

**Special Interest  
Articles:**

- Election of the Officers for 2018
- Membership Drive Contest Update
- Judges Recognition Ceremony & Pictures

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**Denton County Paralegal Association**

## Election of Officers for 2018

*Submitted by Vicki Schmidt, Membership Chair*

The October DCPA meeting will include election of officers for 2018. The positions of President-elect, Secretary-Parliamentarian, and Treasurer will be voted on using paper ballots. The ballot is printed in this issue of *The Verdict*.

If you are not able to attend the October meeting and if you are an active member in good standing, please vote using the proxy ballot. Mark your ballot and email it to Vicki Schmidt at [vicki@cmloveless.com](mailto:vicki@cmloveless.com) no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 19, 2017. Those who attend the meeting will mark their ballots as they sign in. The membership committee will tally the ballots during the meeting and the new officers will be announced after the guest speaker's presentation.

The best way to develop a strong organization is to have strong leaders. We elected Daphina Park to serve as President in 2018. The slate of candidates running for positions as Executive Officers on her team are:

- President-elect: Jenna Earhart
- Treasurer: Lisa Pittman
- Secretary-Parliamentarian: Sharron Dowdle

We appreciate the willingness of these candidates to step up and serve our association in the offices they seek to hold! We appreciate our active members taking the time to attend the meeting and vote!

## Meeting Notice

The Denton County Paralegal Association's next Luncheon will be on Thursday, **October 19, 2017** at noon at Oakmont Country Club, 1200 Clubhouse Drive, Corinth, Texas.

### 2017 Officers

Pamela Snavelly, President  
psnavely@hbvwlaw.com

Daphina Park, President-Elect  
Daphina.Park@dentoncounty.com

Martha Gallegos,  
Secretary/Parliamentarian  
Martha.gallegos@dentoncounty.com

Lisa Pittman, Treasurer  
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

Heather Walker, Historian  
heather.walker@dentoncounty.com

## Did you know...

We have streamlined the online registration process! Go to the DCPA website at <http://dentonparalegals.org/>. Under the Upcoming Events blue bar click the Monthly Luncheon & CLE link, then click the Register tab and provide the requested information. When registering online, you must indicate whether you plan to attend the CLE and pay for lunch, or will attend the CLE only. We encourage you to make the buffet lunch payment online. If you prefer to pay at the door, you can choose to receive an invoice during the registration process.

**Online Registration Is Required!** The deadline to register for this month's meeting is **October 16th at 3 p.m.** Be sure to complete the registration sequence to notify us that you will either attend the CLE and purchase lunch, or will attend the CLE only. That will help us ensure Oakmont is prepared for the number of guests who will go through the buffet line, and that we provide adequate seating for those attending CLE only. **Please note we must bill individuals who register for lunch even if they are unable to attend.**

## Directions to Oakmont

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

- Exit 461 – Shady Grove Road/Post Oak Drive
- Turn west onto Post Oak Drive
- Turn right (west) onto Robinson Road at stop sign
- Turn left (south) onto Oakmont Drive – you will see an Oakmont sign in the median
- Turn right into Clubhouse Drive (second right)

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### 2017 Committee Chairs

**CLE**, Deborah Nyarangi  
Deborah@bowen-law.com

**Fundraising**, Daphina Park  
daphina.park@dentoncounty.com

**Legal Directory**, Cheryl Cooper  
ccooper@dentonlaw.com

**Membership**, Vicki Schmidt  
vicki.dcpa@gmail.com

**Newsletter**, Lisa Pittman  
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

**Social**, open

**Scholarship**, Jenna Earhart  
jearhart@hbvwlaw.com

## AGENDA FOR MEETING

Date: October 19, 2017  
Place: Oakmont Country Club  
1200 Clubhouse Drive  
Corinth, Texas 76210  
Time: Noon

### 1. **Welcome Members and Guests**

### 2. **Election:**

Election conducted for 2018 President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary/Parliamentarian.

### 3. **Speaker:**

Ms. Donna Bloom

The Paralegal's role in identifying and responding to domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault in client populations

### 4. **Old Business**

- a. Approve August Minutes
- b. Approve August Treasurer's Report
- c. Approve September Minutes
- d. Approve September Treasurer's Report

### 5. **New Business**

Election Results for 2018 Slate of Officers

### 6. **Announcements**

- Sunnie Palmer - Ad Hoc Committee for Bylaws and Standing Rules
- Business Meeting - November 16, 2017
- Christmas Party – December 7, 2017
- Daphina Park – Committee Chairs
- Blanket Brigade Project Conclusion

### 7. **Door Prize**

### 8. **Adjournment**

## CLE GUEST SPEAKER



Donna Bloom, Director of Legal Services with Denton County Friends of the Family, will be our special guest speaker. Her presentation will discuss the paralegal's role in identifying and responding to domestic violence in our client populations.

Ms. Bloom exclusively represents victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in a broad range of civil legal matters, including divorce, custody disputes, CPS issues, housing concerns, and protective orders. Before joining the team at Denton County Friends of the Family, she served as a staff attorney with the Texas Advocacy Project (formerly the Women's Advocacy Project).

Ms. Bloom's 25 year professional commitment to ending violence against women and children has included her legal career and a host of roles with the Family Place and New Beginning Center, including victim advocate, community educator and Executive Director of the Women's Center of East Texas. During her time at the Women's Center of East Texas she saw first-hand the overwhelming need battered women had for legal assistance, especially the importance of having an attorney who appreciated the significance of domestic violence, and made the decision to attend law school and devote herself to this cause.

She often pursues statewide policy solutions for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through her involvement with the Texas Council on Family Violence and the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault and is recognized as a leading expert in the State of Texas on the intersection between domestic violence, child abuse, and neglect.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES!

- October 19, 2017 - CLE and Luncheon at Oakmont  
Donna Bloom, Guest Speaker
- Elections for 2018 Officers
- Texas Paralegal Day Celebration (tentative date)
  
- November 16, 2017 - DCPA Annual Business Meeting
  
- December 7, 2017 - Christmas Party



## Membership Drive Contest – Update

### ***And the winner is. . . .***

Congratulations to Sharron Dowdle, our grand prize winner of the Membership Drive Contest! Members who participated in the membership drive contest earned points for bringing colleagues eligible to join DCPA to a monthly luncheon as their guest (5 points), for new members who joined the association from that DCPA member's referral (10 points), and for the member bringing guests to other events and activities, such as Blanket Brigade (2 points).

The Membership Drive Contest ran from January through September, so there were many opportunities for participants to earn points and change the stats on the leader board in this challenge! We hope Sharron enjoys the well-deserved *Date Night!* grand prize for her effort, which included a \$100.00 gift certificate for dinner and drinks at Hannah's off the Square plus two tickets to the production "Big Fish" at the Campus Theatre in Denton.

Thank you to all participants for reaching out to your professional colleagues and extending a person invitation to see what DCPA has to offer. We hope you enjoyed meeting new people and making new connections in the process. We all benefit when our membership grows!

The year-long membership drive/contest is finished and the clear winner is **Sharron Dowdle**. At the last meeting Sharron surged to the finish line and carried off the prize!

Congratulations, Sharron. Again, thank you to all our members who brought guests to our meetings and welcome to our new members!



## President's Message

By: Pamela Snavelly, ACP

There has been a great need for assistance recently due to natural disasters in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and Puerto Rico. The barrage by Hurricane Harvey, Irma, and Maria dealt serious blows to a great swath of the south and southeastern portions of the country. Local first responders and emergency personnel who are trained and equipped to handle emergency coordination of evacuation, rescue, and recovery stepped up in the aftermath. Volunteer aid and rescue efforts generated beyond the borders of the devastated areas were instrumental in saving lives and offering shelter.

While many of us may have provided financial aid to relief organizations or donated supplies, we have generally done so from the safety of our home base rather than venture into dangerous areas. We let the experts in the field help assess the damage, protect public health, safely clean up hazardous materials, and get things running again.

Although we may lack the training necessary to assist on the ground in an emergency situation, paralegals have a skill set and educational background that can be used to help others in need and make a difference within our local community. This year DCPA embarked on a new service project for the benefit of minors that stay in the Friends of the Family shelter. We made hand-tied, colorful fleece blankets to cheer and comfort kids displaced from their homes. It's a small token when you consider the bigger picture of what some of these children have had to endure, but we hope that this act of kindness has a positive impact on their well-being now and on their vision for the future.

When we volunteer to assist others through a community service program, we begin to see the things we have in common instead of our differences. The assistance we provide is a benefit to those in need and helps us connect with each other in new and stronger relationships. An act of service can provide a sense of purpose, transform perceptions, and encourage social responsibility in people of diverse backgrounds. It isn't difficult to take the first step and start with one small thing. As we grow from that experience and increase our confidence and skill level, we have more to offer and may begin to see a ripple effect that our participation in volunteer opportunities can have on the community.

Service opportunities abound for Texas paralegals. In addition to local churches that offer assistance to help those in need, here are some local and state programs for your consideration that welcome volunteers, will provide training, and accept donations:

**CACDC (Children's Advocacy Center for Denton County)** – Their mission is to empower child abuse victims, their families, and community through education, healing, and justice. They offer various ongoing volunteer opportunities including Family Greeter, Community Ambassadors, Committee Members for the Annual Gala, and Assistance Drive Hosts.

## President's Message Con't

**CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children)** – Volunteers are screened, highly trained, and then appointed by judges to represent and advocate for a child's best interests in the foster care system. Advocates provide a voice and hope for the future to Denton County children currently navigating the child welfare system.

**CCA (Christian Community Action)** – CCA is one of the largest nonprofits in North Texas, and provides services in a holistic approach from rescue through transition to self-sufficiency. They provide volunteer opportunities in the CCA Food Pantry, their Seasonal Programs, the Donation Center in Flower Mound and resale stores in Lewisville, Carrollton, and The Colony.

**DCFOF (Denton County Friends of the Family)** – Volunteers play an important part in the delivery of services to clients who are victims of violence. Volunteer opportunities for individuals include Crisis Line Facilitators, Legal Department Assistance, Administrative Support, Thrift Store Staff, Speaker's Bureau, and Survivors Advocacy Team, among others.

**IPTX (Innocence Project of Texas)** – A nonprofit human service organization that provides emergency investigation and legal assistance to low-income Texas citizens who were convicted of crimes they did not commit. Their mission is to restore citizen liberty that was unjustly taken, reconnect families torn apart by injustice, defend freedom in our democracy, and promote accuracy and integrity in our criminal justice process. They utilize the power of volunteers, including law students, lawyers, and paralegals.

**NTFB (North Texas Food Bank)** – They provide access to more than 190,000 meals each day for hungry children, senior citizens, and families in a 13-county service area. You can get involved by volunteering your time as an individual or group, donating money, hosting a canned food drive, participating in events that benefit NTFB, or becoming an advocate against hunger.

**RFW (Refuge for Women)** – This is a 3-phase program that provides a place of escape for sexually exploited women. They have created a safe place for residents to experience healing with few distractions and focus on sobriety, healing from trauma, and rebuilding trust. They seek volunteers that are able to provide healthy, safe, and loving relationships.

**TAJF (Texas Access to Justice Foundation)** – The Supreme Court of Texas created this state-based funding source for the provision of civil legal aid in Texas. They are committed to the vision that all Texans will have equal access to justice, regardless of their income. There are opportunities for lawyers, law students, and paralegals to donate their skills. *Remembering Our Heroes Campaign* will help Texas veterans access free legal help to successfully integrate back into civilian life and secure the rights and benefits for which they risked their lives.



## President's Message Con't

The above entities have experts to manage, implement, and run their programs, but they depend on volunteers to see things through and reach out to people on a personal level. Paralegals can perform valuable services and provide unique assistance with special tasks due to training, educational background, and skill set. Take the first small step to volunteer where your heart leads. *You can make a difference today that will make a better tomorrow for all of us.*



## Birthdays

Our members with November Birthdays are:

Kathy Galindo (11/02)  
Jesse Guerrero (11/3)  
Beth Honeycutt (11/5)  
Carla Pressly (11/18)  
Pamela Snavelly (11/22)

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

## Judges Recognition Ceremony A Huge Success!

Submitted by Pamela Snavelly, DCPA President

DCPA acquired and donated a commemorative plaque in honor of several esteemed Judges who retired from the bench within the last several years. This beautiful plaque commemorates each Judge with his or her name and years of service inscribed on a gold bar affixed to the plaque:

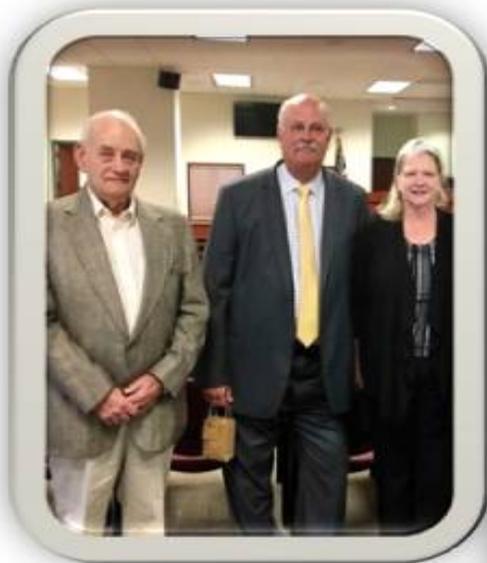
Sam Houston, 211<sup>th</sup> District Court  
David White, 362<sup>nd</sup> District Court  
Phillip Vick, 158<sup>th</sup> District Court  
John Narsutis, 16<sup>th</sup> & 158<sup>th</sup> District Courts  
Vicki Isaacks, 393<sup>rd</sup> District Court  
Darlene Whitten, County Court at Law #1  
Don Windle, Probate Court  
Jake Collier, 158<sup>th</sup> District Court  
Carmen Rivera-Worley, 16<sup>th</sup> District Court  
Richard Podgorski, County Criminal Court #5  
L. Dee Shipman, 211<sup>th</sup> District Court

DCPA dedicated the Judge's Plaque in a special recognition ceremony held in the Jury Assembly Room of the Denton County Courts Building on September 14, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Many of the Judges that were honored agreed to participate and attend this special event. All DCPA members were invited and encouraged to attend the ceremony to honor our retired Judges.

Many thanks to our distinguished speakers for sharing their insights and memories for the occasion: Richard Hayes, Hayes Berry White & Vanzant; Virgil Vahlenkamp, County Criminal Court #2; and Bruce McFarling, 362<sup>nd</sup> District Court. Special thanks to Rev. Clay Horton, Associate Pastor of Trietsch Memorial United Methodist Church, for closing the ceremony with a heartfelt benediction.

As always, we appreciate the hard work and effort of the DCPA Committee Members, chaired by Martha Gallegos, who facilitated this special event!

Photos from the ceremony are on the next few pages!



Honorable Sam Houston,  
Honorable L. Dee Shipman &  
Honorable Margaret Barnes



Mrs. David White &  
Honorable Sam Houston



Honorable Jake Collier &  
Honorable Don Windle



Honorable Virgil Vahlenkamp





Attorney Richard Hayes & Honorable Don Windle



Honorable Darlene Whitten



Honorable Margaret Barnes



Honorable Bruce McFarling



Speaker: Attorney Richard Hayes



Speaker: Honorable Virgil Vahlenkamp



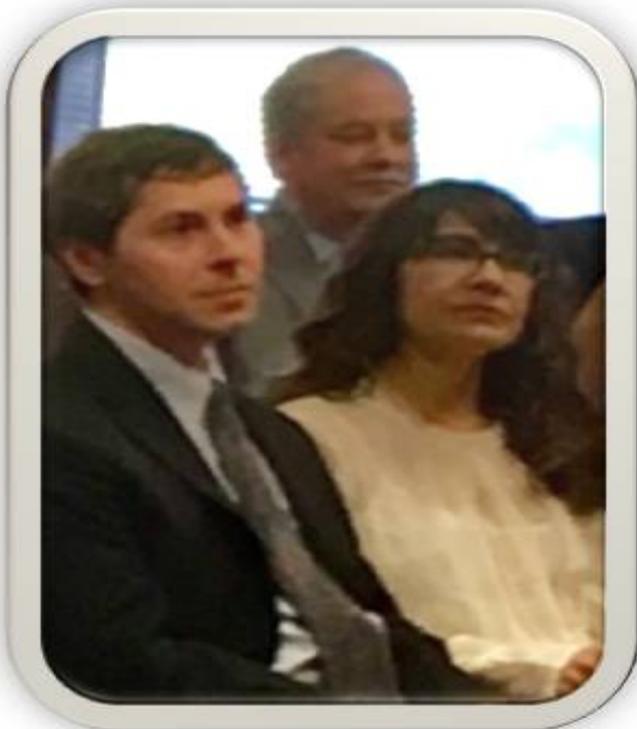
Speaker: Honorable Bruce McFarling



DCPA President Pam Snavelly & Attorney Richard Hayes



Honorable L. Dee Shipman & Attorney Bruce Isaacks



Rev. Clay Horton, Associate Pastor of Trietsch Memorial United Methodist Church & DCPA Secretary Martha Gallegos



DCPA Member Kim Guertler



431<sup>st</sup> Court Coordinator Denise Spalding



DCPA President Pamela Snavelly & Secretary Martha Gallegos



Honorable Don Windle & Honorable Darlene Whitten



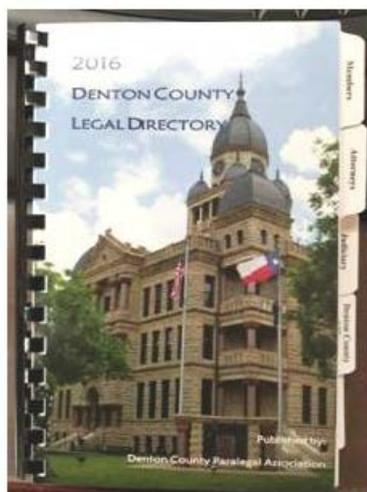
## SEPTEMBER'S CLE SPEAKER

Thank you Honorable David D. Garcia for any eye-opening and informative presentation regarding the Denton County Veteran's Treatment Court Program at our September CLE. We also appreciate the insights of attorney Sean Kilgore, who has been involved with the program since its inception.



## 2016 Legal Directory

By: Cheryl Cooper, Committee Chair



The 2016 Legal Directory Committee of the Denton County Paralegal Association is pleased to report that we have published our Denton County Legal Directory.

We are providing two options for the directory this year: a bound hard copy of the directory, as well as a digital copy of the directory that is on a flash drive. This is the first time in the history of DCPA that we have offered a digital copy of the directory and we are very pleased at the way they turned out.

If you, or someone you know, would like to purchase one of these directories, please contact Cheryl Cooper at [ccooper@reecerlaw.com](mailto:ccooper@reecerlaw.com); Work (940) 382-3168; or Cell (979) 277-8761.

Digital directory - \$15.00 (\$2.50 Shipping Fee)

Bound directory - \$22.00 (\$4.50 Shipping Fee)

Both directories - \$35.00 (\$6.50 Shipping Fee).

If you prefer to pick up a copy at no additional cost, you may do so, with advance notice, at the Reecer Law Firm, 400 W. Oak Street, Suite 205, Denton, Texas 76201.

Checks should be made payable to Denton County Paralegal Association and either hand-delivered or mailed to our address.

## Support Our Sustaining Members

**Please help support our Sustaining Members by calling them when you have a project that needs outside support. Remember it is through their continued support and generosity that DCPA is able to provide social events at a low cost.**

### **County Process Service**

#### **Fred Bowles**

159 Sunnyside Lane  
Valley View, Texas 76272  
Phone: 940-390-0914  
Email – [fbowles@ntin.net](mailto:fbowles@ntin.net)

### **Stoffels & Associates, Inc.**

#### **Janel M. Stoffels**

207 W. Hickory, Suite 304  
Denton, Texas 76201  
Phone: 940-565-9797  
Fax: 940-565-9197  
Email – [jmstoffels@aol.com](mailto:jmstoffels@aol.com)

### **File & ServeXpress**

#### **Jesse Guerrero**

500 E. John Carpenter Fwy  
Irving, Texas 75062  
Phone: 972-893-6691  
Fax: 888-529-7587  
Email – [jguerrero@fileandserve.com](mailto:jguerrero@fileandserve.com)

## Minutes

1. President Pamela Snavelly called the meeting held on September 21, 2017 to order at 12:10 p.m. at Oakmont Country Club in Denton. President Snavelly welcomed members, guest and speakers.
2. Guest speakers were Judge David Garcia and Sean Kilgore. They gave a presentation regarding Veteran's Court Treatment Program.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

3. Vicki Schmidt announced the winner of the Membership Drive Contest. Grand prize winner was Sharron Dowdle. She received a basket which included a \$100 gift certificate for dinner and drinks at Hannah's, two tickets to the production "Big Fish" at the Campus Theater in Denton and a bouquet of flowers.
4. Vicki Schmidt announced the candidates running for office: President Elect- Jenna Earhart, Secretary- Sharron Dowdle, and Treasurer- Lisa Pittman. President Pamela Snavelly asked if there were any nominees from the floor.
5. Sunnie Palmer gave an update on the Bylaws. They will email to approve and review.
6. The blanket deadline will be October 13<sup>th</sup>. The presentation to Friends of the Family is scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup> at the October meeting.
7. Daphina Parks gave an update on the upcoming Christmas Party. It is scheduled for December 7, 2017 at Ghenti's in Corinth.
8. There being no further business, President Snavelly adjourned the meeting at 1:17 p.m.