

ParaSight

CATAWBA VALLEY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Professionalism in the Law Office

by Monroe Pannell, Attorney

JANUARY 2010
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PROFESSIONALISM

The level of professionalism with your membership is high. I have experienced the same level of professionalism from the paralegals here in the Catawba Valley no matter what the working conditions – no matter how busy they may be, no matter how much stress they are under. To many of you who know me I may be a bald, middle-aged attorney but in my former life I was a paralegal as I began that experience my senior year in high school at the age of 17 when I was put to work checking real estate titles for my father's law firm. I got training from

him, his law partners, other attorneys in the community, the staffs from the Register of Deeds, Clerk's and Tax Office. I got much of my training from a member of your association. Someone who has maintained her high level of professionalism in the many years I have known her. The point here though is that I see the same thing going on from the new members of your profession, that is they are willing to act in a helpful, mannerly and professional way toward one another, the attorneys, and the public staffs at the courthouse. In spite of the new stress all of us are under, the level of professionalism has

remained high and constant among the paralegals and legal assistants in the Catawba Valley. I am confident this level will remain high among the membership; two reasons come to mind. The Bar's certification program requires institutional instruction on professionalism and history supports this.

EXPECTATIONS

I would like to share some of the things I would expect from a professional paralegal and some things that a professional paralegal should expect from an attorney supervisor.

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Officers:

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CVPA PROVIDES ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILY

In keeping with our objective to promote the paralegal profession through community service activities, the CVPA sponsored a family through the Catawba County DSS's 2009 Christmas Project. CVPA donated a \$250 gift card to a family of three, father, mother,

and 6-year old daughter, to help with their living and clothing expenses. The father is disabled but has not yet been approved for disability assistance. He is unable to drive and even though the mother works all that she can, she must take the father to the dialysis

clinic every other day. In addition, thanks to members' clothing donations and cash contributions totaling \$90, Christmas presents were purchased for the little girl. These items included sneakers, jeans, shirts, games, puzzles, a book, and a few little girl accessories.

THANK YOU to all the CVPA members who helped made this project a success!

CVPA Member Visits China

Delores Deal, CVPA member, had the opportunity to visit China in November, 2009. Here she talks about her trip.

The Chamber of Commerce offered another chance to go to China this November and I took advantage of the opportunity. The historical sites and the famous Peking Roast Duck dinner we were served our first night there made the grueling 13 hour flight from JFK to Beijing worth the trip. We visited the Temple of Heaven, built in 1420 A.D., where the emperors prayed to the heavens for a good harvest, the Great Wall, a Jade factory, and a Chinese acrobatic show. In Beijing we saw Tian'anmen Square, the Forbidden City which is the home of 24 emperors and contains 9,999 rooms, the Summer Palace, Kunming Lake, a beautiful Seventeen Arch Bridge, and a pearl factory. Visiting the Chinese Medicine Chest was one of my favorites. A group of elderly Chinese doctors would talk with you individually using an interpreter, take your pulse, and ask you to stick out your tongue. After a few minutes, the doctor would diagnose your problem and then prescribe herbs. We were told that Princess Diana visited the doctors in hopes of curing her insomnia. The entire pharmacy was just a warehouse of herbs that came from everywhere. We took a rickshaw ride in the old historic

district of Hutong and ate lunch with a local family. The family prepared the entire meal for 25 people in a wok. The food was rice and vegetables. No desserts were served as the Chinese do not eat desserts after each meal.

We flew to Shanghai, visited Tiger Hill, a monument that has been there for thousands of years, a silk factory and saw how the silk was woven from the silk worm to make beautiful silk. We next visited the Lingering Gardens which dates back thousands of years. Some of the Bonsai plants were 600 years old. There were beautiful rock ponds and pagodas. The Lingering Gardens was the place for wealthy families to go to cool off and have tea at a time when the majority of people were farm peasants.

"We took a rickshaw ride in the old historic district of Hutong and ate lunch with a local family."

A trip to the Silk Embroidery Institute was spectacular. They say in 30 years this dying art will no longer exist. It was unbelievable how the women sat all day sewing with silk to make fabulous tapestries that could take a year to complete. I especially enjoyed the tea plantation. Women picked the tea leaves in March when the leaves are very tiny. These very fine leaves make the most

expensive tea. This tea was primarily for the Emperor. The tea gets sweeter as the day goes on.

The Buddha at the Lingyin Temple was amazing with the monks walking around in their yellow robes. You were not allowed to take their picture.

We took a three hour bus ride to SuSuzhou. We saw building construction on both sides of the road, men working day and night, seven days a week. It was unbelievable. The bus ride around the city of Shanghai at night was spectacular with beautiful high-rise buildings. This is truly the financial center of Asia and the oldest area.

Traffic was terrible with no specific lane and everyone trying to move forward; living chaos.

The last shopping trip was China Town with the sales girls practically pulling you over to get you to make a purchase.

Of all of my trips abroad, I put this one at the top of the list and would recommend a trip to China. I had such a wonderful trip that I would endure it again just to visit more of this exotic culture. The people were very gracious. My only complaint was the terrible air pollution, so next time I will wear a mask and enjoy.



The word ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos, which means "character," and from the Latin word mores, which means "customs." In modern society, it defines how individuals, business professionals, and corporations choose to interact with one another.

EXPECTATIONS Continued from Page 1

When I am handed work product prepared by a professional paralegal I expect it to be free from error. In other words the paralegal should have checked the work product for errors before handing it to me for review. To be clear I do not expect perfection, as I make errors every day.

I expect a professional paralegal to take the initiative and create systems and forms to perform routine duties.

I expect a professional paralegal to dress appropriately. You might ask what that means. I cannot say exactly what it means but I know inappropriate dress in a law office setting when I see it. For the most part I believe the paralegals in the Catawba Valley meet the standards of professional dress.

I expect a professional paralegal to offer no excuses or alibis when the job did not get done as it should have been. I do not want to hear that it was someone else's fault.

I expect a professional paralegal to be curious about their work. It is okay to ask a supervisory attorney "Why are we doing it this way?" I

will plead guilty that I have at times wrongly said to my staff – "I have my reasons but I do not wish to go into them at this moment." But it's okay to ask the question.

What should a professional paralegal expect from an attorney?

I have learned most of these things from my father, someone who has practiced law for about 50 years.

Expectation #1: Never let your staff put the work at the law firm ahead of their family. There are exceptions to this rule but when it comes to 5 o'clock he expected the staff to leave. I try to abide by this rule.

Expectation #2: A professional paralegal should expect their supervising attorney to listen to their questions, concerns, input, etc. about the job at hand (here is an area where I need more training).

Expectation #3: A professional paralegal should expect complete respect at all times from the supervising attorney (no exceptions).

Monroe Pannell is an attorney with Martin & Monroe Pannell, P.A. in Conover.

Gratitude Expressed to the CC Bar

In October, 2009, Cyndy Adams, Leah Poovey, and Lynn Price attended the Catawba County Bar Association's meeting and accepted a donation for the association. CVPA extends its gratitude to the Bar for its continued support and recognition.

Ethics Topic of January 2010 CPE

Be sure and attend the January meeting of CVPA and earn your 1-hour CPE credit in ethics. The program, *Hot Topics: UPL and Confidentiality*, will be presented by Leslie D. McKesson, Ed. S., NCCP. Ms. McKesson has been the Coordinator and full-time instructor of Paralegal Technology at Western Piedmont Community College since 1989. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in the Administration of Criminal Justice from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master of Arts degree in Leadership and Higher Education from Appalachian State University. The meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, at the CVCC Auditorium, Hickory, NC.

"Ethics is a code of values which guide our choices and actions and determine the purpose and course of our lives."

— *Ayn Rand, Russian-American novelist and philosopher (1905-1982)*



Leslie D. McKesson

High School Mock Trial Competition

For the past 18 years the North Carolina Advocates for Justice has held the High School Mock Trial Competition. Regional competitions will take place on Saturday, February 20, 2010, in Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Fayetteville, High Point and Wilmington. The eight top placing teams will compete in Raleigh on March 19 and 20. Site volunteers and scoring jurors are needed. If you are interested in participating, please contact CVPA member, Beverly Moore, NCCP, at bev@tissuelaw.com. Also see the attached brochure and volunteer form.

SAVE THE DATE!

CVPA members have been working diligently planning this year's events. Remember to mark your calendars for the 2nd Tuesday in each month at 6:00 p.m.

January's CPE covers ethics;

February's CPE will be presented by John Furmage, Surveyor with the City of Hickory;

Socials are planned for **March** and **July**;

April's CPE will be presented by attorney D. Shawn Clark;

In **May** our speaker is attorney Blair 'Tripp' Cody;

June's CPE will be presented by attorney Vanessa Hawkins;

Then in **August** attorney Susan Janney will speak with us regarding foreclosures.

So, how easy is that? You can network, socialize and get all 6 of your CPE hours just like that!!



LITIGATORS VS MEDICATORS

Spring will be here before you know it and same goes for the Catawba County Bar Association's annual fund-raiser "Litigators vs Medicators," a basketball game between local physicians and health care providers and attorneys. CVPA is making plans to assist the CC Bar in making this event possible. Leah Poovey is heading up the committee with help from Wendy Spires and Kelley Walker. *Join in the Fun!* If you would like to help out, please contact Leah at lpoovey@phd-law.com.

NCPA is now on Facebook and MySpace™

<http://www.facebook.com>

<http://groups.myspace.com/ncparalegal>

Contact Beverly Moore at bev@tissuelaw.com if you have trouble locating NCPA on Facebook.

Treasurer's Report

As of November 30, 2009, we have a balance in our checking account of \$4,056.21. This balance includes deposits of \$210 for new and renewing membership dues and payments of \$100 for CPE bar application fee and CPE presenter honorarium.



**Catawba Valley
Paralegal Association,
Inc.**

Find us on the WEB

<http://www.catawbavalleyparalegalassoc.org>

E-mail:

info@catawbavalleyparalegalassoc.org



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

§130A-192--An Act to Assist Owners in Recovering Lost Pets, Relieve Overcrowding at Animal Shelters, and Facilitate Adoptions of Animals from Shelters. An animal that is picked up by Animal Control, which is not wearing tags or other ID must be held for at least 72 hours, while attempts are made to locate the owner. Before an (adoptable) animal may be sold or euthanized, it must be made available for adoption to the public. The law also states that if an "officer has access at no cost or at a reasonable cost" to microchip scanning device, the animal shall be scanned, in an attempt to locate the owner. The animal may also be placed in foster care during the 72 hours it is held, pending adoption.

§31-4.1--For all wills executed on or after January 1, 2010, no attorney who drafts a written will or codicil to a will may be named as a beneficiary under the will, regardless of whether the attorney was compensated for his or her services, unless the attorney is related to the testator within five degrees of kinship.

§30-15--For individuals dying on or after January 1, 2010, every surviving spouse of an intestate or of a testator...shall be entitled, out of the personal property of the deceased spouse, to an allowance of the value of \$20,000 for support for one year after the death of the deceased spouse. The allowance shall be exempt from lien, judgment or execution. (Increased from \$10,000)

§130A-497--Effective January 2, 2010 – Smoking prohibited in public places. The owner, manager, operator, etc. of a public establishment shall remove all indoor ashtrays, post "no smoking" signs, and direct anyone who is observed smoking to extinguish the lighted tobacco product. If the person continues to smoke in the public area following oral notice by the "person in charge" to stop, that person shall be guilty of an infraction and punished by a fine of not more than \$50. Anyone found guilty of an infraction shall suffer no further consequence, shall not be assessed court costs, and shall not be punished as a misdemeanor.

AOC Forms Discontinued or Revised

The following AOC forms have been discontinued or revised and some new forms are available.

DISCONTINUED FORMS:

AOC-CR-237 Request And Reports Convictions/Ex-punctions Dismissals And Discharge

REVISED FORMS:

AOC-J-460 (Rev. 12/09) Juvenile Adjudication Order (Delinquent)
AOC-G-100 (Rev. 12/09) Subpoena
AOC-G-150 (Rev. 12/09) Exhibits/Evidence Log Plaintiff (P) Defendant (D) State (S) Both
AOC-G-153 (Rev. 12/09) Notice Of Intent To Dispose Of Biological Evidence And Request For Preservation
AOC-G-154 (Rev. 12/09) Petition And Order For Disposition Of Biological Evidence
AOC-G-200 (Rev. 12/09) Civil Case Trial Level Fee Application Order

For Payment Judgment Against Parent/Guardian
AOC-CV-317 (Rev. 12/09) Civil Summons Domestic Violence Alias And Pluries Summons
AOC-CV-407 (Rev. 12/09) Motion To Claim Exempt Property (Statutory Exemptions) (Use if judgment filed before 1/1/06)
AOC-CV-415 (Rev. 12/09) Motion To Claim Exempt Property (Statutory Exemptions) (Use if judgment filed after 1/1/06)
AOC-CR-130 (Rev. 12/09) Indictment Embezzlement
AOC-CR-200 (Rev. 12/09) Conditions Of Release And Release Order
AOC-CR-213 (Rev. 12/09) Bond Forfeiture Notice
AOC-CR-220 (Rev. 12/09) Notice Of Hearing On Violation Of Unsupervised Probation
AOC-CR-224 (Rev. 12/09) Order Of Assignment Or Denial Of Counsel
AOC-CR-261 (Rev. 12/09)

Notification Of Requirement to Register As Sex Offender Or As Person Who Committed Certain Offenses Against Minor Sexually Violent Predator Sex Offender Who Is A Recidivist Sex Offender Who Committed An Aggravated Offense (When Defendant Does Not Receive Active Term Of Imprisonment)

<http://www.nccourts.org/Forms/FormSearch.asp>

