

THE VERDICT

DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2012

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jennifer Stout

My year has begun as your new DCPA president. A month has come and gone. I can say that I am honored to hold the position and enjoy working with the DCPA Committees, Chairs, members and volunteers in our combined efforts to improve and grow our profession.

It's February and as we all know February is the month of "love". In keeping with the spirit of the month, I want all of us to try and remember to take the time during our hectic, crazy, and the majority of the time, stressful professional and personal lives to reflect on how our behavior, professional and personal, can affect others and our profession.

So often the legal profession receives a bad rap by the media and in turn by the public. Unfortunately, some of the bad rap is true and we as a profession should own it, but we can also change the "bad" persona. More often than not our profession is set in an extremely adversarial forum. It is how we conduct ourselves during the adversarial forum which is a start to changing the persona. It is our actions which generate respect, civility and kindness or the lack thereof. Respect is the keystone to any profession; civility the corner stone and kindness is human. The loss of one or all of these destroys the foundation of who we are as humans and what we represent as legal professionals. Let us be cognizant that respect is earned, civility and kindness are our nature as human beings, and mold our actions to merit the respect, civility and kindness that should be inherent in our profession. In our profession there are always two sides; parties are pitted against each other and ultimately there is a winner and a loser. The outcome of winning and losing itself continues the conflict. The winner, as in any contest, feels joy and vindication and the loser feels loss, rejected and sometimes cheated. It is at this time that both teams, winners and losers, should strive to be the best of being a human; win with grace and humility and accept the loss with grace and pride. This is also the time for us to be nice and show respect to our

adversary; acknowledge a job well done and a fight fought hard and fair. I have found in my many years in this profession, whether I am on the winning or losing team, a simple act of kindness like a kind word, a loving gesture, or something as easily given as a smile can make your adversary, a co-worker, client or family member feel pride of a job well done, respected, appreciated and loved.

Let's use the month of February as our catalyst for the rest of the year to show a little "love." As the new President of the Texas District & County Attorneys Association, Mr. William Lee Hon, stated in his January-February message; "...strive to remember how a kind word, handshake, smile, or positive comment can make all the difference in terms of how others perceive us."

Let's all try harder to raise the bar on the public's perception of the legal profession. We can all work on being respectful, civil and kind to our adversaries. Smile and show a little "love".

Jen



2012 DCPA OFFICERS

President – Jennifer Stout

President Elect – Ria Sherman

Secretary/Parliamentarian – Kim Guertler

Treasurer – Lisa Pittman

Historian – Vicki Schmidt



2012 DCPA COMMITTEES

CLE Committee -

Lisa Bowles, Chairman
Michelle James
Debbie Mitchell
Marguerita Alba
Allison Martin

Fund Raising Committee -

Jenna Earhart, Chairman
Lisa Pittman
Ria Sherman
Michele George

Legal Directory Committee -

Debbie Maldonado, Chairman
Ava Watson
Lisa Pittman

Membership Committee -

Priscilla Brooks, Co-Chairman
Linda Lewis, Co-Chairman
Sunnie Palmer
Jennifer Harris
Denise League
Michelle Beecher
Rachel Huntman

Newsletter Committee -

Lisa Pittman, Chairman
Jennifer Earhart
Wanda Woodworth
Michele George

Social Committee -

Christy Powell, Co-Chair
Pam Snavelly, Co-Chair
Carolyn Ganzer
Carol Pelzel

PLEASE NOTE: EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Due to the increase cost in food & beverages, and to insure there is no increase in cost to DCPA members, the DCPA monthly luncheon meetings will now be held in the smaller banquet room at Oakmont; space will be limited. Therefore, it is imperative you make your reservation to attend and eat or to attend with no lunch. And per policy if you RSVP and do not attend an invoice will be sent to cover the expense.

MEETING NOTICE

The Denton County Paralegal Association's next Luncheon will be on Thursday, **February 23, 2012** at noon at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Drive, Corinth, Texas.

The all-inclusive cost of lunch is \$13.00 payable when you sign in. We cannot accept debit or credit cards, or make change, so please bring exact amount of cash or a check made payable to DCPA.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED and can be made via e-mail to jennifer.stout@dentoncounty.com. The Deadline for making your reservation is 5:00 P.M. on Monday, February 20, 2012.

Notice: We must notify Oakmont of the number attending prior to the meeting for preparation of adequate food and seating arrangements. Those that have RSVP'd will get served and seated first. We cannot guarantee that you will have seating or food if you do not RSVP. Please note we are also required to bill those individuals who make reservations and do not attend.



Directions to Oakmont: Oakmont Country Club is located in Corinth off I-35 East between Lewisville and Denton.

- Exit 461 – Shady Shores Rd/Post Oak Drive
- Turn west onto Post Oak Drive
- Turn right (west) onto Robinson Rd at stop sign
- Turn left (south) onto Oakmont Dr – you will see an Oakmont sign in the median
- Turn right into Oakmont Country Club (second right)





AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: Thursday, February 23, 2012

Place: Oakmont Country Club
1901 Oakmont Drive
Corinth, Texas 76210

Time: Noon

1. Welcome members and guests
2. New Business
 - A. Fundraising Report
 - B. Membership – Renewals & New
3. Old Business
 - A. Approve January minutes
 - B. Approve January treasurer’s report
4. Speaker – Randy Stout
5. Door Prizes
6. Adjournment

DCPA WEBSITE

Check out what’s new on our website at www.dentonparalegals.org. Let us know what you think, and what you would like to see on our website in the future. If you have any changes that need to be made to your contact information, please let us know.



MEMBERSHIP

Please encourage those paralegals and others in the legal field, whom are not currently members, to join. If you know of anyone who would like to join, please contact Priscilla Brooks at Priscilla.brooks@dentoncounty.com, (940) 349-2758 or Linda Lewis at linda@dentonfamilyattorneys.com, (940) 591-1191.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION INCLUDE:

- ❖ Receipt of the monthly issue of *The Verdict*
- ❖ Free Accredited CLE at monthly meetings
- ❖ Continuing Legal Education seminars on various topics
- ❖ Job Bank
- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Networking with other paralegals in Denton County
- ❖ Professional growth through participation
- ❖ Communication and promotion of professional conduct and responsibility
- ❖ Continued individual and professional growth as paralegals
- ❖ Fulfillment that is received from being involved in the direction of the paralegal profession



BIRTHDAYS!



Our members with March birthdays are:

- Lisa Pittman (3-14);
- Carly Hensley (3-15);
- Heather Collard (3-19);
- Bruce Stewart (3-22);
- Lisa Bowles (3-31);

Hope each of you will have a **Happy Birthday!**



SPEAKER INFORMATION



Our Speaker this month is attorney Randolph W. Stout, speaking on "Texas Education Code v. Texas Family Code "Does the Left Hand Know What the Right Hand is Doing?"



EVENTS/NEWS



Do you have a recipe, informative tip/idea, or joke, etc. that you would like to share with your fellow DCPA Members? If so, please submit your idea to Jenna Earhart at jeahart@hbvwlaw.com. Thank you!



CONGRATULATIONS!!

Member, Jennifer Earhart is the proud grandmother “Ya Ya” to a beautiful baby boy born to her son Cody and his wife, Corey. Baby Charles was born on January 31st.

**CHILDREN ADVOCACY CENTER
OF DENTON COUNTY**

A special thank you to all that donate to The Children’s Advocacy Center of Denton County School Supply Drive, Thanksgiving and Christmas families each year. Without your donations the CACDC would not be able to help so many families in need. Attached are two letters and a flyer from CACDC thanking DCPA for our support and donations.

REMINDER: If you have not already completed the “Getting To Know You” questionnaire please take a moment to fill it out and forward to Ria Sherman at ria@cokerlegal.com. The questionnaire is attached.

DCPA FUNDRAISER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fund-Raiser Event - Cookie Grams!



Our Cookie Grams were an absolute hit - we SOLD OUT this year!! DCPA sold 133 Cookie Grams and this could not have been pulled off without all the cookie and candy donations.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Carol Pelzel | Amy Riggs |
| Jennifer Stout | Erin Pack |
| Lisa Bowles | Michele George |
| Heather Walker | Jackie Cox |
| Kim Guertler | Cody Barnett |
| Georgya Rankin | Corey Barnett |
| Christy Powell | Stephanie Taylor |
| Rodney Bernal | Lisa Pittman |
| Toya Brown | Ria Sherman |
| Debbie Maldonado | Jenna Earhart |
| Adriana Sanchez | |

If you donated to this fundraiser, whether with goodies or your time, please let our Fund-raiser Committee know - they want to recognize all involved!



SUPPORT OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Our Sustaining Members give so much to our Association, please be sure to think of them when you are in need of services that require their specialty!

- Brent Ballow @ Depo Texas
- Jay Freeman @ Accurate Concept Insurance
- Dana Miller @ Zenith Investigations
- Cheryl Perlich @ The Reporting Professionals
- Claudia Stapleton @ Arlington Career Institute
- Bruce Stewart @ Stewart Process Service Inc
- Janel Stoffels @ Stoffels & Associates Inc.



IN THE KNOW

By Wanda Woodworth

Talking with Joni Barr, Mackoy, Hernandez & Qualls in Frisco TX

Years Experience - 20

What made you choose to be a Paralegal? Actually the job found me. I was a stay at home mom and when my children started going to school, I started looking for a job. I knew an attorney who needed a paralegal and she offered me the position. I had no experience, learned on the job and later went to school and earned my General Paralegal Certificate.

What type of law did your attorney practice? Family Law, Personal Injury and Criminal Law. The attorney was appointed by the Court in several criminal cases, which I found interesting.

What was it like being a new Paralegal? I learned a lot in a short amount of time. Once I learned the terminology and the flow of things it became easier.

How many Paralegals and Attorneys are at your present firm? I am the only paralegal for four attorneys. I do not generally go to Court with the attorneys, but have many times. When the attorneys need help in a Trial, they normally take the Associate Attorney that works for our firm.

What kind of law is practiced at your current firm? Mainly Family Law matters, including custody, child support and visitation modifications/enforcements. We also

handle Adoptions and Probate matters and Wills. I really try to help the clients, if I can, with issues and problems to free up the attorneys time. I try to make the client's experience as easy as possible since they are going through a really tough time in their lives by empathizing with what they are going through and being patient and understanding of their circumstances.

What is your advice to new Paralegals? Learn the legal terminology and develop your organizational skills. Get good at docketing cases and monitoring deadlines.

What paralegal organizations do you belong to?

Paralegal Division, State Bar of Texas, Denton County Paralegal Association (DCPA), Dallas Area Paralegal Association (DAPA), National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA), and National Federation of Paralegal Association (NFPA). I must attend 6 hours of Continuing Legal Education per year, with one hour in Ethics. I recently attended a seminar featuring court administrators and found it very informative and interesting.

How do you relax after a tough day at work? I enjoy watching TV or reading a book.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

If you have an open position in your office or know of another office that has an opening and would like to e-mail it to the members and have it posted in the next newsletter, please contact Lisa Pittman at (940) 387-3518 or lpittman@hbwlaw.com.



JANUARY MINUTES

1. President, Jennifer Stout, called the meeting of January 26, 2012, to order at 12:05 p.m. at the Oakmont Country Club. There were 28 in attendance, which included 25 members, 2 guests, and the speaker, all of whom were welcomed by the President.
2. President Stout asked for a vote of approval of the 2012 budget. A motion for approval was presented by Michelle James and seconded by Sunnie Palmer, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
3. President Stout asked for a vote of approval for the November minutes. A motion for approval was presented by Vicki Schmidt and seconded by Ria Sherman, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. President Stout asked for approval of the Treasurer's Report. A motion for approval was presented by Ria Sherman and seconded by Jenna Earhart, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
5. President Stout asked if there was any other new or old business that needed discussion. Michelle James reported the Directory is ready to print and asked members to get orders or corrections in as soon as possible. Jenna Earhart asked for cookie volunteers for the Cookie Gram fundraiser and she asked that all members turn in their orders as soon as possible.
6. Michelle James introduced the speaker, Jay Freeman, who presented "*A Practical Guide to The Texas SR-22 (and Its Impact on the Attorney/Client Relationship)*."
7. Pamela Snavelly won the door prize which was a Barnes and Noble gift card donated by Lewis & Passons.
8. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

