



NCPA FORUM

WINTER 2020

*Goodbye 2020,
Hello 2021!*



NCPA is an affiliate member of the National Association of Legal Assistants



President's Message

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP



HAPPY NEW YEAR!! We all waited for what seemed like forever to say that. While flipping the calendar to January 1, 2021 did not make it all better, it felt good to say goodbye to 2020. Wow, what a year!!! I am so thankful for technology that allowed us to work from home, meet from home and stay safe but I do miss seeing everyone in person.

A big THANK YOU to the Board and Executive Committee for adapting and making sure that NCPA was still moving forward.

The Board and Executive Committee wanted to be able to offer the Annual Seminar live in Cary, but it was just not to be in 2020. I am thankful that we had a great hotel, Hilton Garden-Inn, Raleigh-Cary, to work with. They worked with us continuously throughout 2020 to try to have a live event.

While we could not meet in person, we were able to offer two Zoom CLE presentations. Thank you to Crystal Robinson, NCCP for getting the speakers – Judge April Wood and Julie Beavers from Lawyers Mutual. They both gave excellent presentations, and both were well attended.

We also held two Meet & Greets online. The first one was great with several students and some great questions. I hope to hold some more in 2021.

The Board/EC are working on making sure that NCPA has an Annual Seminar and Meeting in March 2021. More detail to come soon. We hope you make an effort to attend.

Something very exciting for NCPA, is the upgrade to our website. When I first got word that we had to upgrade by our provider, I was seriously going “oh no”. After a few Zoom calls and seeing all the new and improved features I believe it will be great. More of the changes are on the admin side of things, but it will look a bit different. I look forward seeing what everyone else thinks.

I hope you all have a safe and happy 2021. Hopefully, we will be together again real soon.

Best wishes,

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP
NCPA President

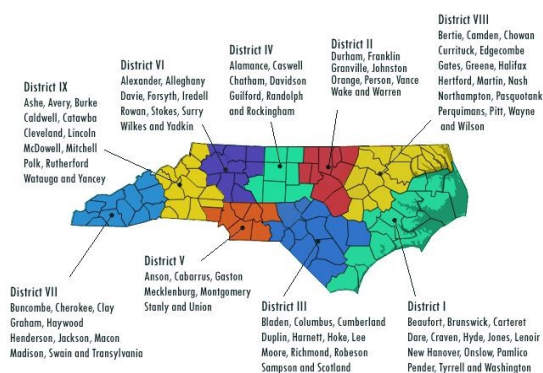
Chairman of the Board Report Heather N. Padgett, NCCP

I usually try to start these messages with a relevant quote that I've come across, but honestly, I think we're all past the point of motivational quotes, right? I think for now we're all just trying to keep the wheels on the road – whatever that may look like for you. Some of us have moved into the realm of working from home, some of us have learned how to go about the days armed with masks, Plexiglas dividers, and enough hand sanitizer to sink a boat, and some of us have gotten the grocery store delivery cycles down to an exact science. Did we ever figure out why the run on toilet paper? Was that ever going to keep the virus at bay? I'm not even going to look at the home-schoolers – you all are in my prayers. I was never happier to have a child old enough to be out of school! The good news is, we've made it this far. The not-so-good news is that we're nowhere near out of the woods. Even with the vaccine rollout, it may be some time before we get back to the days of traveling, big family gatherings, and hugging friends you haven't seen in a while. I hope everyone continues to keep healthy and safe and does their part to keep others safe as well.

Your Board and Executive Committee continue to work behind the scenes, although we have gone 100% virtual. I miss seeing everyone face-to-face, but I am thankful for the technology that lets us move forward, even when we are stuck at home. Another reason I am grateful for technology is if, like me, you found yourself in the middle of December without all of your required CPE hours, NCPA has a video library of past Annual Seminars that members can tap into for \$10 per hour. I was able to make up the hours I was missing while sitting on my couch. It was great to go back and catch some of the presentations I'd missed during dual sessions. We really have had some top notch speakers during Annual. (A side note – a big Thank You to Patti Clapper, our NCPA Coordinator, who had to deal with more emails than I can count from folks looking for their CPE Attendance Certificates before the end of the year, including me!) Our Education Committee is working on plans for this year's Annual, so stay tuned for more information.

Although this year doesn't look like any other we've seen, I hope you still can find joy in the new beginnings a New Year can bring. I'd love to hear how you've adapted to working in these unprecedented times (a phrase I sincerely hope goes away soon!) Are there things that have come about during the pandemic that you hope to never see again? Are there some things you wouldn't mind if they don't go away? (Hello, never having to shake hands with strangers again!). Take care of yourselves and hopefully we'll be able to gather together again.

Heather Padgett, NCCP |
Chairman of the Board



NCPA NEWS



SAVE THE DATE

**NCPA's 41st Annual Seminar
will be held March 26 & 27, 2021**

In Cary. We have not made a decision on in-person or online yet but we are exploring all of our options if we do have to hold a virtual seminar.

Stay tuned for more info!



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Did you know that many of our annual seminar sessions are available online, on demand for CPE credit? Each session is 1 hour of CPE credit.

Registration information is on our website.

NALA Liason Report
Kaye Hare, ACP, NCCP,
NALA Liaison

Join NALA July 22-24, 2021 for the Annual Conference to be held at Louisville Marriott Downtown located in the heart of Bourbon City. Take a short walk to 4th Street Live, Entertainment



District or to the Louisville Slugger Museum. A short drive away you'll find Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby. Look for more information on [NALA's website](#) soon!



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CONTEST!!!!

The contest this quarter will be a Snowflake hunt! There are hidden snowflakes throughout the newsletter, in addition to the page decorations. The first person to submit the correct TOTAL amount of snowflakes in this edition of the FORUM will win a prize. Simply send an email to info@ncparalegal.org with your answer. You will be notified if you are the lucky winner, and the winner will be announced in the next edition of the FORUM!

GOOD LUCK everyone!!!!

(The one below counts!)





Articles of Interest

How to Manage your Law Firm Remotely During COVID-19

<https://www.natlawreview.com/article/how-to-manage-your-law-firm-remotely-during-covid-19>

The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Paralegal Employment and Education

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/blog/blog_5/

Job Hunting During Coronavirus—5 Ways To Get Hired

<https://www.paralegal.edu/blog/job-hunting-during-coronavirus-5-ways-to-get-hired>

Ethics in Life

<https://www.nala.org/articles/ethics-life>

Soft Skills to Excel In Any Environment

<https://www.nala.org/sites/default/files/Soft-Skills-Any-Environment-Career-Chronicle-2016.pdf>

Coping During Covid

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>



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**...AND THE 2020 STUDENT
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ARE:**

1st Place - Rhiannon Fionn-Bowman, Central
Piedmont Community College (\$400)

2nd Place - Kayli Murillo, Coastal Carolina Com-
munity College (\$300)

3rd Place - Timothy Brown Coastal Carolina
Community College (\$200)

4th Place - Lisa Bulls, Meredith College (\$100)





1st Place

Rhiannon Fionn-Bowman

Central Piedmont Community College

I have chosen to become a paralegal because my career as an award-winning independent investigative journalist ended in 2019 following a death threat from a reader and years of online and in-person harassment, which is no great surprise in a time when it's become socially acceptable to abuse those who work in the media, especially women. Making the decision to leave journalism was long in coming, and one I did not take lightly – I love writing, investigating new-to-me stories, interviewing people of all kinds, and sharing what I have learned. I also enjoy learning new technologies that make the work more efficient and effective.

Journalism was always going to be a tough field. I graduated from UNC Charlotte in 2009, right at the height of the Great Recession when journalists were being laid off, it seemed, daily. I soon learned it's a highly competitive field even though my preference is to only compete with myself. Still, I'm proud of the work I did and can look around my community and tell that it made a positive difference. However, one of the pitfalls of the job is that you work hard on a piece, sometimes for months and often alone, then once you publish it you usually only hear back from those who are angry about your work in some way. By the time I decided to leave the field I felt unvalued and even hated. Beyond that, it's a low-paying, uncertainty-riddled gig and so I harbored guilt over the fact that I wasn't contributing more to my family financially.

A few years prior, following another trying time in that industry, I contemplated becoming a paralegal, but just as I began to get serious about the idea the local law school I was considering – Charlotte School of Law – shuttered in dramatic fashion. So, I moved the idea to the back of my mind and pressed on. But my work struggles only intensified as more publications closed and payrates declined. Then came the death threat; I quit the same day – it was a push too far, especially at a time when I was working nearly 70 hours per week.

Again, I looked at the skill set necessary to become a successful paralegal. It seemed like a good fit for the skills I honed as a journalist. Having owned and managed a couple small businesses, too, I can understand the struggles of attorneys running their own firms or managing larger ones. I understand what it's like to enter a field wanting to focus on what you love – in their case the law – and getting mired in administrative tasks, marketing, and all of the many other pieces of the business that aren't as glamorous as a courtroom appearance for a big case. Thanks to my experience, I am certain I can help my future supervising attorney to not only manage their cases but their businesses – and to help them grow them over time, too.



As part of my personal due diligence, I began seeking out podcasts like LAWsome, The Paralegal Voice and more in addition to YouTube videos and other blogs and social media created by paralegals for paralegals. I also joined every paralegal organization for which I qualified as a student, including the North Carolina Paralegal Association. The more I learned about the field the more I thought, "Yes! I can do this." That thought gave me hope, more career-related hope than I'd experienced in a long time. And that made me feel good. I looked again for paralegal programs close to home and was happy to discover a nearby American Bar Association accredited Paralegal Technology program, graduation from which will enable me to sit for the state certification exam. I began classes this past summer and am delighted to report I've taken to the subject so well I have earned a 4.0.

When I entered the journalism field I did so full of idealism and short on practicality. For example, I wasn't paying attention to the fact that print journalism is quickly fading, unfortunately. Now I am relieved and grateful to know the U.S. Department of Labor is projecting "much faster than average" job growth for paralegals through 2028. It's also exciting to learn, from firms that visit our school and make presentations, that area attorneys take the role of paralegals seriously and that some firms are even creating career tracks, training programs, and management opportunities. And the prospects for continuing education are exciting, too, because I believe it's imperative to continue learning throughout your lifetime.

For the first time in a decade, the prospect exists that my hard work may actually equate to career advancement, pay raises instead of cuts, and the ability to save for retirement. And, in my currently limited experience working at law firms (three months, so far), I find true enjoyment helping the clients I've worked with – one even told me our pre-consultation interview put her at ease, which felt terrific.

Thanks to the paralegal field and the instructors at my school, in one year I have gone from feeling hopeless to feeling full of excitement for a future career I hope I will not only enjoy and thrive in, but one in which my work might be valued. I am also working with a fellow student to create an alumni program and seeking networking opportunities with other paralegals in my area because I hope to connect with others so we might lift each other up. NCPA has even matched me with a mentor with whom I'm excited to meet in the New Year.

So, there is much to be grateful for as I race toward graduation in May 2020, and I am very glad to proclaim that I will soon be a bona fied paralegal.



2nd Place

Kayli Murillo

Coastal Carolina Community College

I have chosen to be a paralegal because I have always taken an interest in the law and some family events recently occurred that inspired me to enroll in college to begin working towards that goal. About two years ago, my Grandpa's horrifying divorce threw my entire family for a loop. My Grandpa had moved to Arizona while the rest of the family lived in Southern California. It was hard enough to be far away from him but even harder to receive a phone call saying he had 24 hours to pack up his things and leave the home he just built 2 months prior as his ex-wife had someone serve the divorce papers on him out of the blue. This took a huge toll on my Grandpa. For the next two years as he was trying to heal emotionally, he also had to deal with never-ending disputes over personal belongings, losing his home, and having to rely on his children to help pay for his legal fees.

It was heartbreaking to see a loved one go through something so difficult and losing so many valuables he cherished when he had done no wrong. My Grandpa's ex-wife had filed false claims against him to get him kicked out of their home, embezzled money, and tried to take many of his personal belongings that she knew he cherished. It was frustrating knowing this was going on and there was nothing I could do to help other than be there for him emotionally and try to get his mind off things. Thankfully, his attorney was incredible at his job and had an excellent legal team working together to help my Grandpa. They were able to prove the majority of her claims as lies, tracked down all of the money she was stealing from him, proved that she had drugged him more than once, and discovered that she had been cheating on him for over two years. With all of this new information being discovered it had helped my Grandpa's case tremendously as they were able to prove that she was planning this scheme while having an affair to try and take all of his money leaving him with nothing. The case was officially settled in July of 2019 and my Grandpa was able to get a large enough settlement to start over and that is exactly what he did. My Grandpa received his second chance at a better life all because of his attorney and the legal team that helped his case.



That is why I have chosen to be a paralegal, so I too, can help give someone a second chance. We may not be the attorney defending you in court but we are the ones behind the scenes digging for information, preparing any necessary documentation, and overall helping the attorney prepare for the case in hopes for the best possible outcome for the client. Every day people get caught up in legal matters that can be emotionally and financially draining in hopes that things will soon be settled. They rely on their attorney and the legal team helping them to build their case so the matter can be resolved, and they can move on. I want to be a part of that hope. I want to be a part of that team.

3rd Place

Timothy Brown

Coastal Carolina Community College

There are two reasons why I have chosen to be a paralegal. It provides an opportunity to help people out and there is also flexibility within the field of study as well.

As a child grows up, they are always inspired by someone or something when deciding what they want to be when they are grown up. When I was growing up, my parents told me about one of the jobs my grandma had. She was a paralegal for quite some time and loved every moment of it as well. This inspired me to pursue this career path and do further research into it to see what it was all about. By the time I was able to enroll into community college, I took an introductory course to the program to see if it was really what I wanted to do. After completion of the class, I had decided to choose the path of becoming a paralegal. In addition, becoming a paralegal also gives me an opportunity to take my skills to the next level with regards to helping others out. It also gives me a chance to assist others within the field such as helping prepare my supervising attorney for a trial by drafting relevant documents or by assisting clients with regards to the interview process. But there is also a good amount of flexibility within the field as well.

Whether it is family law, civil litigation, or property law, the flexibility within the law field provides the paralegal an opportunity to specialize in any type that interests them the most. Getting experience in every aspect of law out there gives me the chance to expand on what I already know and build on it, even if I am already an expert at it. By doing this, it makes me more competent in what I do. Becoming competent also helps in the attorney-client relationship because if the client sees how trustworthy the paralegal is, then they would assume that the attorney is just as trustworthy too and would make the whole process very smooth.



Being a paralegal is another form of customer service. Whether it is assisting the attorney for a big trial or interviewing a client to gather necessary information, you are helping others out. The amount of flexibility within the law field allows one to choose what fits them best and by being experienced in every aspect of law, it enhances your skill set. This is why I have chosen to be a paralegal as it allows me to continue to help people at another level.

4th Place Lisa Bulls Meredith College

If I am to be completely honest, it was with some reservation when I finally decided to pursue a paralegal certificate. I was considered a “non-traditional” student: a middle-aged, career changer, mother, and wife. During the summer of 2018 I would face a life-changing ordeal that would become one of the greatest gifts I’d ever receive.

One day, I found myself with no “Plan B”. I had always operated with some level of comfort knowing that if “this” didn’t work out, I could always do “that”. However, this time “this” nor “that” worked in my favor and I felt lost. I was in treading in unfamiliar territory, feeling unarmed, helpless, and flat out scared. A former professor reached out to me and asked if I had considered getting a paralegal certificate. The same day, my mother would ask the exact same question. Sure, I could chalk this up as coincidence, but I knew it was not. I contacted the program coordinator and arranged a meeting to learn more about the program. By the end of that week, I submitted my application with plans to begin classes in a few months.

Previously, I had worked as a paralegal during the time when there was no or very little need to possess a paralegal certification. It was more common to gain any paralegal skills through on-the-job training. For me, having recently attempted law school, I felt as though I was going backwards in the process. I was supposed to become an attorney, not a paralegal. On top of a myriad of emotions, my confidence had also been shaken. For the first time in a long time, I was unsure of anything I contemplated doing.

Classes started that spring. In order to do well in the program, I had to re-assess where I was in life and what I hoped to do going forward. The only expectations were, to do my best, be open-minded and receptive, and earn a paralegal certificate.

The very first course I took provided me with so much insight into not only the paralegal profession but provided a newfound understanding of the role of a paralegal. Although I wasn’t exactly sure how I would focus my skills, I knew it would involve using my interpersonal skills, problem solving strengths, and communication abilities.



As I approach the end of the paralegal program, I can reflect on the person I was when I started. What began with some reservations has blossomed into a renewed view of the importance of the paralegal and the regard others have for this role. Today, my confidence is stronger than ever. In fact, I am excited to be a paralegal. The knowledge and skills that I have acquired during the program coupled with my professional experiences have equipped me to competently perform at an elite level as a paralegal.

I've learned that however we traverse our next steps in life, it's ok if everything isn't figured out upfront. In fact, part of the journey is enjoying the "unknowns" and being well with getting up and trying again. This is why I've chosen to be a paralegal.



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North Carolina State Bar Paralegal Certification Updates

In 2020, Paralegal Certification celebrated its 15th Anniversary. As the program continues to grow changes were made to The Plan for Certification of Paralegals (the "Plan") Subchapter G which can be found on The North Carolina State Bar's website at <http://www.ncbar.gov/rules/>. These changes include: accepting work experience and national certification and administering the exam using remote proctoring.

In order to be eligible to sit for the exam, an applicant must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a legal resident of the United States.
2. Education or Work Experience - The applicant must have earned one of the following:
 - (a) an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree from a qualified paralegal studies program (must consist of 9 semester credits, or the equivalent, of classroom instruction (consisting of live, real-time, or simultaneous broadcast via satellite or webinar); or
 - (b) a certificate from a qualified paralegal studies program and an associate's or bachelor's degree in any discipline from any institution of post-secondary education that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education (an accredited US institution) or an equivalent degree from a foreign educational institution if the degree is determined to be equivalent to a degree from an accredited US institution by an organization that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE); or
 - (c) a juris doctorate degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association; or
 - (d) a high school diploma or equivalent plus five years of experience (comprising 10,000 work hours) as a legal assistant/paralegal or paralegal educator and, within the 12 months prior to the application, completed one hour of CLE on the topic of professional responsibility. Demonstration of work experience may be established by sworn affidavit(s) from the lawyer(s) or other supervisory personnel who has knowledge of the applicant's work as a legal assistant/paralegal during the entirety of the claimed work experience.
3. National Certification. If an applicant has obtained and thereafter maintains in active status at all times prior to application (i) the designation Certified Legal Assistant (CLA)/Certified Paralegal (CP) from the National Association of Legal Assistants; (ii) the designation PACE-Registered Paralegal (RP)/Certified Registered Paralegal (CRP) from the National Federation of Paralegal Associations; or (iii) another national paralegal credential approved by the board, the applicant is not required to satisfy the educational standard described in #2 above.

The Board of Paralegal Certification decided to administer the certification exams using remote proctoring due to COVID-19. Remote proctoring enables examinees to take the exam in the comfort of their home or office under the supervision of a remote proctor using the examinee's computer's webcam and microphone in conjunction with ExamSoft.

For additional information regarding the certification process, please visit our website at <http://www.nccertifiedparalegal.org/>.

Joy C. Belk, NCCP
Managing Director, Paralegal Certification
North Carolina State Bar
www.nccertifiedparalegal.gov



Helpful Links

NCPA — www.ncparalegal.org

NALA - www.nala.org

NC State Bar Board of Paralegal Certification - www.nccertifiedparalegal.org

NC State Bar — www.ncbar.gov

ETHICS CORNER

Professional Responsibility In A Pandemic: <https://www.ncbar.gov/for-lawyers/ethics/ethics-articles/professional-responsibility-in-a-pandemic/>

Things To Do During Covid Quarantine: <https://www.ncbar.gov/for-lawyers/ethics/ethics-articles/things-to-do-during-covid-quarantine/>

20 Ethics and Professionalism Tips for 2020 (and still good for 2021!) <https://www.ncbar.gov/for-lawyers/ethics/ethics-articles/20-ethics-and-professionalism-tips-for-2020/>

Questions about your NCCP status, renewal or wanting information on the NCCP exam?

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Due to the pandemic, we have not published a FORUM in several months. We are sorry we have not been able to do this. We've been thought a lot this past 8 months as paralegals and as humans. For the first time since Hurricane Floyd in 1999, NCPA had to cancel a seminar. Our members have been great in working with us on refunds, credits, etc. While we hope to be able to see everyone in person in March 2021, we can't even guarantee that will happen.

I have tried to include links to articles in this issue to help members though this time, both professionally and personally. If you come across an article that has helped you, please feel free to send it to us or link it on our Facebook page.

Anything we can do to help each other get through this is appreciated.

Patti Clapper
NCPA Coordinator

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