

June 2017

The Official Publication of the  
Montgomery County Paralegal Association  
[www.montcoparalegals.org](http://www.montcoparalegals.org)

**Next CLE**

*Welcome New Members*

*Legal Aid Golf Classic*

*Opinion: New Class of  
Legal Professionals  
Could Help Close Justice  
Gap*

*Governor's Proclamation*

## CLE LUNCH & LEARN

Tuesday, June 13, 2017  
12:00 p.m.

### Montgomery County Civil Procedures and Practices

Presented by  
Wendy Rothstein, Esquire

**Collections for Laurel House** While we appreciate all donations, the following goods are especially needed right now:

• Women's, Men's, Children's, Baby clothing - NEW OR GENTLY USED. Please no stains, tears, missing buttons, broken zippers, etc.) All Accessories (handbags, wallets, belts, scarves, gloves, hats) Jewelry (including broken sterling or gold), Toiletries (new and unopened)

**Fox Rothschild, LLP**  
10 Sentry Parkway, Suite 200  
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Blue Bell, PA 19422  
(610) 397-6500

**Lunch provided by:  
Fox Rothschild**

\$10.00 for MCPA members  
\$20.00 for NFPA affiliated members  
(evidence required)

**Light Bites and Beverages  
provided by MCPA**

Although we are aware of the dietary restrictions of many of our members, it is not possible to meet all dietary requirements for every member. If you have certain dietary limitations you are welcome to bring food with you to the meetings.

**Please RSVP to:**

**Jennifer Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa CP**  
[jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org](mailto:jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org)

**Pending Approval for 1.0 SUBSTANTIVE CLE  
by NFPA and Keystone Alliance\*\***

Visit us at:

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**Newsletter Committee:**

**Contributing Editor:**  
Suzanne Sarver, RP  
[suzannehoffman32@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannehoffman32@yahoo.com)

**Layout Editor:**  
Michelle Calkins, Pa.C.P.  
[Mcalkins@millerturetsky.com](mailto:Mcalkins@millerturetsky.com)



**WELCOME NEW  
MEMBERS**

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Paralegal*

*Kristi Rambo  
Customers Bank  
Paralegal*

*Mary Oliver  
Law Office OF Edward J. Gilson, Jr.  
Paralegal*

There are many reasons to join MCPA. When you become a member, you become a part of the dynamic changes that are transforming the legal industry and by helping to shape the future of paralegals. MCPA provides the tools and resources to help get you there, by advancing your career and enriching your knowledge with life-long learning resources.

MCPA Professional and Student members enjoy these benefits:

- ◆ *Receive MCPA's bi-monthly newsletter MCPA Today;*
- ◆ *Access the MCPA job bank;*
- ◆ *Access MCPA ListServe where paralegals can get advice and assistance in all areas of practice;*
- ◆ *Monthly meetings or Seminars\* dealing with topics that affect paralegals today;*
- ◆ *Obtain the annual MCPA Membership Directory;*
- ◆ *Automatic membership in the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA);*
- ◆ *Subscription to the National Paralegal Reporter, the official bi-monthly magazine of the NFPA;*
- ◆ *Network with paralegals and other members of the legal community;*
- ◆ *Stay on top of local and national trends in your career.*

Do you want to stay on top of local and national trends in your career and lend your voice to the future of the paralegal profession? Join MCPA today! [www.MCPA.org](http://www.MCPA.org)



## **Legal Aid Annual Golf Classic Tee off for Justice June 26th**

*Tee off on Friday, June 26, 2015 at the Montgomery Bar Association's Legal Aid Golf Classic hosted by the Meadowlands Country Club in Blue Bell, PA. This annual outing raises much needed funds for LASP's legal services for Montgomery County's vulnerable residents.*

*Not a golfer? That's ok! You can still support the Golf Classic by purchasing raffle tickets or sponsoring a tee. Download a brochure [here](#).*

*For registration information, please contact Nancy Hagner at 610-279-9660 x 208 or e-mail [nancyhagner@montgomerybar.org](mailto:nancyhagner@montgomerybar.org).*



## Opinion: New Class of Legal Professionals Could Help Close Justice Gap

*By: Karen Morin*



In his article “Help for the Unrepresented: A Look at a New Approach,” published in the Sept. 21, 2016, issue of Bar News, attorney Chuck Douglas advocates for the use of non-lawyer legal professionals to close the justice gap in New Hampshire. In contemplating how to provide low-income, unrepresented litigants with the legal help they need, he suggests that, “Just urging lawyers to take more pro bono cases is not going to solve the problem...”

I couldn’t agree more, and as a paralegal in New Hampshire, I would like to add that many paralegals are already in a position to play a role in bridging the justice gap. Paralegals already handle substantial legal work, and in a limited capacity, we could provide significant assistance to unrepresented litigants.

As Mr. Douglas points out, an astounding number of people are trying to navigate the justice system without an attorney because they cannot access representation. They fill courtrooms and clerks’ offices, trying to figure out what forms to fill out, what laws to read, and the roles of the professionals in the courtroom. They need assistance in obtaining justice.

As part of a comprehensive approach, a new class of legal professionals could be instrumental in providing assistance to unrepresented litigants. Legal needs are not all created equal. Many legal needs could be addressed by properly trained, non-lawyer legal professionals (NLPs); individuals with experience and skills similar to those of a paralegal, perhaps with some additional training depending upon the area of law and the scope of their services.

Around a dozen states are contemplating or have implemented programs using NLPs to provide limited legal services, including preparing and filing forms, reviewing and explaining exhibits and other legal documents, and providing support and guidance. NLPs are not lawyers and do not represent clients in court.

One example of a NLP program is New York’s Court Navigators Program. Volunteers (often college students and law students) are trained to assist unrepresented litigants in the Housing Court’s nonpayment proceedings. The Court Navigators do not give legal advice. They act as guides or interpreters, helping unrepresented litigants to access courthouse computers and other resources, and to collect and organize case documents. They can sit in on conferences with the judge or opposing party and respond to the judge’s request for factual information. They also help secure pro bono attorney services as needed.

In Washington State, Limited License Legal Technicians (LLLTs) have more latitude in their representation. They also have much more rigorous education and training requirements, must be licensed, and must secure professional insurance. LLLTs can represent clients in family law matters. They can open their own practices. At this time, LLLTs cannot represent a client in court (though that may come in the future), but they can help clients prepare legal forms, advise them on documents they will need, explain legal procedures and proceedings, and gather facts and explain their significance to the case.

CONTINUED

## Opinion: New Class of Legal Professionals Could Help Close Justice Gap CONTINUED

**By: Karen Morin**

Research will need to be done to determine how NLPs could help close the justice gap in New Hampshire. Personally, I don't think an LLLT program would be effective in addressing New Hampshire's justice gap. With all the costly requirements LLLTs must meet, how can they charge a significantly reduced rate?



I believe a program with less rigorous requirements could serve New Hampshire well in its efforts to close the justice gap. We could identify specific areas of law or specific services that are in high demand, and could tailor a NLP program to help meet the need. Relevant courses, taught by attorneys or other qualified individuals, could provide targeted information to paralegals for handling the need in these areas. Some paralegals may be able to show they have the required knowledge by taking an exam.

Paralegals could assist litigants in a limited capacity and at a reduced cost. Paralegals could make a big difference in the lives of the unrepresented litigants that stream into New Hampshire's courts on a regular basis. Doing so would take pressure off court employees, who do their best to guide unrepresented litigants while performing their own jobs. It would also help free up attorneys to handle the more complex legal matters that are better suited to their education and experience.

NLP programs vary, but the programs have a common goal. They are designed to be part of a comprehensive approach to bridge the justice gap. Our justice system is not designed for those who do not normally operate within it. Concepts and procedures that are basic and routine to those of us in the legal field are completely foreign to many others. That's why people hire lawyers and why the growing justice gap has resulted in new programs designed to help those who can't afford to hire one.

*This article first appeared in the New Hampshire Bar News, the monthly publication of the NH Bar Association. Karen A. Morin, RP® is a paralegal working for Sheehan Phinney in Manchester, New Hampshire. She works primarily in Intellectual Property, but she also has experience with liquor licensing and other corporate work. Karen graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Political Science, summa cum laude, from Northeastern University in 2002. She is currently the President of the Paralegal Association of New Hampshire, and has served on the Board since 2014 in various capacities. She earned her Registered Paralegal Designation with the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. in June, 2015.*



## DID YOU KNOW?

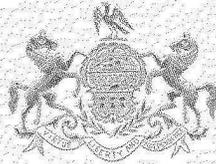
- Pennsylvania has a certification program for paralegals?
- Certified paralegals:
  - Must meet educational and employment requirements;
  - Raise your profitability;
  - Hold themselves to the same ethical and professional standards as attorneys; and
  - Create more value for your clients.

## LEARN MORE

Visit the website of the  
Keystone Alliance of Paralegals Associations at  
[www.keystoneparalegals.org](http://www.keystoneparalegals.org)



# Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



## Governor's Office

### PROCLAMATION

**PARALEGAL WEEK**  
July 24-28, 2017

**PARALEGAL DAY**  
July 28, 2017

*WHEREAS, the practice of law is a challenging and complex endeavor that has protected and preserved the rights, liberties, and safety of our citizens for centuries; and*

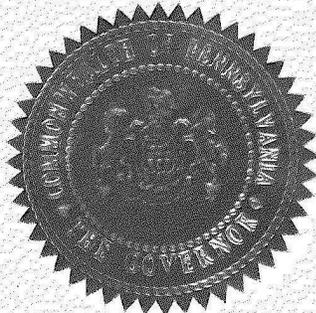
*WHEREAS, members of the bar require knowledgeable and reliable assistance to fulfill the duties of their profession; and*

*WHEREAS, paralegals have become an invaluable source of support in law offices, providing lawyers with a variety of skilled professional services throughout their practice; and*

*WHEREAS, paralegals are highly educated, trained, and experienced professionals with expertise in legal and case research, interviewing clients and witnesses, legal and correspondence writing, and other critical aspects of successful and efficient law practices; and*

*WHEREAS, the value of talented paralegals is often overlooked by the general public, but their worth is never underestimated by the lawyers and firms for whom they work.*

*THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim July 24-28, 2017, as PARALEGAL WEEK and July 28, 2017, as PARALEGAL DAY. I encourage all citizens to recognize the important tasks that paralegals accomplish and to reflect upon their role in ensuring our legal system remains strong and just.*



*GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, on this seventeenth day of April two thousand seventeen, the year of the commonwealth the two hundred forty-first.*

*Tom Wolf*  
TOM WOLF  
Governor



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Ro is a Paralegal at the law firm of Villari, Brandes & Giannone, PC in Conshohocken. She has been a member of MCPA since 2005 and has served as chair of the Planning &

Community Outreach Committees. She has also previously served as Treasurer for four years and Secretary for two years and was recently elected to serve as President. She resides in West Norriton with her husband, Larry.

***Jen Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa.C.P.—Secretary***

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 jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org

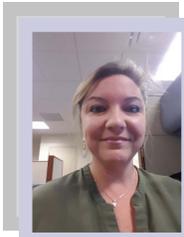


Jen is the Vice President of Finance at The Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation located in Hatboro. She has served on the Association's Board of Directors and was

recently elected to serve as its Secretary. She lives in Hatboro with her husband and two children.

***Suzanne H. Sarver, RP— Vice President***

Gramercy Property Trust  
 (267) 620-2963  
 suzannehoffman32@yahoo.com



Suzanne works for Gramercy Property Trust as a Registered Paralegal in the Horsham office. She currently serves as a Board of Director of the Association as well as Contributing Editor to its

newsletter and has recently been elected as the Vice President. She resides in Upper Gwynedd with her husband Brian and their two labs, Frack and Powerstroke.

***Kelly Smith, Pa.C.P. —Treasurer***

Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer  
 (610) 275-2000  
 ksmith@kanepugh.com



Kelly is a Paralegal at the law firm of Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer in its Norristown office. She currently serves as the Association Treasurer, a position she has held since 2013. She is also the Job

Bank Coordinator for the MCPA. She lives in Phoenixville with her cat, Emmett J.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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(2017—2019)

Chris works for the law firm, Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer as a Paralegal. He has been an active board member for the past 3 years and serves as its Social Media Committee Chair. Chris was born and raised in Willow Grove and still resides there with his family and their dachshund Queenie.



**Noreen Messmer, Pa.C.P.**  
(2017—2019)

Noreen is a Paralegal with the law firm of Ford & Buckman, P.C. in Blue Bell and has worked with Sarah Ford, Esquire for over 40 years. She has been a Board member since 2010 and also serves on the Hospitality/Planning Committee. Noreen lives in Blue Bell and is the mother of three and Nana to three granddaughters.



**Michelle Calkins, Pa.C.P.**  
(2017—2019)

Michelle is a Paralegal with Miller, Turetsky, Rule & McLennan located in Collegeville. She is an active member of the Association and currently serves as the Layout Editor of the MCPA newsletter. She lives live in Collegeville with her husband, Wes.



**Shari Weber Bradley, Pa.C.P.**  
(2016—2018)

Shari works for Peter E. Bort, Esquire at Bort Law which is a general practice firm. A long time member of MCPA, she was recently elected to the Board of Directors. Shari lives in Eagleville and is the mother of two twenty something boys and stepmother of three teen boys.



**Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P.**  
(2016—2018)

Nancy is a Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy was recently elected to the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She lives in Berks County with her husband, Joe and rescue dogs.

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| <b>NEWSLETTER</b>                                 | Suzanne Hoffman Sarver, RP—Contributing Editor<br><a href="mailto:suzannehoffman32@yahoo.com">suzannehoffman32@yahoo.com</a><br><br>Michelle Calkins, Pa.C.P.—Layout Editor<br><a href="mailto:mcalkins@millerturetsky.com">mcalkins@millerturetsky.com</a> |
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| <b>PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>                           | Jen Kuemmerle, Pa.C.P.<br><a href="mailto:jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org">jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org</a>  |
| <b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>                               | Christopher Gregg<br><a href="mailto:cgregg@kanepugh.com">cgregg@kanepugh.com</a>   |
| <b>STUDENT LIAISONS</b>                           | <b>Peirce College:</b><br>Annette M. Long-Tulio, CRP, Pa.C.P.<br><a href="mailto:amlong83@gmail.com">amlong83@gmail.com</a>   |
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