



AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS, INC.

CIPA CONNECTION

October/
November 2015

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Message from the President

I am honored and enthusiastic to continue my role as President of The Central Illinois Paralegal Association. I am committed to advancing the role and recognition of paralegals. Paralegals are highly educated and trained professionals with expertise in legal research, interviewing clients and witnesses, legal writing and other critical areas of law.

The value of talented paralegals is often overlooked by the general public, but their worth is never underestimated by the lawyers for which they work. CIPA is dedicated to the advancement of the paralegal profession through education, a network of support and raising public awareness and appreciation. One of the ways we do this is through our Annual Legal Educational Seminar which is held in September each year. This year's seminar was held on September 18, 2015, and was a great success. You can read about the seminar in the article that follows in the newsletter.

As President of CIPA it is my responsibility, together with the other Officers, to continue to promote our profession. We want to assist all our members in realizing and accomplishing their goals. The strength of our organization comes from the diverse, talented, and dynamic membership body we have. Our hardworking board has volunteered countless hours of their time to advocate for the profession and the organization. I would ask you to consider serving in some capacity to help this effort. Choose from the seminar committee, the membership committee, the newsletters committee, or many more! Your individual talent is always needed and appreciated.

Please join us as our guest on December 14th at Tony Roma's in Bloomington for our Annual Holiday Party so we may all get acquainted!

I look forward to another wonderful year!

Crystal Thomas, ACP
CIPA President



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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 14, 2015 (Monday):

Join CIPA for its annual Holiday Party and installation of the 2016 officers at Tony Roma's in Bloomington, Illinois. Dinner is scheduled to be served at 5:30 p.m. There will not be a speaker for CLE at this meeting.

The 2016 CIPA meeting schedule is yet to be determined, but will be announced to members via e-mail and on CIPA's website as soon as dates are known.

Visit CIPA Online at www.ciparalegal.org.

2015 Annual Legal Educational Seminar

by Debi Taylor, ACP

How very appropriate that the title of this year's Seminar was "Crossroads of History and Progress."

Little did the 2015 Seminar Committee know when they chose that title just how germane it would be to our speakers.

We were delighted to begin our morning with Featured Speaker **Dr. David Mouser** of The Mouser Group.

His motivational, energetic, and engaging presentation urged us to use positive interactions to make a difference in the workplace. He was very inspirational and took simple suggestions and made them relevant to all of us.

Attorney Amelia Buragas of the Dorris Law Firm in Bloomington focused on the legal history of McLean County, asbestos, and corporate monopolies. A local significance coupled with facts including Abraham Lincoln are always interesting to learn.

Perhaps the best example of "Crossroads of

History and Progress" was the intersection of the history of how of our current criminal justice system is so flawed vs. in some instances how we are able to overcome those flaws. Such is the case of **Ms. Kristine Bunch**. **Attorney Sara Sommervold**, of the Northwestern School of Law Center on Wrongful Convictions, shared the work of the Center and the horrible consequences of wrongful convictions. She shared staggering statistics with the audience – in some cases you could hear the jaws dropping to the floor. A great reminder to us of the presumption of innocence.

Ms. Bunch shared her experience of spending over 17 years in prison before she was released in 2012. After a house fire in 1995, Kristine was found guilty of murder by arson in the death of her three year old son. In 2012, Kristine's convictions were reversed based on evolving forensic science and undisclosed evidence from the ATF. The strength, determination, and steadfast hope that she displayed during this time was truly beyond compare.

Jim Grogan with the ARDC is always a house favorite but (fortunately for him) he was on a plane heading to New York for the birth of his first grandchild. We were honored to have **ARDC Chicago Administrator Jerry Larkin** stand in at the last minute. Mr. Larkin discussed Model Rule 1.6 – Client-Lawyer

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SAVE THE DATE!

September 16, 2016 is the date to remember for the next **CIPA Annual Legal Educational Seminar**, which will take place at the Double Tree Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington. If you are interested in joining the Seminar Committee, contact the committee Co-Chairs for more information:

Debi Taylor and Chris Thomas:
annual_seminar@ciparalegal.org

October Meeting Summary

by Nichole Byers

Speakers from Caterpillar

CIPA was fortunate to have two speakers from Caterpillar speak to the members and ICC Students in attendance at the October 13th meeting.

Barbra J. Moran, Senior Corporate Counsel, kicked off the joint presentation, entitled "Increasing Efficiency through Standard Processes." As she described her career path, she stressed the importance of discipline and process in making professional opportunities happen. The theme of her discussion was "Opportunity looks like hard work."

Jody Foster, Paralegal, discussed how the long and difficult steps required for creating office processes actually makes work more efficient in the long run. Her talk about "Chaos to Order" seemed applicable to many people in the room.

The audience was very appreciative of the time and information that Ms. Moran and Ms. Foster generously afforded us.

CIPA would also like to extend its gratitude to **Michelle Weghorst** and **Illinois Central College** for being such wonderful hosts for the annual business meeting. The meal provided by ICC Catering was certainly a treat.

Annual Election of Officers

By the unanimous vote of those present and by those who voted by proxy, the following incumbent officers ran unopposed and retained their offices for the 2016 year:

Crystal Thomas, President;
Denise Risinger, Secretary;
Nichole Byers, Treasurer; and
Debi Taylor, NALA Liaison.

Additionally, **Celeste Poole** accepted a nomination as candidate for Vice President and was elected unanimously by the members who were present.

Upcoming Board Meeting

Please note that the 2016 Executive Board will be meeting on **November 4, 2015** to discuss CIPA's agenda and schedule for the next year. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please submit them to **cipa@ciparalegal.org** no later than 5 p.m. on November 2, 2015 for consideration.



\$20 WORD OF THE MONTH

Contumacious:

A willful disobedience of a court order (*Black's Law Dictionary*).

Stubbornly perverse or rebellious; Willfully or obstinately disobedient (*Dictionary.com*).

The \$20 Word of the Month was suggested by Susan Harris of the Ronda Glenn Law Offices in Bloomington.

A Very Important Cause

by Chris Thomas, ACP and Debi Taylor, ACP

During the Seminar this year, we were privileged to listen to Exonoree Kristine Bunch. She told her astounding story of languishing behind bars for more than 17 years. She was arrested and charged with setting a fire that claimed the life of her three-year-old son before a court overturned her conviction for killing her son.

Ms. Bunch has the Northwestern University School of Law Center on Wrongful Convictions to thank. Located in Chicago, the Center, which opened in 1998, has contributed to the exoneration of dozens of innocent men and women. The Center is at the forefront of the current nationwide movement to reform the criminal justice system; dedicated to identifying and rectifying wrongful convictions and other serious miscarriages of justice. The CWC's work focuses primarily in three areas: representation, research, and reform.

The Center receives approximately 200 inquiries a month from inmates around the country seeking their legal representation. Center faculty and staff attorneys, in

partnership with outside pro bono attorneys and CWC students, review these requests and represent imprisoned clients with claims of actual innocence. Although the Center focuses primarily on post-conviction cases, occasionally CWC attorneys serve as co-counsel with experienced trial lawyers working pro bono, in the retrials of cases that have been reversed and remanded. CWC attorneys may prepare "friend of the court" briefs in the trial and appellate courts. The Center also has pioneered projects focused on representing wrongfully convicted youth and women — the first projects of their kind in the United States.

At the Center on Wrongful Convictions, their ability to help the innocent in prison is directly proportional to the support they receive from individuals and institutions committed to correcting miscarriages of justice and reforming the criminal justice system. The Center on Wrongful Convictions relies on private donations to support their work. Every dollar contributed furthers the Center's mission to identify and rectify wrongful convictions and reform the criminal

justice system.

It was with the above in mind that the 2015 Officers of the Central Illinois Paralegal Association voted to donate \$500 to the Women's Project of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. They also would like to continue supporting the Women's Project and the CWC itself in the future endeavors of CIPA.

The Officers also voted to enclose a check for \$500 in the thank you note to Ms. Bunch. The note thanked her for an extraordinary presentation and wished her all the best as she continued her journey. We told her we hoped our paths would cross again.

CIPA has not, in recent years, had a specific cause to support. The Officers are very excited about supporting the CWC. We sincerely hope you will join us as we discuss what we can do as an organization to help financially, raise public awareness, and reforming the criminal justice system to reduce the numbers of men and women sentenced to prison for crimes they did not commit.

NALA News and Events

www.nala.org

NALA Annual Convention

It's never too soon to start planning to attend the 2016 NALA Annual Convention.

The dates are July 13 - 15 in sunny Las Vegas!

For further information contact CIPA's NALA Liaison Debi Taylor at debi.taylor.qntn@statefarm.com or visit NALA online at <http://www.nala.org/>.

Certification: CP, CLA and ACP

You may have noticed that some CIPA members have letters printed after their names: CP, CLA, or ACP. These initials stand for Certified Paralegal, Certified Legal Assistant, and Advanced Certified Paralegal, respectively.

Certification through NALA is a voluntary process that for many people consists of a lot of studying, and subsequently, sitting for



an exam. The exam covers the following areas: Communications, Ethics, Legal Research, Judgment and Analytical Ability, and four areas of Substantive Law.

Certification is good for a period of five years, and a certified paralegal must submit 50 total hours of CLE during the five year period in order to qualify for recertification. CLE hours are offered through CIPA at its Annual Legal Educational Seminar, as well as at its regular meetings throughout the year. If you are looking for an alternate source for CLE

credits, NALA offers many CLE programs, and members may access these at its website, www.nalacampus.com.

NALA offers study guides and workbooks for purchase through its website, www.nala.org.

Online Continuing Legal Ed

While Central Illinois Paralegal Association conducts several events offering CLE credits throughout the year for Certified Paralegals and Advanced Certified Paralegals, NALA offers online access to Continuing Legal Education for those times when you may need to catch up on a few credits in order to meet your requirements. Please visit <http://www.nala.org/Fall2015Schedule.aspx> for the current Live! course schedule.

Some highlights of the 2015 November/December course schedule include:

Nov. 4: Medical Liens and Set Asides

Nov. 18: Understanding and Drafting Leases

Nov. 20: Fact Investigation and Analysis

Dec. 9: Resume and Interviewing Tips

2015 Annual Legal Educational Seminar

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Relationship, Confidentiality of Information. The ABA has gone through a long history with this Rule and has made varied progress with it over the years.

History and progress overlap in the investigation into computer hacking. **Special Agent Stephanie Wright** of the Federal Bureau of Investigation said that unfortunately, our laws have not developed as quickly as our technology has progressed. She explained how computer intrusions occur both in our daily and corporate lives. SA Wright was very relatable and informative.

It has been 26 years of renewing friendships, enjoying the experience of meeting new acquaintances, and hopefully learning something new. We were pleased, once again, to present the seminar in conjunction with

IICLE. We had 65 attendees and seven vendors. Thanks to our many raffle donors, we made record profits for our raffle donations. All of the raffle proceeds go toward scholarships for next year for registration fees for paralegals who otherwise may not be able to attend.

The Seminar Committee works very, very hard each year at not just maintaining but superseding the previous year's event. We sincerely thank you for always supporting us. If you are interested in joining the 2016 Seminar Committee please contact Debi or Chris at annual_seminar@ciparalegal.org. We welcome more members.

If you missed the Seminar this year I highly recommend you mark your calendar right now for Friday, September 16th. The 27th Annual Seminar is calling your name.

Member Milestones

Compiled by Denise Risinger

Welcome New CIPA Members

- ❖ Cheryl Carlile, Dunlap
- ❖ Rhonda Felson, North Barrington
- ❖ Barbara Heneghan, Bloomington
- ❖ Patrick Moore, Bartonville
- ❖ Haylee McNamee, Normal

CIPA Members are Moving and Shaking

If you or someone you know has had a recent job change, promotion, graduation, or other accomplishment and would like to share, please submit to cipa@ciparalegal.org and indicate "Newsletter" in the subject line. We would love to hear from you!

2016 Membership Renewal Applications

Please check your inboxes in November for your 2016 Membership Renewal Applications. 2016 looks to be an exciting year for CIPA. Be sure to commit to your favorite committees right away. Our organization is only as strong as the hard work and dedication of our members. Thank you so much for your continuing support.

Visit CIPA Online at www.ciparalegal.org

CIPA Connection is compiled and edited by Denise Risinger and Nichole Byers, Co-Chairs of CIPA's Newsletter Committee, and relies heavily on content submitted by members. To contribute news, articles, photographs, or other material for the newsletter, please e-mail cipa@ciparalegal.org and reference "CIPA Newsletter" in the subject line.

Photograph credits: Former McLean County Courthouse (p.1), Nichole Byers; 2015. All other photographs: Shutterstock