



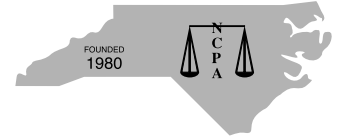
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Spring / Summer 2014

North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.



Forum

noun [C]; *för-əm*
an occasion or a place for talking about a matter of public interest

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- NCPA Student Scholarship Winners
- Thanks to 2014 Annual Seminar Supporters!

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Opinions expressed in articles and features herein are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of NCPA. The Editor strongly encourages the submission of materials for publication. The Editor reserves the right to edit material and accept or reject materials submitted.



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President's Message

Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP



I hope everyone enjoyed the Annual Seminar and spending time at the beach, the weather was more cooperative this year. Our Education Committee did a wonderful job putting together some great session topics this year. We are planning to make some of those sessions available online in the coming months.

Information will be posted on our website and on our Facebook page. Our next Annual Seminar will be held March 19 - 21, 2015 in Wrihstville Beach.

We are looking forward to having the NALA Convention in Charleston, SC in July. If you are planning to attend, please let us know. If we have a large enough group, we will try to car pool and pair up for hotel rooms to help with cost. This is a great opportunity to network with paralegals from all over the country and visit a beautiful city.

Our Directors are planning Meet & Greets for next month. If you have a suggestion for location or topic, please let me know and I can put you in touch with your Director. Hopefully the weather will be a little more cooperative then it was in February. We still do not have a Director for District III and District VII. If you are a general member in either of those districts and are interested, please contact myself or our Chairman, Karen England.

Some of you have contacted us that you did not receive your membership card. We had a glitch which has now been fixed so you should be receiving those soon. You can also check your profile on NCPA's website to confirm that your renewal date has been extended to 2015.

I hope everyone has a safe and fun Summer.

Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP

President

Chairman's Message

Karen F. England, NCCP



What an awesome seminar we had at the beach in March, thanks to the tireless efforts of our hard working seminar committee. They should all be commended! We don't often think about how much must be done behind the scenes prior to, and during, our seminar. Thank you Michele Bryant, Diane

Tally and Crystal Robinson for all that you did, not just during the weekend of our Annual Meeting and Seminar, but for the entire year leading up to it.

I am sure I speak for every member of NCPA when I say very loudly "Thank goodness Spring has finally arrived!" I don't think I know of a single person who is not glad to see this winter come to an end. As the trees begin to burst forth with new life, so do we as NCPA begin a new year with newly elected officers, directors and newly appointed committee chairs. Although some of us may be returning in our same roles, I believe we should begin each new term the way the trees are beginning anew again this Spring. I am delighted to serve again this year as Chairman of the Board and hope to work with each of our District Directors during the coming year to continue providing networking opportunities and holding meet & greets in your local districts. Several districts already have events in the works, and I hope others will follow suit.

Since this issue of the Forum is Spring/Summer, I also want to take a moment to encourage each member to consider attending NALA's convention in beautiful Charleston, South Carolina in July. If you have never been to a NALA conference, you will certainly be in for a treat. Our NALA Liaison, Stephanie B. Elliott, is busily helping plan the opening night reception and will be speaking during one of the Affiliated Associations discussions. Let's support her by having a huge showing in Charleston!

Have a great Summer and "Follow Me to Charleston!"

Karen F. England, NCCP

Karen F. England, NCCP
Chairman of the Board

Report of the First Vice President and Education Committee

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP

Greetings!! I am excited to be serving as NCPA's new First Vice President for 2014-2015.

A big THANK YOU to Diane L. Tally, NCCP, Michelle Bryant, CLA, NCCP, Crystal L. Robinson, NCCP and Chreatha Alston, NCCP for all the hard work on NCPA's 2014 Annual Seminar. The weather was great, the food was delicious and the CP classes were awesome. Great job ladies!!!

The NCCP/CLA Review Course committee is working on revising

the CLA review course to accommodate the changes NALA made to the Certification Exam in 2013. The NCCP/CLA Review Course will be offered in September. Watch your inbox for more information.

Have a great summer!!!

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP
2014-2015 NCPA First Vice-President



Since becoming a member of NCPA in 2011, I've had my eye on one position, Registration Chair. Three years later, though, the position continues to elude me. This past March, I became the NCPA Treasurer. So, after just one

Editor's Court

Lakisha A. Chichester,
ACP, NCCP

nonetheless, I'm ready for the challenge.

Charity Inglis, ACP, NCCP, who currently serves as the articles editor, will be stepping up as the editor for the Forum. Mary Brunk will be joining the Forum as the advertising editor. Please join me in welcoming Charity and Mary. Also, please be sure to read Mary's winning scholarship essay in this issue.

year, I'm wrapping up my stint as the Forum's editor. Yes, I know Treasurer doesn't have the glitz and glam of Registration Chair, but

Despite all of the trials and tribulations that come with being an editor, I learned so much. I know it's a cliché, but I really did! Thanks to the NCPA volunteers and leadership who stayed in the trenches with me until each issue was completed.

I'm also excited to announce that I've been selected by the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) to participate in its Leadership Enhancement and Preparation (LEAP) Program. The yearlong program will focus on developing personal and professional leadership skills.

Finally, in July, I will be attending my first NALA convention. I can't wait to mix and mingle with the best and the brightest in the paralegal profession and to enjoy all the sights and sounds of Charleston, South Carolina. Are you going? I hope to see you there.

Have a FABULOUS summer!!!

Lakisha A. Chichester

Senior Editor, NCPA FORUM

Second Vice President's Report Membership

Martha L. Blackman-Hughes, NCCP, ACP

The current membership breakdown as of June 1, 2014 is as follows:

General members:	197
Associate members:	38
Student members:	137
Sustaining Members:	13
Affiliate members:	3
Educational Program members:	3
Attorney Advisors	2
Total	393

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NCPA would also like to recognize our Affiliate and Educational Program members:

Alamance County Paralegal Association, Cumberland County Paralegal Association, and Guilford Paralegal Association.

Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about membership in NCPA.

Martha L. Blackman-Hughes, NCCP, ACP

Martha L. Blackman-Hughes, NCCP, ACP
Second Vice President, Membership Chair



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July 23rd - 25th

For more information and a schedule of events, visit

<http://www.nala.org/2014anmntn.aspx>

Deadline to file your proxy for voting if you are a NALA member
is June 25th. Use the link above to file online or print a form.

Questions? Email our NALA Liaison, Stephanie Elliott selliott@gastonlegal.com

Already registered? Be sure to download the NALA Convention App from the Apple App store or Google Play store.



2014 is the first year the NALA Convention is paperless! A meeting app designed specifically for the NALA program is available in the iStore and GooglePlay for all to see. Handout material and other documents just for convention attendees are password protected. Registrants will receive the user name and passwords in advance of the meeting.

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ACP EXAM FEE AWARD

Submit an essay on:
“I am pursuing the ACP designation because _____”

All essays must be a **1,000 to 1,500 words** in length, typewritten and
postmarked or emailed on or before **August 15, 2014**.

Participants do not need to be NALA members, but must be NCPA members in good
standing and meet the eligibility criteria for sitting for the CLA/CP or APC exam.

Finalists will be notified by September 15, 2014.

Scholarship fees will be paid directly to NALA and the finalists will have one year
from the date of the award to sit for the exams. The fees will be refunded to NCPA if
the finalists do not sit for the exam within the one-year time requirement.

Send your typewritten essays by August 15, 2014 to:
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or email in pdf format ONLY to kenland@wehwlaw.com

For additional information, please email:
NALA Liaison Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP at selliott@gastonlegal.com.

The Best Position

By: Charlotte A. Ward, CLA, NCCP
NCPA Student/School Relations Chair



What area of law should I pursue? How do I gain experience? How much can I expect to make? What advice do you have for someone considering changing careers? These are just a few of the questions that I commonly see from current paralegal students. My answer is this: You're in the best position you could possibly be in.

As a student, you have the opportunity to take advantage of several paralegal associations with free membership or a nominal fee. As such, you're able to attend seminars in different practice areas and most importantly—network. You may have your heart set on civil litigation but after attending a seminar learn that it was nothing like you imagined. The key is to get as much information as you can to help you make that decision. You should also consider seeking opportunities to shadow paralegals in an area of law that you're interested in. NCPA offers a great mentoring program that provides a more intimate and hands-on method of learning about the paralegal profession. This is also a way to nurture professional relationships and possibly get your foot in the door as your mentor can attest to your hard work and character.

Volunteering is another good way to make connections and stand out. Paralegals and attorneys serve as judges and jurors as well as behind-the-scenes at local high school mock trial competitions. If you love children,

you can serve as a Guardian ad Litem or consider volunteering for Disability Rights North Carolina. Also ask for ways to volunteer in the paralegal association(s) that you join. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities which provide a means to make contacts while giving back to the community and may be the area that strikes the attention of employers on your resume'.

**The key is to
get as much
information as
you can to help
you make that
decision...**

Get certified. More and more, employers are requiring that paralegals be certified by the North Carolina State Bar. But, don't just stop there. Obtaining certification through the National Association of Legal Assistants will make you stand out and show potential employers that you are committed to the paralegal profession and add to your marketability. Also consider non-paralegal positions on your journey to gaining experience. You may start out as the receptionist, filing clerk or administrative assistant

but you have now gained internal contacts who can serve as references for the position you have your eye on.

I leave you with this: Never stop learning as technology and laws are ever changing. In all your learning, never forget to pass your knowledge on to others.

"Even the wisest mind has something yet to learn."
—George Santayana

NCPA Student Scholarship Winners

Each year, NCPA offers a Student Scholarship to any paralegal student enrolled in an accredited North Carolina paralegal educational program. The scholarship is determined by an essay competition, with the essay topic of "I have chosen to be a paralegal..."

All winners receive a complementary student registration to the Annual Meeting and Seminar, a complementary one-year student membership to NCPA, and a scholarship check to be paid to his or her school. First place winners receive \$400.00; Second place winners receive \$300.00; Third place winners receive \$200.00; and Fourth place winners receive \$100.00.

I would like to thank our Student/School Relations Chair, Charlotte Ward, CLA, NCCP, for providing me with the winning essays for this edition of the FORUM. I'm sure it was a difficult decision for the judges. Please enjoy the winning essays included in this issue of the FORUM.



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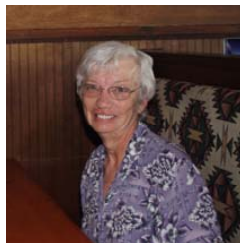
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Mary F. Haggerty, CLA
1944 – 2014



The local, state, and national paralegal community lost a dear friend in February. Mary F. Haggerty, CLA was a graduate of the Paralegal Technology program of Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina and obtained the CLA credential in 1990. She started her paralegal career in 1986 and worked tirelessly for the law firm of Parker Poe and then later for the real estate development firm Grubb Properties, until her retirement in 2009. Simultaneously with private employment, Mary had a second paralegal career. She was a paralegal *Volunteer* and that is how we know her best.

Mary's commitment to the paralegal profession was insurmountable. She continuously encouraged everyone to always be an *Ambassador* for our profession. Mary was dedicated to the Metrolina Paralegal Association (MPA), the North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc. (NCPA), and the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA). She chaired numerous committees, served on several boards, and was elected to several positions, including the office of President for both MPA and NCPA.

Mary received NALA's Affiliated Association Award three times. The following is an excerpt from the 1998 program:

When asked why she gives so much of her time to NCPA, the answer comes easily and rapidly: "It's just my way of giving back to the association and the profession."

In 2008, Mary received the Distinguished Service Award from NCPA and a banquet was held in her honor. Many of her friends paid tribute to "Mother Mary," and shared their fondest memories of how Mary touched their lives throughout the years. Below is a poem given to Mary by an NCPA member at the banquet:

NCPA Founding Member;
Is Always Smiling
And An Inspiration to All;
Says To Us, "You Will Survive" ;
Gave Her All To Be
NCPA's Glue;
Calls Herself The "Gray Haired Lady";
Left Big Shoes to Fill;
Always Eager to Answer Any Question
And Ready To Help;
After Over Two Decades Of NCPA Membership
You Will Be Greatly Missed!

Mary retired to Florida in 2009. She left private employment, but continued her volunteer activities through her church and the community where she lived. Mary passed away on February 18, 2014 and she is most likely continuing her volunteer work at the pearly gates with St. Peter.

Written by Theresa A. Irvin, ACP, NCCP

Mary Wade Brunk
UNC Chapel Hill Paralegal Program
1st Place 2014 NCPA Student Scholarship Winner

“I have chosen to be a paralegal...”

I am beginning a journey, a new challenge - my new mission. I am becoming a paralegal to experience the challenge of learning the law and to share what I learned in my previous career with those I meet in my new career – attorneys, fellow paralegals, and clients. After more than a decade working in higher education with student-athletes, I lost my spark. I value my years of experience in the field, specifically the opportunities to interact with a diverse group of students. Forging relationships that promote success, offer support, and ultimately raise the bar have been essential components of my work, and I want to transfer these elements to my work as a paralegal.

Three years ago, I had no idea that simply fulfilling my civic duty as a United States citizen would be the first spark in my recent decision to become a criminal law paralegal. I was selected to serve on the jury for a murder trial in Atlanta, GA. My first experience reporting for jury duty, and I was not only selected, but also later ‘chosen’ as the foreperson. I soaked in as much of the experience as I could. I dismissed my colleagues’ suggestions that I weasel my way out of being selected. I wanted to be selected, and while I knew little of what serving as the jury foreperson would entail, I stepped up to the plate and dove in. Often more comfortable observing a group’s interaction, I found myself naturally inclined and eager to contribute to the weeklong deliberations. I trusted myself and knew that I would uphold my duty to do everything in my power to lead my fellow jurors through a just analysis of the evidence. I felt a genuine sense of duty and respect for the process; and, while it took me much longer than others to reach my determination of a verdict, I was confident in the role I played and the effort I made to seek justice through the application of the law.

Unable to reach a unanimous verdict, our hung jury led to a mistrial. Following that initial trial, I maintained communication with the Senior District Attorney as she prepared for a retrial. Discussing the intricacies of her

argument, controversies in the deliberation room, and the significance of circumstantial evidence when limited physical evidence existed were frequent topics. She, without a doubt, was genuinely enthusiastic when I shared my career change with her.

Around this same time, a member of the NFL’s Atlanta Falcons’ Operations staff approached me about one of the team’s players who had recently enrolled in his final course

for college graduation and needed a tutor. The course: Sociology of Law. A sociology major in college, I was comfortable with the material; however, when it came down to it, I knew very little about the intricacies, technicalities, and realities of the law. I eagerly accepted the tutoring assignment, both to educate myself and to teach my student. Not only did I enjoy my experience as a tutor; I was fascinated by the content.

In January 2013, I left higher education after more than a decade in the field and relocated to North Carolina. I did a great deal

of soul-searching, and while I was figuring out just what I wanted to do, I found myself participating in jury focus groups. Something continued to draw me back to the legal field. How two sides could apply the law to the very same case, and make two distinctly opposing arguments reflects my appreciation for the very nature of what makes every interaction, every situation so unique: perspective. I found my spark again.

Perhaps my experiences as a jury foreperson, tutor, and research participant should have triggered something in me sooner – something that would make it clear that I should head in this direction and explore work as a paralegal; or, perhaps not. While I did not anticipate undergoing a career change in my mid-thirties, I am confident and energized about my decision. I am prepared to face the intellectual challenge, necessity to problem solve, and opportunity to navigate a complex system. I am deadline driven, work with a sense of urgency, and value my integrity with high regards. I want to contribute to the professional advocacy of paralegals. I want to raise the bar.



Jo Ann Reeves
Meredith College Paralegal Program
2nd Place 2014 NCPA Student Scholarship Winner

“I have chosen to be a paralegal...”

Much of my professional career has been spent working in the Banking/Brokerage field, first as a Financial Advisor and then as an Operations Manager for a branch office. In addition to financial matters, I learned about compliance, ethics, and working with clients to help them achieve their goals. In my last job, working with the General Counsel at a small health care company, I learned about contracts, corporation organization, acquisitions, and in a limited role, malpractice litigation. Many of my skills and experience transitioned nicely into the legal field and I was always attentive when I worked with attorneys and paralegals. Occasionally I thought about attending a paralegal program to explore my interest in the legal profession but always stopped short of applying because I had a stable job and felt I was too old to go back to school.

In August 2012 I was laid off when my company was acquired by a new company. My husband encouraged me to stop talking about paralegal school and follow my dream. Our children are grown and it was time for me to further my education. There truly were no more excuses; it was time to take on the challenge or live with the “what ifs” for the rest of my career. For many years, I have had taped to my desk a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: “Do one thing every day that scares you.” It seemed like a good time to take her advice.

I was absolutely petrified when I started school in August 2013. Since it had been years since I had officially been a student, my daughter helped me organize my classes in a way that made sense to me. As the anxiety lessened and my studies began, I learned that I love being a paralegal. Who wouldn’t love a job where you get to read, research, write, organize, and work with clients and attorneys? These are all tasks that I have performed in varying degrees throughout my career; to have them come together in one job description is pure heaven for me.

Being a paralegal has finally brought satisfaction to my professional life. I always felt like there was something

missing from my work life. While I have had a fulfilling career to this point, I was always looking for new challenges. There was an underlying boredom sometimes that I was not using my brain to its fullest capacity. It is an amazing feeling to wake up in the morning ready to learn and be of service to others. Whether researching an issue for an attorney or conveying information to a client, it is satisfying to know that I am able to participate in the outcome of a legal matter. Because I am organized and detail oriented, I take pride that my work is accurate and understandable so that an attorney can use it to make sound legal decisions.

I believe that learning is a lifetime journey and I don’t want to ever stop learning and adapting to new information. Being a paralegal affords me the chance to continually learn new ideas through research and writing. One of the side benefits of being a paralegal is that I never have to retire. There are always volunteer opportunities through the NC Bar Association and legal aid groups. Throughout the rest of my career and my retirement, I can be a part of the legal community. Becoming a paralegal has certainly expanded my horizons; I am grateful that I took the opportunity to further my education and find the perfect career for me.



Brenda Lambert
Meredith College Paralegal Program
3rd Place 2014 NCPA Student Scholarship Winner

“I have chosen to be a paralegal...”

I was originally drawn to the legal field because of it's parallels to my current career in social work: I wanted to help people. I loved the idea of going to work everyday in a service profession that has a direct impact on a client's lives. But I've learned some interesting things while studying in my paralegal program that have given me another perspective on the paralegal profession.

Throughout my first semester, I've gained solid skills in analyzing cases, drafting legal business documents, and researching. But I've begun to think those skills are just the tip of the iceberg. Under the surface I've been learning to think in a certain manner, to perform tasks under deadlines and stress, and be confident in the process of finding information for myself instead of having it spoon fed to me.

This growing confidence in my skills and abilities is why I'm thinking about the paralegal profession differently. For the first time, I'm beginning to see that my choice of profession can be not only about helping others, but also about helping myself. Perhaps it's obvious to other people, but I had never thought about my career in terms of what it gives me. I had never stopped to consider whether I would be intellectually challenged, or whether interesting work would be important to me. I had not realized how much confidence one could gain from acquiring skills and the ability to think in a certain way.

So while I am still excited about my work helping others, I am growing more excited daily to be working towards a career that gives me so much, too. It is such a gift to pursue work that will be rewarding to me on many levels. I know that I can practice as a paralegal nearly anywhere I decide to move, so it provides stability. The work itself is demanding intellectually, which appeals to

me. I know paralegal salaries will provide me with a solid financial basis.

Best of all, for me right now, is the confidence that the beginning of my journey has brought. I have grown so much in one semester as I've learned the skills needed to be a paralegal. I've gone from being the undergrad who procrastinated on every project to turning in assignments days early, from counting the minutes to quitting time at work to eagerly anticipating going to work in my first paralegal position, and from doubting myself and my abilities to knowing I am capable and being confident in my skills.



Perhaps a simple career change is not this transformative for everyone. Perhaps to others the paralegal profession is just a job that offers stability or money. But to me, though I'm still a student, the paralegal profession has offered me this incredible chance to be excited and interested in my job. It's given me a chance to do meaningful work that requires skill and knowledge. It gives me so many opportunities and a variety of options in my profession. It's given me a chance to feel confident, both in my career prospects and in myself.

Desiree Haulk

**Western Piedmont Community College Paralegal Program
4th Place 2014 NCPA Student Scholarship Winner**

“I have chosen to be a paralegal...”

When I was six years old, my father passed away and my mom had to work two jobs just to make ends meet. Over the years, I watched my mother move from working in mills and fast food restaurants to a dependable and good paying job with the U.S Postal Service. She always taught and encouraged me to better myself so that I can be successful in life.

As I grew into womanhood, I found myself also being a single parent with two little girls and it was only then that I realized the hardship and struggle my mother endured for so many years. I have chosen to be a paralegal to create and provide a better, more enjoyable life for my daughters and myself. I understand that being a paralegal is a complete demanding field, but the rewards are great and since I have always lived paycheck-to-paycheck I am excited to know that my efforts and hard work will pay off. I strive to be the best I can be and am determined to gain knowledge and wisdom throughout my career.

Looking back, I remember the times when there was barely enough to make it through each day but as I look at my life now I realize that there is only one way to fail and that is to quit. I teach my children the same values my mother taught me and encourage them to help others and remain positive no matter what comes their way. As a paralegal, I understand that there are certain rules

and ethics that I must abide by and I am willing to do so I can maintain a lasting and reputable relationship with my employer. In my professional career, I will have the opportunity to network with others in the legal field and prove myself as a dependable and responsible paralegal. Clients are important, and as a paralegal, I want to relate to my client's needs so that I can create a lasting relationship with that person. It would be great to know that I can touch a person's life and help them overcome their obstacles. I want my clients not to fear justice but remain positive that there is hope in spite of their difficult circumstances. I also chose to be a paralegal because there are more job opportunities available than just working for a law firm. I can work for a bank, corporation, or court and government agencies. Knowing that I have a chance to work for various reputable employers and earn an average salary of about \$50,080 per year is intriguing. To see an opportunity like this and not take it would be ignorance on my behalf seeing that I am making less than \$10,000 a year now and neither medical nor dental insurance is available.

Being a paralegal, will allow me to prove my value of work to practice law, demonstrate my excellent organizational and communicational skills, and show that I am detail minded and able to multi-task. I have a genuine interest in law, can empathize with clients' problems and know that I will be a valuable member of the legal team.



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