# PARALEGAL DIVISION

## STATE BAR OF TEXAS



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# PARALEGAL DIVISION REPORT TO THE PARALEGAL COMMITTEE Fall 2009

The Paralegal Division Board of Directors continues to work on the Division's ever existent goal of serving our membership and paralegals across the state of Texas. In this report, I have highlighted some of the activities and events in which the Division is currently involved.

# Annual Meeting 2009

We celebrated the Annual Meeting in Dallas with the State Bar. We held a Friday luncheon where we inducted our 2009-2010 Board of Directors:

President – Stephanie Hawkes, RP, CIPP

President-Elect - Debbie Guerra

District 1 – Nan Gibson

District 2 – Connie Nims

District 3 – Michele Rayburn, PLS, CLA, Texas Board of Legal Specialization Board Certification - Personal Injury Law

District 4 – Michele Flowers Brooks

District 5 – Susan Wilen

District 6 - Sheila Veach, CP

District 7 - Misti Janes

District 8 – Carol Trevino

District 10 - Cheryl Bryan, CP, Texas Board of Legal Specialization

Board Certification - Personal Injury Law

District 11 - Kimberly Hennessy, CLA

District 12 – Gloria Porter

District 13 - Cindy Powell

District 14 - Shannon Watts, CP

# District 15 – Cindy Curry, ACP, Texas Board of Legal Specialization Board Certification - Estate Planning and Probate Law District 16 – Clara Buckland, CP

# 2009-2010 Board Meetings

The Board of Directors has two meetings before the June 2010 Annual Meeting. The first meeting was September 24-27, 2009 in Amarillo, Texas. On February 19-21, 2010, we will meet in Corpus Christi, Texas. This year, in an attempt to provide our members with more networking opportunities and give them more exposure to the Board of Directors, we are having a networking event in conjunction with each Board meeting. This idea has been well received by both our members and the Board.

# Communicating with the Sections and Departments of State Bar of Texas

Last year, there were several discussions at the PC meeting regarding how to best communicate with the State Bar sections and departments, especially TBLS. The Paralegal Division is working very hard this year to have good communication with all sections of the Bar.

Last week at TAPS, we held a one day mini Exhibit Hall for the Bar. TBLS, the State Bar College, the Pro Bono College and State Bar Insurance Trust were all invited to attend and promote their sections and services. All but State Bar Insurance Trust sent a representative or flyers.

The Paralegal Division was invited to submit an article in the "Family Law Section Report". For the Fall issue, Kay Redburn graciously submitted her article and an ad for TAPS was included. We have lined up three Family Law paralegals to submit articles for future issues.

Our TBLS liaison, Cheryl Bryan continues to communicate regularly with Molly Galvez. As the deadline for the most recent exam approached, the Paralegal Division engaged in heavy marketing of the exam and application criteria. One of the consistent comments we hear from our members is that they would like to have a TBLS study course. We hope to meet with TBLS in the coming weeks to discuss this option, with the possibility of holding such a course in conjunction with TAPS 2010.

The Pro Bono College and Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism both allow paralegals to become members and have asked the Paralegal Division to assist with marketing of these organizations. We are happy to do so and will send information to our members soon.

# **TAPS**

The TAPS 2009 Committee was chaired by past-president Rhonda Brashears and was held last week, in League City. Approximately 210 attendees joined TAPS in its 11<sup>th</sup> year of providing quality CLE to Texas paralegals. TAPS 2010 will be held Austin, September 29 – October 1, 2010. Mark your calendars and attorneys let your paralegals

know. If any of this committee is located in the Austin area and would be willing to be a speaker at TAPS please let us know.

#### Council of Chairs

I attended the Council of Chairs orientation in Houston in July. I attended the second Council of Chairs meeting via telephone in September.

#### Access to Justice Task Force and Pro-Bono Ad-Hoc Committee

For the second year in a row, I represent the Paralegal Division on the Access to Justice Task Force. Several years ago, the Task Force asked each section of the State Bar to create a Pro Bono Ad Hoc Committee.

Past President, Patti Giuliano serves as the Chair to the Pro-Bono Ad-Hoc Committee. She will continue to investigate the many ways Paralegal Division members can help their communities through pro-bono.

# Paralegal Ethics Handbook

The 3rd Edition of the "Paralegal Ethics Handbook" was recently released. You will recall that this book was authored by several Paralegal Division members. We continue to be very proud of this accomplishment and the opportunity to bring an ethical response to most every situation which a Texas paralegal may find themselves. In June, West Publishing determined that the "Paralegal Ethics Handbook" would be well received as a Kindle publication. This format was released last week.

## Texas Paralegal Journal

We continue to publish the *Texas Paralegal Journal "TPJ"*. Because of budget considerations, the Board voted to reduce the printing to three times a year and communicate with our members via an electronic newsletter throughout the year. We are always looking for good substantive articles for the *TPJ* and would be encouraged if any members of this committee had an article to submit. We could of course recognize the contributor as a member of the Paralegal Committee of the State Bar.

# PD Goes to Europe

The Paralegal Division plans to travel to Spain for their annual destination trip this year.

#### PD Ambassadors

Our PD Ambassadors continue to be very popular and provide numerous CLE and information presentations across the state every year.

## Profiling the Paralegal Profession

Lisa Sprinkle another past-president of the Division headed up the project of updating a very exciting marketing tool. This is a video which discusses many important aspects of the paralegal profession, including appropriate education choices, certification information for paralegals, the many roles that a paralegal can fulfill in a law practice, the benefits and uses of the Paralegal Standards, and case law covering recovery of paralegal fees. The video is moderated by Ms. Sprinkle and also features, Pat Hammer, Javan

Johnson and Rhonda Brashears as presenters. This video has been approved for .50 hours of MCLE by the State Bar. By the end of the calendar year, we expect the video to be posted on the PD website for viewing, at no charge. We welcome any comments this committee has on promoting this valuable resource to law firms.

## On-Line CLE

The Division continues to grow our online CLE library which can be found on our website at <a href="www.txpd.org">www.txpd.org</a>. We offer very affordable and up to date CLE to members as well as non-members who need the benefit of easy and accessible CLE without leaving their home or office.

## Webinar CLE

The Division has decided to join the webinar world. Last year, we offered three free webinars. We hope to offer three hours of <u>free</u> CLE to our members this year through webinars.