



President's Message

Dear Paralegals,

I am writing this before 09-11-11. I regularly listen to a radio station in which the host encourages listeners to do something on 09-11-11 to make a difference. I agree completely, and I am challenging us as a group to make a difference every day. We work in a field in which people need our compassion and the hope we can bring them. We can make a positive legal difference in their lives.

As paralegals we can make this kind of difference in the lives of others in at least three ways.

By doing the best work of which we are capable in our respective offices.

By being active in paralegals with not only our attendance at meetings but also volunteering our time and talents.

By actively reaching out to paralegals who are non-members and encouraging them to become a part of our organization and make a difference as well.

In big ways and small ways, my heart's desire is for each one of us to be paralegal "heroes" in our community. To borrow a phrase: "Let's roll."

Sincerely,

Billie Sue Scales

President, Bell County Bar Association Paralegals

**Absolutely
Brilliant
Household
Tip**



**Always keep several
get well cards on the
mantle..
So if
unexpected guests
arrive,
They will think
you've been sick
and unable to clean.**



**Teddy
Bear
Drive**

Our Charity Drive for the next four months is the Teddy Bear Drive. Please contribute a teddy bear to give to children.

The flower pot has been brought out to collect money to support our charity.



Drop in your spare change at each meeting so our aid to the charities will grow.



REAL WORLD LESSONS

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**This article is a condensed version of her article
by the same title.**

Most law offices are not like the ones depicted on shows like Boston Legal, Harry's Law, or Ally McBeal. And most attorneys are not going to look or act like William Shatner, Kathy Bates, or Calista Flockhart.

Do not assume; always verify the facts.

Pay attention to detail. No one ever lost a case by knowing the facts too well.

Never give an attorney an original or your only copy of a document.

Develop your own daily reminder system. This way tasks and deadlines don't fall through the cracks, and also serves as a backup to the general calendar systems of your firm.

Abide by a stringent, ethical code in your practice as a paralegal. Never give legal advice. Do not hold yourself out or in any way give the impression you are a lawyer.

Develop relationships with court personnel -- treat them all with respect.

If you don't know the answer, know the resources you can use to find it. Knowing the resource is half the battle. The other half is admitting you don't know the answer and identifying the question(s) to ask in order to utilize the resources you have available.

If you make a mistake, admit it immediately. One can only correct a mistake if it is admitted to, recognized, and addressed. It may be hard to admit to a mistake, but early admission may make the critical difference in being able to rectify the errors.

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REAL WORLD LESSONS (continued)

Don't be too quick to take "no " for an answer. Good paralegals always look for a way to work it out or get around an issue when someone initially says "no."

Proofread all work. One mistake can compromise your case. Even though I didn't like it. I learned this lesson -- sometimes the hard way -- but I learned it.

Respect your attorney and the client by meeting or exceeding deadlines. No one has ever been fired for finishing a project early.

Conference frequently with your supervising attorney. Provide the attorney with a list of questions and topics for discussion prior to each meeting.

Always repeat back instructions as given to you when receiving an assignment. This way you can confirm you heard what the other person thought they were saying.

Networking is invaluable. You can never know too many smart people.

Treat legal secretaries and all support personnel in the office as equals. You will find that they know more about many things that you do and are valuable resources.

Listen and learn. Everyone has something to offer. You can learn from the most experienced of veterans and the most inexperienced "greenhorns." Great ideas sometimes come from the most unexpected sources.

Keep up with new court rules, changes in the law, and changes in technology. With each passing year, computer technology plays a larger role in the practice of law.

Document, document, document ... Each task completed, each client communication, each conference with an attorney, and all deadlines.

Do not participate in office gossip; in the end it serves no purpose and is a distraction from your assigned tasks.

Regardless how adversarial your supervising attorneys are, it is important for the paralegal to be courteous, personable, and professional when dealing with court staff, witnesses, and opposing counsel.

Do not lose sight of who you are really working for: the client. You may have twenty files on your desk, but to each client his file is the only one that is important to him.

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REAL WORLD LESSONS (continued)

Join and participate in local, state and national professional organizations, and take advantage of continuing education programs offered to their members. Through these activities you can exchange ideas, learn new resources, and develop a valuable network of peers.

The most important lesson I have learned is that success can only be achieved on your terms. Everyone has his or her own idea of what a successful career is. Ultimately, true success is who each of us chooses to define it.

Don't let someone else decide what your success should be. If your success is not on your own terms -- if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart -- it is not success at all.

Regardless of what original motivation steered us into this profession, most paralegals would agree we are heavily encouraged by our adversarial system's motivation to win, win ... win!

Without a doubt, assisting your attorney win for his or her client is a strong benchmark for the measurement of success.

However, I prefer to think the true measure of a successful paralegal-attorney-client relationship is that of service. That would encompass service to the client and service to the client's best interest, regardless of whether you can record a "win".

Each class, each job, each life experience along my journey was a foundation for my next step. I encourage you to learn from each case you assist with. Learn from each attorney you work with. Let each of these lessons be a foundation for your next experience.



TAPS 2011
PEARLS OF
Wisdom



TEXAS ADVANCED PARALEGAL SEMINAR

October 5-7, 2011
Marriott Hotel & Golf Club; Fort
Worth, TX (North)

A Three Day Multi-Track CLE
Seminar sponsored by the
Paralegal Division, State Bar of
Texas



Above, Parliamentarian Brenda Colvin explains the benefits of membership in the Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas.



Below, Vice President Marissa Ribas left and Sherry White right listen as business items are discussed.



Above, Eva Lott with back to camera, Sherry White, and Cathy Beaman listen to the proceedings.

Below, Brenda Colvin at right welcomes Dawn Glass, new member.

Photos from the August 18 Membership Meeting that was held at Las Casas Restaurant



SUSTAINING

MEMBERS

**Central Texas Litigation
Support Services, Inc.**

Paper works Express

**The Ted Smith
Law Firm, PLLC**

Reliable Document Retrieval



Registered Agent Solutions, inc.

Happy Birthday

Juana Amador September 4

Marissa Brauckmiller-Ribas September 11

Diana Wolf September 14

Mandy Avila-Clark September 16

Cheryl Mraz September 18

Roxana Peterson September 30

Brenda Colvin October 4

Samia Wetzel October 5

Jeanie Yarnell October 9

Brooke Johnson October 20

Joanna Staton October 27

Beckey Worley October 31



OCTOBER

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BCBA **PARALEGALS**

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month at the Justice Complex in Belton on Loop 121 in the Auxiliary Court Room #2 on the second floor.

2011 - 2012 Officers

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