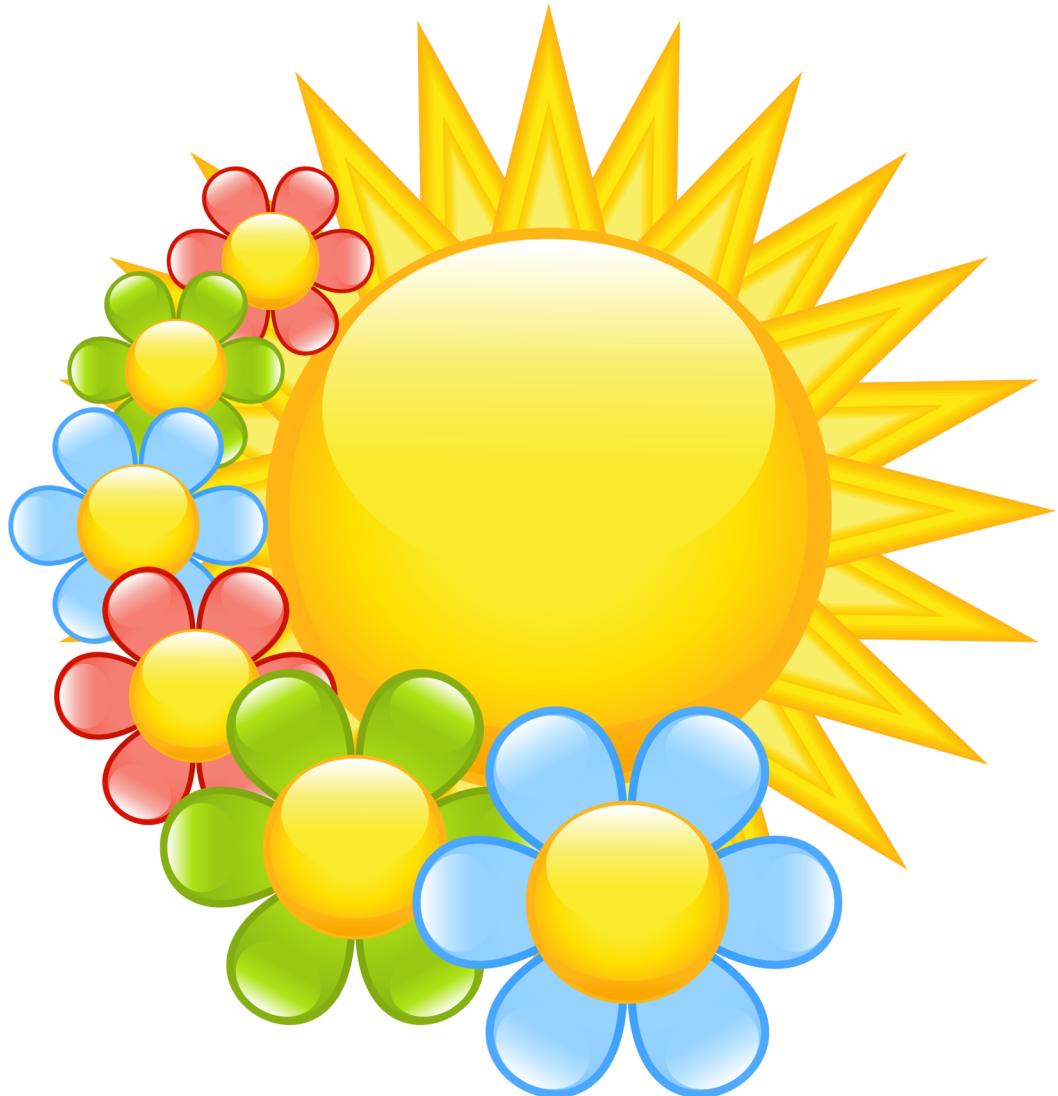




NCPA FORUM

SPRING 2021



NCPA is an affiliate member of the National Association of Legal Assistants



President's Message

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP

TEAMWORK

Coming together is a BEGINNING

Keeping together is a PROGRESS

Working together is SUCCESS

-Henry Ford

Happy Spring NCPA!! The pollen is out, and everything is yellow!! However, I do love the warmer temps and longer daylight. It has been over a year since everything changed. I am looking forward to getting back to some normalcy soon.

While NCPA's 41st Annual Seminar was held virtually, I was so excited that we were able to get together. I have missed seeing everyone. A HUGE thank you to Crystal Robinson, NCCP for all her hard work getting speakers and NALA and NCCP approval for CPE hours. The Annual Seminar and Meeting could not have happened without the amazing TEAMWORK of NCPA and Huesby. The Huesby crew of Hillary, Jill and Brad took care of all NCPA's technology needs and Billy and Dillon recorded the sessions. Hillary stayed with us all day long to help make sure everything ran smoothly.

While things are still up in the air, I feel hopeful that in 2022 we can meet in person for the 42nd Annual Seminar and Meeting.

NCPA has stayed strong throughout 2020 and the start of 2021 due to the awesome Board and Executive Committee. THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered! If you would like to get involved and see what goes on behind the scenes, please contact me at bev@tissuelaw.com. We would LOVE to have you join us! Come join the TEAM!!!!

Take care everyone!!

Beverly K. Moore
NCPA President



Chairman of the Board Report

Heather N. Padgett, NCCP

Mark Twain said, "In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours." While this often feels true in North Carolina, as I write this, the azaleas are in bloom, the temperature is a lovely 72 degrees and I'm hoping we are through our last freeze of the season. We'll just leave off the pollen and hurricane discussions and enjoy the sunshine for now.

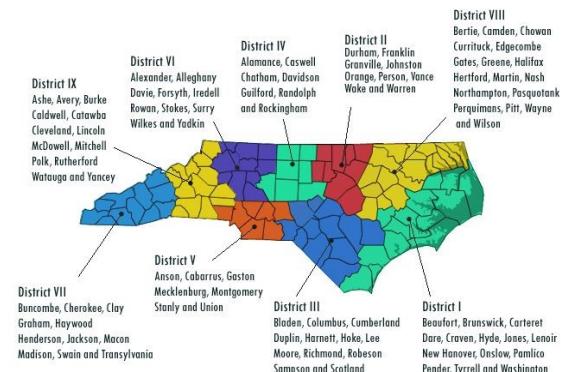
If you haven't seen a copy yet, The State Bar Journal has some fantastic articles in the Spring 2021 issue, including one by Philip Gerard on North Carolina's part in the ratification of the 19th Amendment (Spoiler: We messed that one up. The General Assembly did not ratify the 19th Amendment until 1971, more than 50 years after it became law). There are also great articles on the legal profession during the pandemic, and a checklist for attorneys who finally decide to take that sabbatical they have been planning. (I know, right? I can tell you that every third bullet on the list begins with some version of "inform your assistant", so at least they are realistic about who will make sure things don't fall apart while they are gone.)

On to NCPA business! Thank you to everyone involved in NCPA's very first all-virtual Annual Seminar! We had a terrific technology partner in Huseby, interesting and knowledgeable speakers, and great participation from the attendees. The sessions were recorded and will be available for replay in the near future, so be on the lookout. I am so thankful for the technology that let us hold this year's Annual Seminar, but I am certainly looking forward to the time when we'll be able to meet in-person. Fingers crossed for a huge party next year!

As our District Directors can attest, the pandemic has put a serious wrench in planning Meet and Greets, but that does not mean they are not available virtually to the membership for other things. If you have a question or concern about NCPA, your District Director is your link to the answer. If you don't know who your Director is, find out! You can poke around our new website to get more information. District Directors can be a great resource for general questions and to keep up-to-date on what your Board and Executive Committee are doing. On that note, we have vacancies in a couple of Districts, so if you have ever wanted to take a more active role in NCPA, this is a great way to do it. Email me at padgett.hn@gmail.com if you'd like to discuss the possibility of becoming a District Director.

I hope everyone has a terrific spring and summer. As always, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out. We love hearing from you.

Heather Padgett, NCCP
Chairman of the Board





NCPA NEWS



Did you know that many of our annual seminar sessions are available online, on demand for CPE credit? Each session is 1 hour of CPE credit. Registration information is on our website.

NCPA appreciates the support of its Sustaining Members! Please check out their services and let them know you heard about them from NCPA!

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North Carolina Certified Paralegal Exam Dates

APR

CERTIFICATION EXAM

24

Spring Exam – April 24, 2021

Application Deadline – January 15, 2021

Fall Exam – October 16, 2021

Application Deadline – August 13, 2021





NALA Liason Report
Kaye Hare, ACP, NCCP,
NALA Liaison



Early bird registration for the 2021 NALA Conference @ Home is now open! Last year's historic conference was one for the books with over 900 virtual attendees. Register now for the 2021 NALA Conference @ Home July 22-24, 2021 by clicking the link above.



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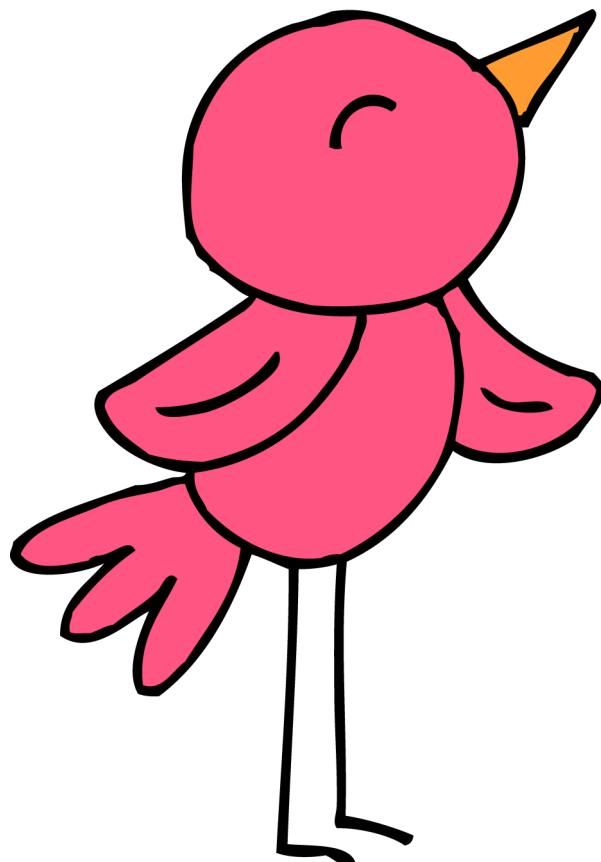


CONTEST!!!!

The contest this quarter will be a red bird hunt! There are hidden red birds like the one below throughout the newsletter. The first person to submit the correct TOTAL amount red birds in this edition of the FORUM will win a prize. Simply send an email to info@ncparalegal.org with your answer. You will be notified if you are the lucky winner, and the winner will be announced in the next edition of the FORUM!

GOOD LUCK everyone!!!!

(The one below counts!)





Articles of Interest

Working at home when everyone is home could pose confidentiality risks (ABA Journal):

<https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/working-at-home-when-everyone-is-home-could-pose-confidentiality-risks>

NC Bar Journal Spring 2021 <https://www.ncbar.gov/media/730633/journal-26-1.pdf>

The Paralegal and The Pandemic: How COVID-19 Is Impacting Your Day-to-Day Work

<https://www.athennian.com/post/coronavirus-impact-on-paralegals>

Paralegal Superstars: An Ode to the Unsung Heroes of Law

<https://www.natlawreview.com/article/paralegal-superstars-ode-to-unsung-heroes-law>

UNC School of Government Blogs (there is SOOO much information here!)

<https://www.sog.unc.edu/blogs>

Five Reasons To Trust A Password Manager and Not Your Notepad

<https://www.lawtechnologytoday.org/2021/02/five-reasons-to-trust-a-password-manager-and-not-your-notepad/> (Do you use a password manager? If so, let us know on our Facebook page!)

Perfectly Paralegal (website) (She is on Facebook too.)

<https://miamifrp.com/>

The Paralegal-Client Relationship: The Often-Overlooked Part of the Legal Process

<https://www.nala.org/articles/paralegal-client-relationship>



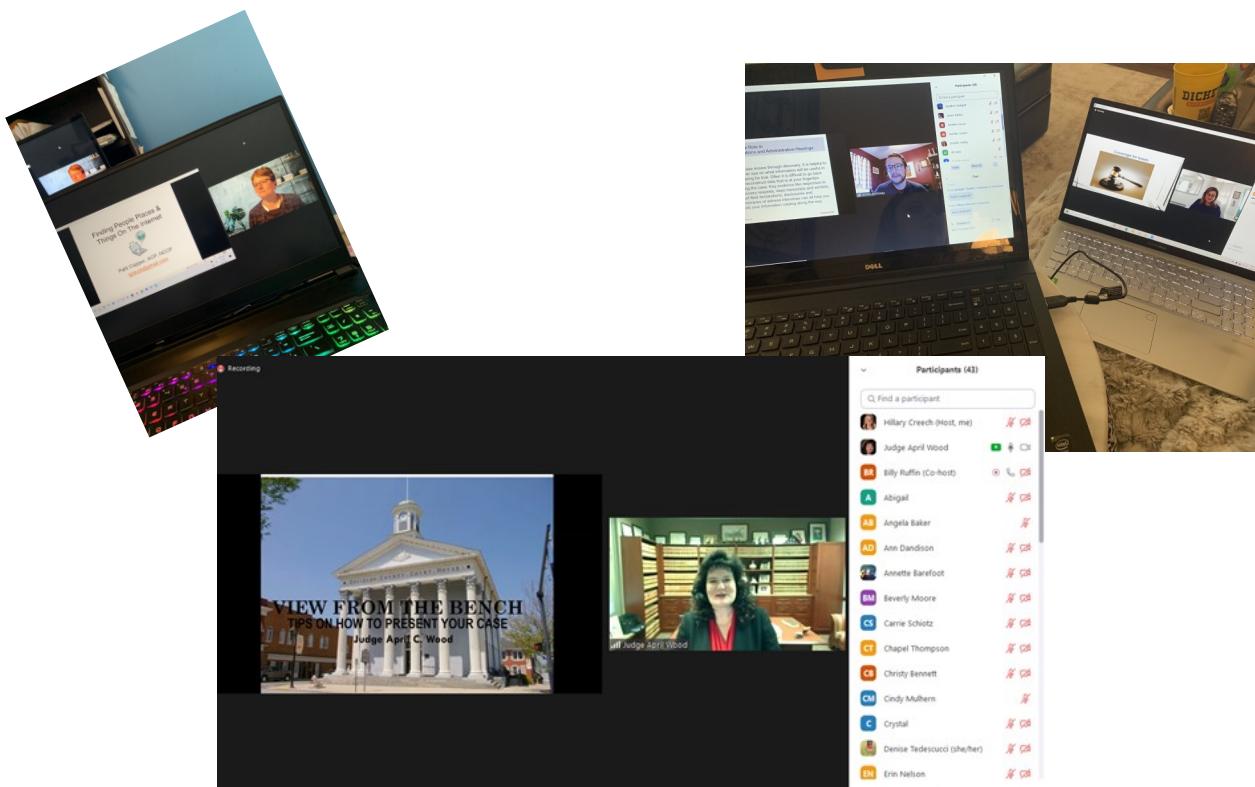
NCPA 41st Annual Meeting & Seminar

The 41st North Carolina Paralegal Association Annual Seminar kicked off on March 26th via a virtual seminar on Zoom. It was not how we wanted to do Annual, but with COVID-19 still looming, we thought it was better than having nothing at all. We had awesome speakers throughout the day. We discovered some great websites from Patti Clapper and got tips on how to work from home and still maintain confidentiality from Mark Scruggs. Landon McKinney offered ways to prepare for trial while taking covid precautions and Judge April Wood shared tips on how to present your case at trial. Steve Brown and Shannon Smith gave us a refresher on title insurance and surveys. Kaye Hare shared her experiences in navigating the sometimes confusing world of intestate estate administration. We finished off the day with a riveting session on the 14th Amendment from John Birmingham.

If you were not able to attend but would like to watch any of the sessions, we will have replays on the website soon. It is a great way for you to get your CPE credits for the year if you cannot attend an in-person seminar. Hopefully next year we can all be at the Annual Seminar in person. Until then be careful and stay safe.

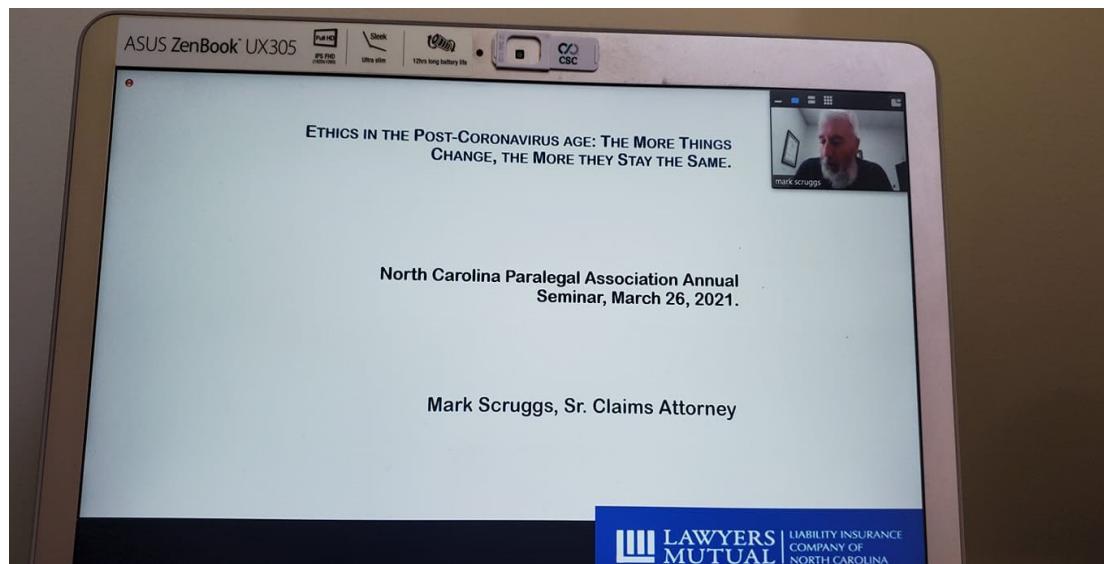
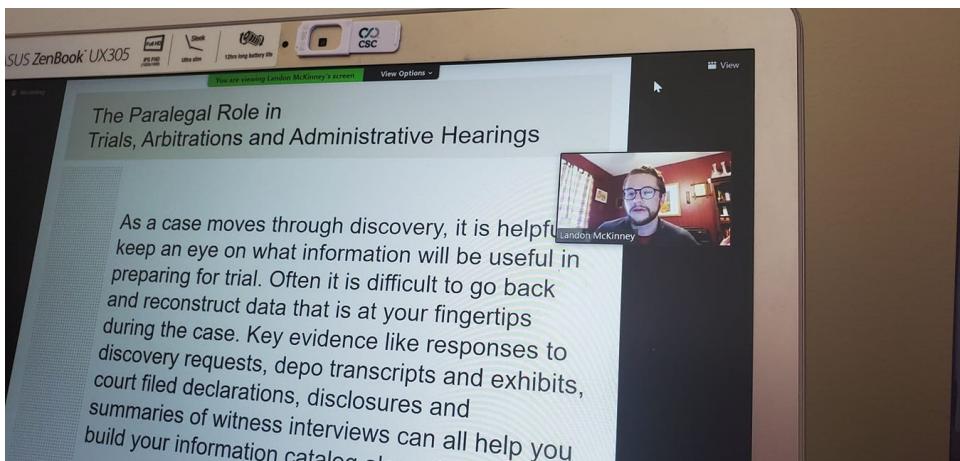
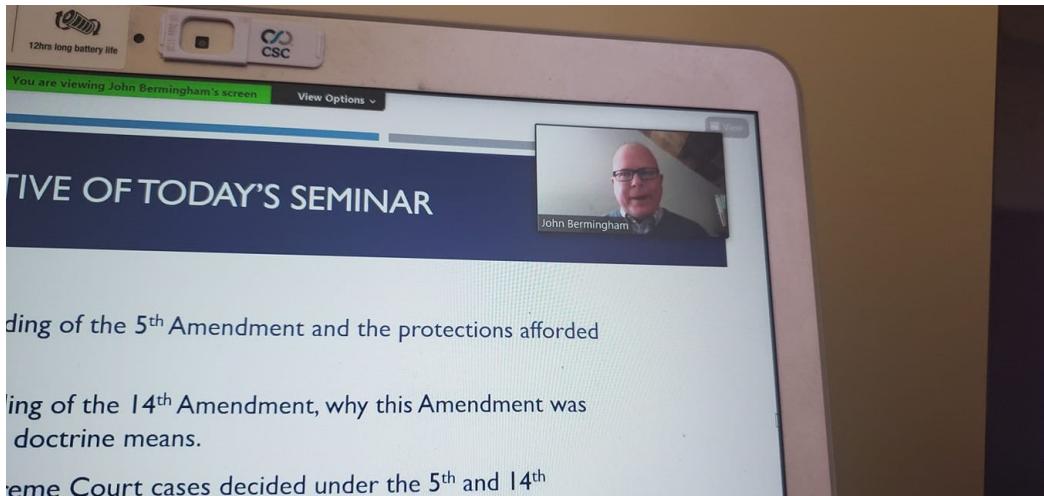
Crystal Robinson, NCCP

Annual Seminar Chair





NCPA 41st Annual Meeting & Seminar







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...AND THE 2021 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ARE:

**1st Place - Elizabeth Mazzola,
Meredith College (\$400)**

**2nd Place - Stacy Mowery,
Cape Fear Community College (\$300)**

**3rd Place - Leanna George,
Johnston Community College (\$200)**

**4th Place - Shakira Doleman,
Guilford Technical Community College (\$100)**





1st Place

Elizabeth Mazzola

Meredith College

In April 2020, I lost both of my jobs—my only sources of income—due to the unforeseen devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Feeling trapped in the eye of a treacherous storm, I was submerged into the dark abyss of unemployment and forced to navigate the icy waters of my job loss alone. As the days turned into weeks, my hope for another job opportunity grew dimmer and dimmer. The powerful undertow of a damaged career identity and overwhelming worry sparked my desire for change. Self-rescue was paramount. Through careful introspection, I recognized that my ideal new career is one that nourishes my life's purpose, sense of meaning, and intellectual growth. However, it is my interpretation of the pandemic—the gripping hold it has on human life, and in turn, its gentle tug on mortality—that reinforces, now more than ever before, the importance of a work and life balance. Hence, my ideal new career embodies this attribute as well. Although self-awareness of these powerful truths did not ease jobless fatigue and sadness quite yet, it was the catalyst for a major career meets life realignment. The numbing waters of uncertainty, fear, and lost hope were no longer threats. Instead, I embraced them as gentle wondrous waves that carried me from bitter cold to the soothing waters of resiliency and reinvention. It was this momentous transition in time when the promising vision of a paralegal career surfaced. From here, the flicker of a distant lighthouse and the magic of sweet old fashioned intuition guided me to the shores of my new career-seascape. Like an uncharted island with plenty of resources for survival, so too is this seascape in its abundance of new career ideals. In fact, the essence of unemployment is still present around me, but it weakens whenever I mention I have chosen to be a paralegal for the following reasons: (a) to contribute to society and be purposeful, (b) to enjoy work-life balance, and (c) to learn and grow and feel a sense of community.

Reasons I am drawn to the paralegal career are in alignment with my general interest in the legal field. My desire to contribute and be purposeful is a powerful catalyst. My purpose, or meaningful work depends on my ability to empathize and connect. I feel a sense of purpose when I capitalize on empathy; it deepens client trust, thereby encouraging interactions through the openness and soft skills I project. Purpose and meaning also depend on my ability to foster connections. I do this by leveraging an empathetic listening style, which encourages a deepening of business relationships. Connection is central to team chemistry. I can inspire collaborative ideation and motivate team building. Also, with a work history deep-rooted in human relations, I can connect with a diverse population. An articulate communicator, I am sensitive to the needs of clients and can react in a productive way.



I am drawn to a paralegal career because it is a harmonious amalgamation in work and life. In my past, my career life was consumed by late night operations, hectic weekend workflows, and erratic customer demands. As my career ambition grew, so did the stress to my personal life. Eventually, my work-life balance was off; the scale had finally tipped to one side. Past experience has shown me I need to realign life goals with professional goals in order to restore greater balance in work and life. I hope to achieve this goal as a paralegal.

By staying intentional in my pursuit of a greater work-life balanced lifestyle, my desire for a career that integrates constant learning will be easy to navigate. I am a perpetual learner—a natural researcher—a conceptual thinker who is eager to feel a sense of community in the workplace and in the legal industry. It will be rewarding to connect with colleagues and peers, yet stand on my own at the same time. By earning the North Carolina Certified Paralegal Certification, for example, I can develop a paralegal specialty and distinguish myself as an expert within the industry.

Looking back, I have chosen to be a paralegal despite losing two jobs, a career identity, and ongoing hope. I have chosen to be a paralegal despite feeling loss, sadness, and worry. Above all, I have chosen to be a paralegal to contribute to society and to individuals, to grow personally and professionally, and to indulge in a work and life balanced lifestyle.

An advertisement for Easysoft Real Estate Closing Software. On the left, there is a photograph of a woman with glasses smiling while holding a coffee cup. On the right, there is promotional text and a small pink bird icon.

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2nd Place

Stacy Mowery

Cape Fear Community College

I have chosen to be a paralegal at the age of 47 after being a Registered Nurse since 1994. When I graduated from high school in 1991, my parents did not have enough money to send me to a four-year college to earn a degree and become a paralegal; so I completed my Associates Degree in Nursing instead. In 1991 Community Colleges in the area where I lived did not offer a two-year degree in Paralegal Technology which was my choice of major in the four-year college that I had been accepted into.

I love being a nurse but caring for people and seeing all aspects of their lives during sickness and even death takes a huge toll on a person, so now a 47-year-old married mother of two is enrolled to become a paralegal. I have maintained a 4.0 grade point average since enrolling in the Spring 2020 semester and I can honestly say that I enjoy going back to school.

I have been a stay-at-home mother for the past few years to raise my son and daughter and be able to spend more time with each of them whether volunteering at school or being their chauffeur while my husband works full-time. My son is now enrolled in a Community College as well, so our household has two college students and one high student living in it. My husband has been so helpful in allowing me to make a career change at this stage in our lives and I want to make the most of this opportunity that I have allowed myself to take.

I want to be a paralegal because I enjoy researching and diving into subjects, attempting to understand both sides of an issue. During my nursing career my passion was in geriatrics and my hope is that I will be able to go into Elder Law because I think that this population is one of the most overlooked but is still a population that has much to give.

Trying to explain making a career at this stage of my life is difficult but I have discovered so many things about myself since going back to school and I am proud of the progress that I have made. I have discovered that nursing and paralegal almost go hand in hand because of the relationships that are built and the depth and level of knowledge that you learn about a patient or client. I would love to be able to work in a law firm that deals with Elder Law by being able to put my nursing knowledge to use and be a credit to the firm that employs me.

It is difficult to describe the many reasons that I am going into Paralegal Technology and keep it at a two-page limit, but I hope that I have given a glimpse into the many changes and accomplishments that returning to school has provided. To be able, in mid-life, to go back to school and earn the degree that I had wanted to obtain at the age of 18 is a blessing and the road that I took to get to this stage by becoming a nurse only enriches what I want to accomplish as a paralegal.



3rd Place

Leanna George

Johnston Community College

Finding My Calling

As a youth, I never once thought or even considered a career in the legal field. Having broken my arm at age 6, my earliest career desire was to be an orthopedic PA. I pictured myself studying X-rays and tormenting children with the buzzing saws used to remove casts. During my high school years, my career interest changed often and I credit that (and a lack of selfdiscipline) for my less than impressive performance in my post-secondary pursuit at the time, despite having been an honor student in High School. It was not until I had children and began dealing with their educational needs that I found what I have become positive is the calling on my life.

I am blessed with two wonderful children who happen to have Autism. My oldest has very significant needs, she is unable to speak and is considered severely intellectually disabled. She was a challenging child, mostly because of her inability to communicate her needs to those around her. As an elementary student, she had been treated poorly by the school system and it bothered me. I contacted Disability Rights North Carolina and an attorney there investigated my complaint. The attorney filed an Office of Civil Rights complaint on my daughter's behalf, which resulted in systemic changes that were part of the resolution agreement made between OCR and my local school district. During this process, I discovered that I knew very little that would ensure my child would be treated fairly in the school system and I knew I was not alone.

I decided I could not continue being the parent that simply trusted the 'professionals' in my child's IEP meetings, so I sought to learn more about Special Education and my child's rights. I attended workshops from the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, Wrightslaw, the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, and other organizations that provide advocacy training for parents. Using this knowledge, I was determined to make a difference for other families. I started attending the IEP meetings with friends and acquaintances, supporting them in their advocacy for their children. I also served as the chair of the Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children, the special education advisory council that serves the State Board of Education.

As my children have grown into adults, their needs are changing. My daughter is a resident of a group home and my son is homeschooled and should graduate High School in the next four years. I am no longer needed at home as much as I was when my children were younger, but I don't want to stop serving and helping fellow parents and individuals with disabilities. I have considered becoming an attorney specializing in Special Education and Administrative Law, but I am not a young woman. I looked into the Paralegal Technology program at my local community college and read how paralegals support the attorneys they work for. According to Disability Rights North Carolina's website, the organization has three paralegals. I discovered I could eventually get a job doing what I love and am passionate about. I have chosen to continue making a difference. I have chosen to be a paralegal.



4th Place

Shakira Doleman

Guilford Tech Community College

I have chosen to be a paralegal. Yes, a conscious and well-informed choice to take part in one of the most prestigious and demanding industries in the world. I have chosen to be a paralegal and to contribute my personal and professional knowledge and experience as I lend a hand (or two) to attorneys and law firms as they participate in cases and legal processes that will change lives, families, institutions, and the world. I have chosen to be a paralegal, which the American Bar Association has referred to as “the heart of the law firm” and an essential part of effective legal teams. I have chosen to dedicate myself academically and professionally to providing support for the legal and justice system. I have chosen to further advance my carefully crafted writing, communication, and organizational skills for use toward the greater good. I have chosen a fulfilling and challenging, yet edifying career based on a genuine and lifelong interest in law and legal research, specifically commercial and real property law, with a soft spot for family law.

I was just a little girl sitting in family court with my grandmother wondering what was going on, what all those people were doing, and what in the world they were talking about. I remember being completely astonished by the architecture and the constant traffic inside of the courthouse. I remember telling my elementary school friends that I was going to be a lawyer and that I was going to help people. I was just watching Law & Order for entertainment but remember envisioning myself assisting with the legal process, interviewing witnesses, filing documents without errors, organizing the attorney’s schedule, and helping clients feel heard and supported. I was just catching up on the news, watching legal scandals and reading about high-profile cases. I remember thinking to myself that attorneys and law firms need more support! I remember wanting to be there - to be a part of those moments and cases that would normally scare people away. I was just a college graduate working as a legal assistant and legal document review specialist watching people put their lives in the hands of legal representatives and trusting them to do the right thing and to operate in their best interest. I remember the calmness I felt during chaotic times in the office and my inherent willingness and productive competence to assist in any way that I could. I remember sitting in Domestic Violence court wondering what I could do to help and wishing more people had access to legal resources that could truly change their lives for the better. I was just a simple employee, wanting to make a difference and a positive impact. I just wanted to be more involved when I was elected Secretary of the Paralegal Club.

I have proudly and passionately chosen to be a paralegal – an empathetic, compassionate, diligent, and ethical paralegal, with clear career plans and a vision for great contributions and collaborations that will pave the way for others to say the same. I have chosen to be a paralegal to help others where it really counts, to increase client relations and general legal knowledge, and to contribute valuable skills and expertise that may be otherwise taken for granted in any other forum. I have chosen to be a paralegal for those of the past who were unable to follow this dream, for those in the present who are just getting started, and for those of the future who will be inspired to make bold, confident choices such as becoming a paralegal.



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North Carolina State Bar Paralegal Certification Updates

In 2020, Paralegal Certification celebrated its 15th Anniversary. As the program continues to grow changes were made to The Plan for Certification of Paralegals (the “Plan”) Subchapter G which can be found on The North Carolina State Bar’s website at <http://www.ncbar.gov/rules/>. These changes include: accepting work experience and national certification and administering the exam using remote proctoring.

In order to be eligible to sit for the exam, an applicant must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a legal resident of the United States.
2. Education or Work Experience - The applicant must have earned one of the following:
 - (a) an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree from a qualified paralegal studies program (must consist of 9 semester credits, or the equivalent, of classroom instruction (consisting of live, real-time, or simultaneous broadcast via satellite or webinar); or
 - (b) a certificate from a qualified paralegal studies program and an associate's or bachelor's degree in any discipline from any institution of post-secondary education that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education (an accredited US institution) or an equivalent degree from a foreign educational institution if the degree is determined to be equivalent to a degree from an accredited US institution by an organization that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE); or
 - (c) a juris doctorate degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association; or
 - (d) a high school diploma or equivalent plus five years of experience (comprising 10,000 work hours) as a legal assistant/paralegal or paralegal educator and, within the 12 months prior to the application, completed one hour of CLE on the topic of professional responsibility. Demonstration of work experience may be established by sworn affidavit(s) from the lawyer(s) or other supervisory personnel who has knowledge of the applicant's work as a legal assistant/paralegal during the entirety of the claimed work experience.
3. National Certification. If an applicant has obtained and thereafter maintains in active status at all times prior to application (i) the designation Certified Legal Assistant (CLA)/Certified Paralegal (CP) from the National Association of Legal Assistants; (ii) the designation PACE-Registered Paralegal (RP)/Certified Registered Paralegal (CRP) from the National Federation of Paralegal Associations; or (iii) another national paralegal credential approved by the board, the applicant is not required to satisfy the educational standard described in #2 above.

The Board of Paralegal Certification decided to administer the certification exams using remote proctoring due to COVID-19. Remote proctoring enables examinees to take the exam in the comfort of their home or office under the supervision of a remote proctor using the examinee's computer's webcam and microphone in conjunction with ExamSoft.

For additional information regarding the certification process, please visit our website at <http://www.nccertifiedparalegal.org/>.

Joy C. Belk, NCCP
 Managing Director, Paralegal Certification
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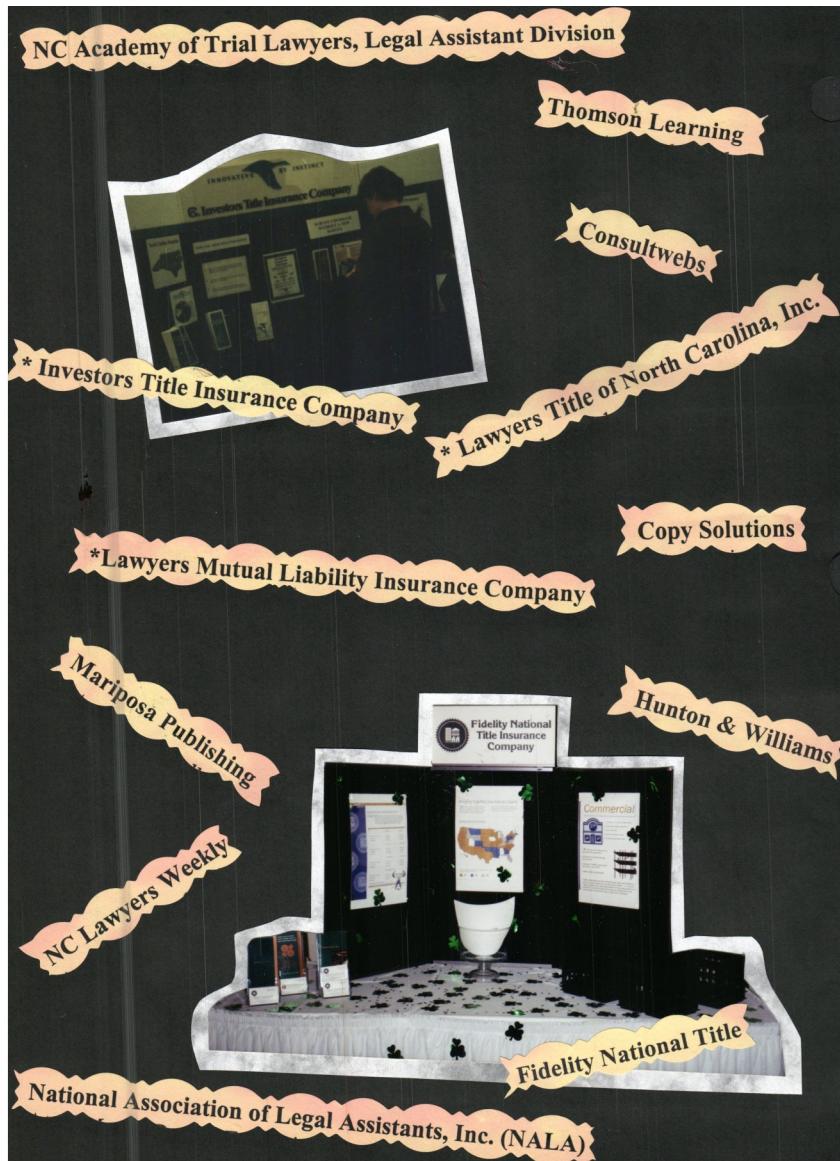
Raleigh Wake Paralegal Association

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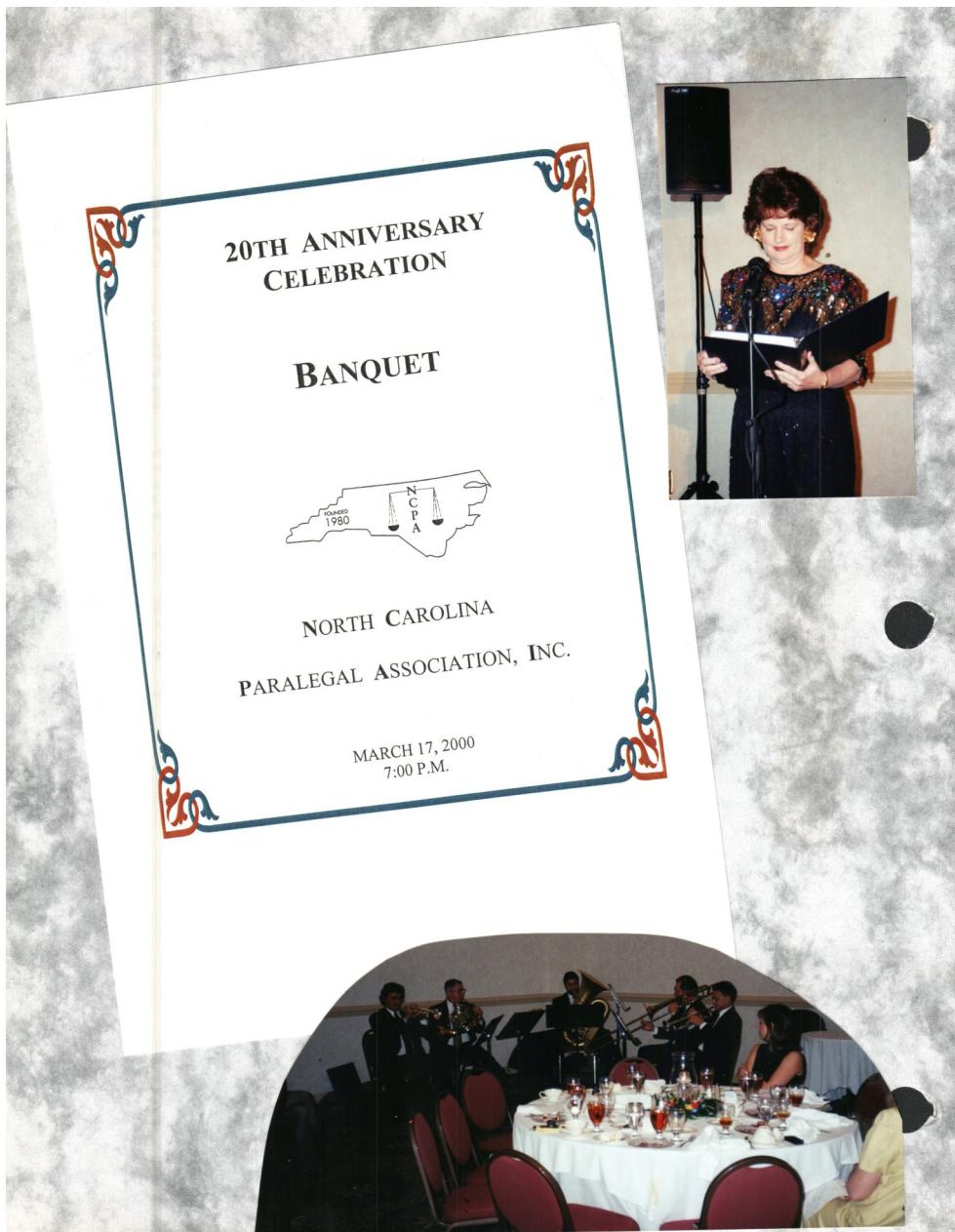
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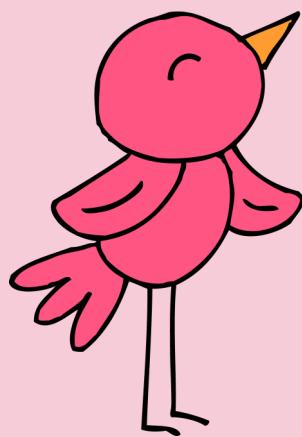




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