



TYLER AREA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS JULY, 2021 NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Leatha Kopech, PP, PLS

Dear TAALP Members:

SUMMER TIME, SUMMER TIME!!!! It may be summer but is anyone else loving the temperatures as much as I am????? Hopefully, now that things are beginning to get back to some sense of "normal" after the craziness of 2020, some of you are able to take vacations, spend some time with your families and make lots of great memories. Even though my official vacation is not until October, I am sure loving the sun and pool time.

July starts a new year for TAALP. I am truly honored that you, once again, chose me to be your leader for the 2021-22 year. My hopes and desires are to continue to offer the areas best legal professionals, a way to continue to grow in not only their knowledge but their professionalism. The board is discussing some possible changes to our meetings and looking forward to a fun year. You will soon be receiving a survey, your participation will help the board know we are doing what our members want.

It's that time of year again, time to renew your membership, if you haven't already done so, please get your renewal applications to Lisa Betts and don't forget to invite your co-workers and friends to join as well.

Once again, this year you have elected a fantastic group of ladies to serve as board members. Be sure and check out the short bios on each board member in this month's newsletter. I am also very excited that Carrie King, CP has agreed to continue as the Executive Advisor and Helen Koch as Parliamentarian. We all look forward to getting to know you better this year, and I hope you will take a minute to introduce yourself to us.

Our first membership meeting will be on, **Thursday, July 8, 2021 at noon, at The Jalapeno Tree**. Our speaker will be Judge Nathaniel Moran, and our topic will be "Civil Mental Health Commitment Process." Lunch is \$15.00, if you eat. The CLE is approved by NALA and TBLS. Please join us for a great hour of CLE!!! We want to say a big **THANK YOU** to **Deposition Resources** for sponsoring our meeting and providing door prizes for this month. Don't forget to bring a guest!!!

Once again this year, we will be conducting our school supply drive for Tyler ISD. Please remember to bring a few supplies for our Community Service activity this month. No worries if you forgot or can't make the meeting this month, we will be collecting next month as well. The Community Service Committee and Sunshine Committee will once again be headed by **Candice Dillon**. As Sunshine Committee Chair, Candice will also be keeping up with the tradition of sending birthday greetings and get-well cards. So, if you have any suggestions for Community Service opportunities or if you know of a member who could use a little note to brighten their day, please let us know. We care about our members! You can email Candice at candice.dillon@lgbs.com.

Leatha Kopech

TAALP can help get your name out to our members!

For more information, email:
brandit@brownbaumansmith.com

Transcript Ad Rates (Per Month):

Business Card - \$10.00
Quarter Page - \$20.00
Half Page - \$30.00
Full Page - \$50.00

NOTICES:

The price of lunch is \$15.00, which covers an hour of CLE and a full course meal (salad, entrée, drink and dessert). Feel free to bring your own lunch with you should you chose not to eat the catered meal.

When responding to your evite, please note whether you will attend and whether or not you will eat so an accurate count can be provided to the caterer. If an RSVP is made with a notation that a meal will be paid for and you do not attend the meeting, you will still be responsible for the cost of that meal. Those with extenuating circumstances will be taken under advisement.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

TYLER AREA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS
MINUTES OF JUNE 30, 2021 BOARD MEETING
By Helen Koch, on behalf of Gaye Boynton

The Executive Board met at Texas Music City Grill on Wednesday, June 30, 2021, for the July monthly meeting. The following board members were present: Leatha Kopech, President; Jo Ruth Hancock, President-Elect; Lisa Betts, 1st Vice President; Candace Dillon, 2nd Vice President; Brandi Turchi, Corresponding Secretary; Tina Knighton, Treasurer; Carrie King, Executive Advisor; and Helen Koch, Parliamentarian.

Absent: Gaye Boynton, Recording Secretary

Leatha Kopech called the meeting to order at 12:13 pm

LEATHA KOPECH, President:

Old Business:

- 2020-21 Final Renewal Membership total 101, this includes 7 vendor members
- 2021-22 Renewal Membership total to date 18
- June Election meeting attendance 30

New Business:

- Welcome New Board
- Looking ahead – Calendar of events attached.
- Location for meetings this year – Jalapeno Tree
- Changes are needed on Bank Signature Card, need to get Tina added and Lisa removed
- Committee Chairs and Volunteers/Assignments – Leatha will reach out to some to see if they would like to continue and will add as applications come in
- We will do a School Supply Drive in July/August again this year. Leatha will be sending an email.
- Sponsorship/vendors - Letters went out to vendors
- Membership Renewals - Application was sent by email on 6/28, reminders; copy Leatha with renewals

JO RUTH HANCOCK, President-Elect:

- Jo Ruth has renewed her NALA membership as NALA Liaison
 - Will send updated record of officers to NALA

LISA BETTS, 1st Vice President:

- Membership Renewals - We have 18 renewals thus far!
- Evite for July 8th membership meeting at noon - send evite after board meeting and send a couple of reminders. Location: Jalapeno Tree - Select Menu
- Avery sticker name tags for general membership were discussed. Name tags will be ordered

- and provided for Board members to wear at meetings.
- Appointment of a liaison to TJC Paralegal Program was discussed. Brandi Turchi agreed to be liaison.
- Meetings structure was discussed. Leatha will prepare a survey for general membership to consider.
- Peggy Lamb, a long time TAALP member, has passed away – memorial to be done in newsletter.

CANDICE DILLON, 2nd Vice President

- July Judge Moran; Civil Mental Health Commitment Process
- August
- September Lindsey Birdsong: Texas Business Entities

GAYE BOYNTON/LAURA BROWNLOW, Recording Secretary: ABESENT

- Board Meeting Minutes

Helen Koch moved that the Minutes of the June, 2021, board meeting be approved, as reported in the Transcript. The motion was seconded and it carried.

BRANDI TURCHI: Corresponding Secretary:

- Publish the newsletter by Wednesday, July 7th. **Deadline** to get your information to Brandi is **Friday, July 2, 2020, by 5:00 pm.**
- July spotlight member: None
- Changes to Newsletter format

TINA KNIGHTON/LISA BETTS, Treasurer:

- Amended Treasurer's Report for October 2020 through May 2021
- June 2020 Treasurer's Report

Lisa Betts moved that the Amended Treasurer's Reports for October, November and December 2020 and January, February, March, April & May, 2021, be filed for audit as amended. The motion was seconded and it carried.

Lisa Betts moved that the Treasurer's Report for June, 2021, be filed for audit. The motion was seconded and it carried.

- Discussion regarding the need for and purchase of a new projector cable; speaker with microphone and screen - Lisa Betts moved that TAALP purchase a screen, speaker with microphone karaoke machine with microphone and a cable for the projector, for use by our speakers. The motion was seconded and it carried. Carrie King will purchase the items and TAALP will reimburse Carrie for the expense.

CARRIE KING, Executive Advisor:

- Updated Application – website

Next Regular Meeting: July 8, 2021 – Jalapeno Tree – Select Menu

Next Board Meeting: August 4, 2021 - TBD

The meeting concluded at 1:05 pm.

Gaye Boynton, Recording Secretary
Presented by Helen Koch

Leatha Kopech, President

EMPLOYMENT – JULY 2021

*Contact: Lisa Betts
TAALP Job Bank Coordinator
903.534.0200 or lisa@sscfirm.com*

Position	Practice Areas/Job Description	Location
1.Receptionist, Immigration Legal Asst. & Immigration Paralegal	Due to the length of the job description, please see my email from 4/15/21.	Tyler
2. Legal Assistant	A solo practice attorney in Mineola is looking for a full-time Legal Assistant/Paralegal. This job does require one year of law office experience preferably in Probate or Guardianship. The attorney also practices family law and CPS cases in Wood County. The candidate must also have exceptional organizational skills. Because of the size of the firm, she does not offer health insurance or other benefits.	Mineola
3. Executive Asst.	One of the major responsibilities of the position is the oversight and maintenance of District policy and appropriate updates. It is a 226 day position and includes school holidays during the year (Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, Spring Break, etc.) and a week off during the summer when the District is shut down around July 4th. This is in addition to flex or personal days that can be taken at the employees discretion or when needed. The position is eligible for TRS (retirement system) and we are self-funded for health insurance in partnership with Christus TMFHS. For further info, see my email from 6-21-21	Tyler
4. Case Manager/Paralegal	Our practice is currently accepting applications for a full time case manager/paralegal. The ideal candidate will be a positive, energetic, self-starter with great customer service skills. Our new team member must be organized and proficient in handling multiple client files for numerous experts. We are a fast-paced practice so the ability to perform and execute time sensitive tasks in a calm and organized way is a must. The Case Manager/Paralegal will aide our experts in overseeing daily case work to ensure everything is completed on schedule. We are seeking a full-time case manager who can handle the following duties: drafting engagement letters, completing intake calls and assigning cases to the appropriate expert; sorting client documents and files, maintaining accurate up-to-date case information throughout the client's case until settlement; overseeing deadlines and calendaring; deposition, trial and hearing arrangements; communicating case details	Tyler

	<p>with our expert team; forwarding and arranging calls, emails, faxes, and all correspondence; speaking with clients and attorneys and ensuring high satisfaction/responsiveness.</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have paralegal experience • Must be knowledgeable in calendar management • Must be knowledgeable in Adobe, Excel and Word • Must be able to multi-task • Bilingual is not required but could be beneficial <p>Compensation and Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Retirement • Paid time off 	
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TAALP would like to thank all of the following for your membership:

Amaya, Lia	Earls, Kristen	Langston, Denise	Taylor, Vickie
Ascencio, Gabriela	East Texas Crisis Center	Lexitas	Tekell, Amanda
Avery, Jacqueline	Epic Office Solutions	Liska, Rhonda	Thedford, Kimberly
Berrum, Melissa	Evans, Karen S.	Luker, Kayla	Thomas, Deborah
Betts, Lisa	Field, Joanna	Mapes, Sarah	Toon, Kristine
Blair, Erin	Freeman, Tabitha	Marshall, Tracy	Torres, Magali
Boynton, Gaye	Godwin, Carol	Martin, Melissa	Turchi, Brandi
Brooks, Bonnie	Goley, Carol	Martinez, Marieliza	Vallery, Jo
Brotherton-Pyatt, Margaret	Hall, Carrie	May, Tamara	Velasco, Brenda
Brownlow, Laura	Hancock, Jo Ruth	Mayfield, Tammye	Vickers, Hailey
Buchanan, Ann	Hankins, Melanie	McLeod, Jacob	Wallace, Melissa
Carter, Kimberly	Harvey, Terri	McMillan, Jocelyn	Watson, Christy
Cash, Lanell	Hemphill, Carla	Mendell, Melissa	Wharen, Marcia
Clarkston, Paul	Henry, Sally	Miller, Susan	Wheeler, Connie
Collins Investigations	Hesse, Wendy	Pilcher, Laney	White, April
Connor, Sarah	Heyder, Brittany	Rakestraw, Macy	Wich, Jodi
Coplan, Patricia	Jackson, Laura	Rex, Renda	Wilgus, Melissa
Crawford, Melani	Johnson, JaKayla	Scirto, Hannah	Williams, Brandi
Crim, Nancy	Johnson, Sandy	Sepmoree, Tina	Williams, Cayce Della
Deck, Mary	Jones, Christine	Sherrill, Sharon	Wootton, Magen
Deposition Resources	Jones, Gabby	Shipp, Kelsey	
Dillon, Candice	Jones, Jordae	Shirley, Racheal	
Discovery Records	King, Carrie	Skeen, Barbara	
	Kirby, Cindy	Slayter, Linda	
	Knighton, Tina	Sparks, Rhonda	
	Koch, Helen	Starcher, Darcy	
	Kopech, Leatha	Starkey, Emily	
	Kramer, Jackie		

Our purpose of TAALP is:

- ✚ To establish good fellowship among association members, national and state legal associations, and members of the legal community.
- ✚ To encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment.
- ✚ To advance high standards of integrity and professionalism for legal professionals to the end that the public and the legal profession may be better served.
- ✚ To further education among members of the legal profession.
- ✚ To cooperate with state and local bar associations.
- ✚ To further the interests of legal support staff and professionals through this Association.
- ✚ To support and carry out the programs, purposes, aims and goals of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

The benefits you will have with TAALP are:

- ✚ CLE approved programs and seminars

- ✚ Discounts to TAALP seminars
- ✚ Access to job bank
- ✚ Subscription to monthly newsletter - The Transcript
- ✚ Great network to other legal professionals

Process Service

Surveillance

Witness Locate

Michael J. Collins
Private Investigator

COLLINS
INVESTIGATIONS

110 N. College Ave
Suite 1504
Tyler, TX 75702
Lic. No. A08864

903-526-1411
FAX 903-526-6453
mikecollins@sprintmail.com

Background Searches

Jury Research

Interviews

mikecollins@sprintmail.com

MEMORIAL FOR PEGGY GANDY LAMB

May 16, 1950 – May 27, 2021

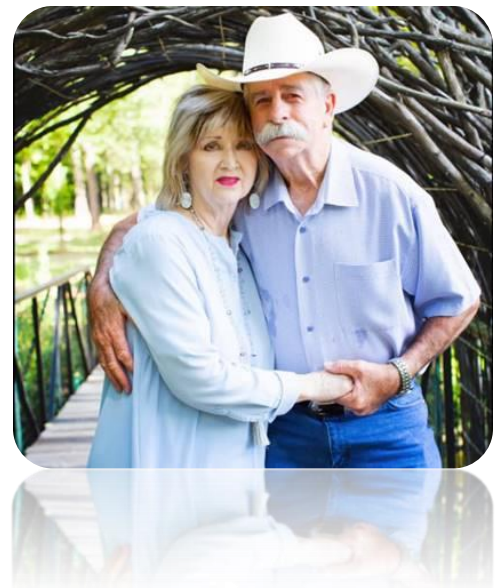
Peggy Gandy Lamb, longtime legal professional in Tyler, passed away on May 27, 2021 in Tyler. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Johnnie Lamb, two children, numerous grandchildren, and many other relatives. She is also survived by many friends and other legal professionals in the East Texas area, a great many of whom she took under her wing and helped train in the legal field.

She most recently worked for Gillen & Gillen (14 years) in Tyler as a real estate expert and closer. Peggy loved the legal profession and always wanted to work. She also always wanted to help others and would pitch in any time she could.

Peggy was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer a little over two years ago, which she diligently fought with all tools available. After each major treatment, she would be back at the office as soon as possible. The first time she went into the hospital, she took her computer and as many files as she could and worked from her hospital bed. Working kept her spirits up. Her doctor finally told her she needed to conserve her strength for recovery from the procedures she went through and the day she was told that was a very difficult day for her.

Peggy had been a major member and contributor to local legal professional associations in Tyler for most of her long career. She was a long-time member and supporter of TAALP and its predecessor associations.

We will miss her, her always cheerful and upbeat attitude, her knowledge, and willingness to help others.





July Birthdays

Vickie Taylor 5th
Marieliza Martinez 6th
Kristen Earls 18th
Brenda Velasco 22nd
Helen Koch 23rd

It's
SUMMER
Time

TAALP
would like to extend a
BIG “THANK YOU”
to DAIRY QUEEN OF TYLER,
for donating the nice TREATS
members are finding in their
birthday cards!!
Be Sure To Frequent Your Local
DAIRY QUEEN!



TAALP SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Barbara Calcote Skeen, CP – Scholarship Chair

TAALP is pleased to announce the recipients of the scholarships awarded annually by the organization. The TAALP Board approved the award of four scholarships in the amount of \$500.00 each for 2021. One of the scholarships is designated to be awarded to a student in a program leading toward a Paralegal degree. The recipients of the 2021 scholarships are as follows:

Zakhar Zapolskyy

Zakhar is a recent graduate of The Brook Hill School in Bullard and he plans to attend Wheaton College in Illinois. Zakhar has a 3.74 GPA and he hopes to pursue a career as an economist and immigration/corporate attorney. Zakhar moved to the United States from Ukraine along with his parents and younger siblings approximately five years ago when his older brother, Pasha, was a victim of a tragic car accident in East Texas.

Emily Livesay

Emily is a recent graduate of The Brook Hill School in Bullard and she plans to attend Baylor University in Waco. Emily has a 4.0 GPA and she hopes to pursue a career as an attorney focusing on constitutional law.

Joanna Field

Joanna is currently enrolled in the Paralegal program at Tyler Junior College and is projected to graduate in December, 2021. Joanna has a 3.7 GPA and she is the recipient of the Betty Kirby Memorial Scholarship which is designated for a student enrolled in a paralegal program. Joanna has interned for Tab Lawhorn, an attorney with the Tyler firm of Findlay Craft. Joanna hopes to ultimately pursue a career as an attorney focusing on criminal and civil rights law.

Christopher Byndom

Christopher is currently enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at Tyler Junior College and is projected to graduate in December, 2021. Christopher has a 3.3 GPA and he is the recipient of the Betty Miller Memorial Scholarship. Christopher hopes to transfer to Sam Houston State University where he will complete his bachelor's degree. Christopher is interested in helping others through a career as a youth correctional counselor or juvenile probation officer.

Each of the recipients has approved the publication of the essays they submitted with their scholarship applications. This is to give TAALP members an insight into the future goals of the scholarship recipients. These recipients were outstanding in their academic achievements and will be exceptional professionals in the future. I hope you will take the time to carefully read the essays.

TAALP received more scholarship applications this year than in any prior year since the scholarship program was established. All of the applicants were outstanding and TAALP is honored to be able to award scholarships each year.

Essay Submitted by Zakhar Zapolskyy

Having experienced terrifying events such as snipers shooting only blocks away from my school, president fleeing his own country, losing my best friend, and witnessing the tragedy of a country abused by power-hungry leaders, I began to dream of living in a place that values the rights and well-being of the people, a country where my family and I could feel safe and prosper. I began to dream of America; and when that dream was realized, I became determined to take advantage of the boundless opportunities that exist here, that I might also become someone who can grant opportunity, stability, and growth to others.

The pain of losing my older brother and best friend quickly changed me from the little brother I had been prior to Pasha's death. Rather than succumb to a depression that threatened to overwhelm me, I made the choice to honor Pasha's memory by striving to achieve the maximum potential God has bestowed upon me. I determined to value every moment of my life, to have a positive impact on my family, friends, and community. Therefore, when The Brook Hill School offered me a full scholarship to complete the academic track my brother never would, I accepted with a grateful and resolute heart.

Now, my goal and definite purpose in life is to become an Economist and Immigration/Corporation Lawyer through which I will be able to affect policies, grant new opportunities, provide stability and growth for the economy, and protect the rights and well-being of the people especially those of immigrants. All this is done to make sure that the people in this country, America, won't have to experience the horrifying events and tragedies that I experienced back in Ukraine.

The knowledge of the law, in particular immigration/corporate law, is crucial to the individual's as well as the country's well-being and advancement. It influences the decisions one must make regarding work, leisure, investment, etc., and it provides the information necessary for governments to make policy decisions that maximize economic growth. This is exactly what fuels my interest in becoming a lawyer – the excitement of navigating challenges and exploring novel solutions to discover the most rewarding course, for both the individual and for larger organizations. The abundant opportunities that come with becoming a lawyer are too great to miss. As lawyers are positioned in a way that lets them protect versatile groups, individuals, companies, and those without a voice – such as children or even our planet. Moreover, a lawyer can expand the public good, influence policies, and even have an impact on the way the world functions. Thus becoming a lawyer is a dream I will achieve to help others attain security, satisfaction, and overall higher well-being not for the good of myself, but for the good of others.

The Unforeseen

It was not long ago that most of the world knew very little about my home country; but in the last few years, the events in Ukraine have shocked the world into acknowledging its existence. The people from my country have revolted against corruption and abuse of power, causing disorder, and it has taken this sort of negative action to call the world's attention to my home. However, this is not only the story of my country; it is also the story of my life. A flower endures the rains in order to flourish and blossom in the sunlight. In the same manner, I have realized that the overwhelming downpours I have and will continue to endure are necessary for my growth.

Pasha Zapolsky was not only my older brother, but also my closest friend and an extraordinary example for me. In March of 2015, he was a senior international student at The Brook Hill School in Bullard, Texas, excitedly looking forward to graduation. However, just weeks before Pasha's graduation would occur, an intoxicated driver took his life from him at only seventeen years old. The horrifying news spread rapidly, soon reaching even our social networks in Ukraine; and while this information seemed at first surreal, as if a dream, there was no escaping it.

The first time my family and I visited the United States was to attend Pasha's funeral. The pain of losing my older brother and best friend quickly changed me from the little brother I had been prior to Pasha's death. I made a choice to honor Pasha's memory by striving to achieve the maximum potential God has bestowed upon me. I determined to value every moment of my life that I may have a positive impact on my family, friends, community, and everyone I encounter. Additionally, I realized I would have to change my attitude to accomplish this goal. Anything can be taken from a person save one thing: attitude. We are often unable to change our circumstances; yet if we have an attitude of gratitude, we can change the final outcome of those circumstances.

After Pasha's death, The Brook Hill School offered me the opportunity to complete the academic path my brother was not able to finish, by granting me full tuition. With a grateful heart, I decided to take on this academic challenge and to persevere through the language barrier and cultural differences. The chance to study in the United States pushed me to learn, explore, grow, and, most importantly, to serve others. My effort was fueled by the fact that I have never lost sight of the true cost of this opportunity – the highest price, the loss of my brother.

As a student in this country, I have experienced both great opportunities and great challenges that have shaped me into the person I am today. Despite many hardships, I am successfully completing Advanced Placement courses, and I am a member of the National Honor Society as well as a dedicated varsity and club soccer player. I enthusiastically volunteer at my church and in the community and

work as a math tutor. Recently, I have also been enjoying books on successful individuals, eagerly consuming the life lessons they have to offer. I have begun to imagine life as similar to a soccer game. In soccer, we work to overcome obstacles, acquire scrapes and bruises, gain skills from experience, and are motivated by the support and encouragement of those who cheer us on; such is life.

Through the anguish of my brother's death, I have learned that though I cannot predict what will happen tomorrow, I *can* choose how I live my life today, and I can choose to live courageously. As Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, once said: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

Essay Submitted by Emily Livesay

A Passion Realized

Some people know what their calling is from a very young age. From the second they are born, it seems, they are certain of who they are and what they're supposed to do in life. I have never had this luxury. I have been blessed with a wide range of interests and talents, which I'm very grateful for; however, this has made it very difficult for me to decide on what I would like to pursue. I have entertained ideas of becoming a screenwriter to being a travel agent; you name it, I've probably considered it. But when I really assessed my interests and natural giftings, I found it to be abundantly clear that I should pursue a career in the legal profession.

I am very interested in becoming a constitutional lawyer. My interest in constitutional law emerged this year in Mr. Steve Dement's US History class. In his class, we spent a good amount of time discussing and analyzing the actions of previous presidents. It fascinates me how many laws have gotten passed that are extremely unconstitutional. We discussed how a great amount of past presidents' actions should not have been permitted under the Constitution. These discussions that we had in Mr. Dement's class kindled a passion in me to keep justice in our country. It was very upsetting to me how many politicians and other powerful figures have gotten away with things that are so clearly prohibited in the Constitution. I would like to be able to challenge the constitutionality of a piece of legislation and uphold the Constitution's authority. I believe that in order to keep justice and order in our country, we must act in alignment with the Constitution, even when amending it.

Another reason I would like to have a career in the legal profession is that I know that I will excel in this field. I've heard over and over from mentors and advisors that I am wired for law school. Ever since I was literate, I have loved reading and learning. You could always find me in the library looking for the next book to read. Being able to read and comprehend texts quickly is essential to doing well in the legal profession, and I have been doing this since a young age. Also, I am very

analytical, another necessary characteristic of a legal professional. I am one who wants to know all the facts. My desire for efficiency and my analytical nature will serve me well in the legal field.

For years, I contemplated how I would like to spend the remainder of my life. When learning more about careers in the legal profession, specifically constitutional law, I was amazed to find that there is a career that I am not only interested in and passionate about but also perfectly fits my natural giftings and abilities. There is no other career that I would excel in or enjoy more than a career in the legal profession.

Essay Submitted by Joanna Field

Choosing a Profession to Match my Passion

When I was young, I was unsure of my career goal, however, I knew I wanted to help people. A year ago, I learned about the Paralegal Studies program at Tyler Junior College and immediately became fascinated. I felt like I truly found something that sparked the passion inside me that I had been looking for.

The passion I found specifically is in Criminal Law and Civil Rights Law. This possible career choice has already made an impact on my life because I have had the opportunity to intern at The Law Office of Tab Lawhorn. In just the past six (6) months I have been interning, I have gotten an abundance of real-world experience and it has solidified my passion in pursuing Criminal Law.

A profession dealing with the criminal legal system is important to me because I believe that civil rights and the opportunity to give everyone a fair and honest chance is more important now than ever. The job of being a criminal defense attorney may not be glamorous, but it's important. In such a large and complex system, it is possible for an individual to "fall through the cracks". Within three (3) years, I would like to be accepted into law school to further my career in order to make a positive impact by helping people and continuing to shape the Criminal Justice System as a whole.

I am looking forward to putting my mark on a system that is constantly evolving and I can't wait to change the world with my passion. I am incredibly grateful that Tyler Junior College has and is giving me the tools to make my passion a reality.

Essay Submitted by Christopher Byndom

My major is Criminal Justice, and my goal is to become a Youth Correctional Counselor and/or Juvenile Probation Officer. I chose this field because I want to make a difference in the lives of young people. I want to be a person who directs young people toward achieving their goals. I want to help

them grown mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I want to be able to guide them as they work toward and achieve a better life.

As a teen growing up, I witnessed many of my friends, classmates, and neighbors living without the love and support that I had growing up as a child. I was so fortunate to grow up in a household with two loving parents. Therefore, I want to step up and become a man of my word and pay back the love and respect that I had as a child. I would love to be a role model and help troubled youth get their lives back on the right track.

It hurts my heart to know that many teens are locked up behind bars because they have been on the streets, doing drugs, fighting, or participating in other illegal activities. Many of them simply lack a role model. I want to help them change their lives by making a difference and being a successful man and role model.

TAALP SPOTLIGHTS: 2021-2022 BOARD MEMBERS

President: Leatha Kopech



I started in the legal field in December 1984 as a receptionist and through the years worked my way up to Paralegal. My husband, Sonny, and I have been married 38 years and were high school sweethearts. We have 2 children, 1 daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. My family is my world. I enjoy spending time with my family, pool time and our little farm, we have 8 chickens and 4 calves.

President Elect: Jo Ruth Hancock



I have been a part of the Tyler legal community for approximately 25 years. I graduated from TJC with an associate degree in paralegal studies in 1991 and became a NALA certified paralegal in 1992. I started out working in-house for an oil and gas company, before moving to the private practice sector in the early 90s. I currently am a paralegal at the Wilson Law Firm and have been here eight months. Prior to this, I was a paralegal for 20 years with Starr Schoenbrun & Comte. Prior to my employment there, I took a four-year break from the legal field to run my own, very successful direct sales skin care and makeup business. Even after returning to the legal field, I continued to maintain that business with a sales team of over 100 consultants and hundreds of customers. That company closed four years ago, and I quickly found another company for my team and customers to transition to and have a thriving business with the new company. Even though this is my business, I consider it my hobby...it is so much fun, and it makes me really happy when I'm able to help someone change their life. I've always had a plan B

in place and it has brought so much enjoyment to my life, not to mention the extra income to our family.

I also like to travel with my family and girlfriends...Beach vacations call my name!

I am married to Joe Hancock. We will celebrate our 42nd anniversary in November. We have a daughter, Devin, married to Darrin and they live in Georgetown with two beautiful children, Ashley (16) & Dylan (14). We have two sons also. Adam, who is Down's Syndrome and lives with us. Matt is an attorney in Nacogdoches. He and his wife have three beautiful children, Reese (11), Harper (5) & Hunter (3). We are so blessed and love spending as much time with them as possible. Once I'm retired, you'll probably find me enjoying playing the role of Mimi a lot more!

First Vice President: Lisa Betts



While attending TJC, I started working for Potter Minton as a file clerk. That is where my interest in the legal field started. I graduated from Tyler Junior College with my Associates Degree of Applied Science - Paralegal in 2002 and began working for Kent Good Anderson & Bush as a legal secretary. In November 2007, I started working for Starr Schoenbrun & Comte for Faye Comte as the Paralegal in our family law practice. On most days, I really enjoy my work, and I am so thankful I work for a great firm. I am currently the 1st Vice President and enjoy my role in TAALP. I have also held the office of Treasurer for two terms. I have enjoyed running the TAALP job bank and helping others find a career in the legal field.

I have been married to Cody Betts for seventeen years, and we have two wonderful children. Ryan is 15 and will be a sophomore and Kaylee is 10 and will be in the 5th grade. If I am not at the office, you can catch me at some type of sporting activity.

Contact Info: lisa@sscfirm.com ; 903.534.0200

Second Vice President: Candy Dillon



My name is Candice Dillon. I work for the Linebarger Law Firm. We collect delinquent property taxes. I've been in the legal field for 40 years, starting as bookkeeper/reception and moving up with the company to Legal Assistant/Office Manager. Most of my career has been in Palestine, Texas, primarily working Personal Injury/Civil Trial cases. We moved to Lake Palestine so I branched out to the Tyler area for employment. I've been a member of TAALP for many years and look forward to scheduling speakers for our monthly meetings.

On a personal side, my husband and I have three married sons and six grandchildren who love the water. Needless to say, we are busy during the summer months. I enjoy dancing and paddling my kayak. I am a member of a Canoe Club. We hold an annual race to fund scholarships at Trinity Valley – Anderson Campus. Our 35th Annual Wilderness Canoe Race on the Neches River will be held August 7th. I look forward to meeting each of you. Feel free to contact me for your CLE needs.

Recording Secretary: Gaye Boynton



My diverse legal career began in 1984 working in family, criminal, and civil law. I attained my paralegal certification from NALA in 2000. My current employer for the past 23 years is with Lance Vincent with Ritcheson, Lauffer, and Vincent, P.C. We represent governmental entities, insurance companies, small businesses and financial institutions.

I also am a Certified Life Coach and work with my husband, Dan, in his practice as a psychologist. We have four sons ages 20-26.

Hobbies include photography, travel, volunteer work and spending quality time with family and friends.

Corresponding Secretary: Brandi Turchi



Hi there!

My life has been pretty much here in East Texas. I grew up in Bullard, Texas which is the hometown of most of my family. My husband Eric and I have two amazing sons named Peyton and Maveric who feel our lives with complete joy and laughter! My hobbies include: spending time with family and friends, staying active in the gym (or trying to) and traveling with my family.

I graduated Summa Cum Laude from Tyler Junior College with an Associate's of Applied Sciences degree in Paralegal Studies in May of 2013. In July of that same year, I decided to take the Certified Paralegal exam and passed! Whoop!!

Shortly before graduating TJC, I joined Tyler Area Association of Legal Professionals ("TAALP"). It has been one of the best decisions of my career. The networking, community service, and fellowship have all served my career with great value. I have enjoyed being a part of TAALP and look forward to many years to come!

Treasurer: Tina Knighton



I have been working in the legal field for 19 years. I received my paralegal certification in 2014. I have worked in several areas of law through the years, but mostly litigation. I have been working in my present position for 5 years and absolutely love it and the people I work with and the professionals I get to serve on a daily basis. Our legal community is awesome!

Outside of work, I enjoy travelling, watching my granddaughters play softball, and doing renovations (DIY) on my house. I have been married to David for 10 years. I have three fantastic kiddos, ages 31, 28, and 23. I have 5 fabulous grandchildren, ages 13, 8, 4, 3, and 1 (three girls and two boys). They are complete sunshine!

I really love being a part of such a wonderful group. TAALP is a super organization of professionals. Thank you for allowing me to serve on the board with such talented, beautiful women. Have a fabulous year!

Executive Advisor: Carrie King



Carrie King is a Litigation & Docketing Paralegal for Fish & Richardson, a leading global intellectual property law firm. Prior to joining Fish in 2015, Carrie served as Judicial Assistant to Honorable Leonard Davis, Chief U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Texas.

She has many years of litigation experience in several civil law areas, including patent, civil rights, business & commercial, pro se prisoner litigation, personal injury, insurance defense, and oil & gas condemnation law. She has also recently assisted in a pro bono death penalty appeal with the Texas Defender Service to help an intellectually disabled man get his sentence reduced to life in prison.

In 2004, Carrie became a Board Certified Civil Paralegal with the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She is also a Certified Paralegal with the National Association of Legal Assistants since 1999. She has a Bachelor of Psychology degree from LeTourneau University and an Associate of Applied Science degree in Paralegal Studies from the Center for Advanced Legal Studies. She has been a member of TAALP since approximately 2001 and in the past has served as President and in every other executive officer position. She is currently serving as Executive Advisor. She was awarded Legal Professional of the Year in 2008.

Carrie has been married to her husband David for 29 years and they have three young adult sons who are all Eagle Scouts. They moved to Tyler from Houston 24 years ago and have been very active in the community, serving in numerous organizations through their church, their sons' schools, and with Troop 335, East Texas Area Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Parliamentarian: Helen Koch



I've only worked for three firms in my 37 year career, 17 of them at Brown, Bauman & Smith, PC. I currently work in the areas of probate, corporate, and transactional matters.

I enjoy cooking reading, walking, spending time with my family, friends and rabbits. I am married to Barry and have two adult sons, Spencer and Sean.



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