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Paralegal PERSPECTIVES

Paralegal Association of Rochester Inc. – a year in review

PAR was founded over 40 years ago to become an association of members consisting of paralegals, paralegal students and affiliate members. From 1975 to 2017, the PAR Board volunteers their time to maintain the association, its members and respect in the local legal community. PAR's objectives are to set high standards of ethical conduct for its members, conduct seminars and conferences to further members' education, provide a resource center for those in or interested in the paralegal profession and provide members with resources to volunteer, network and for career choices. The year 2017 has been no exception.

Events and Happenings

In January, PAR rolled out a new website that allowed members to update their profiles and register online, which also featured an updated interface that was received well by all. The much-anticipated tour of the Monroe County Crime Lab was held in January as well.

Our Trusts and Estate Section held its annual meeting in February at the Monroe County Surrogate's Court and had heartfelt gratitude for Chief Clerk Mark Annunziata and Assistant Chief Clerk Sarah Sennett. March saw the board working feverishly on membership renewals while also hosting the resoundingly successful first annual New Member Happy Hour at Monroe's organized by Events Director Amanda Nemchick. March included the huge announcement of Rochester hosting the 2019 NFPA convention, which is an honor that does not



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come often. April was a very busy month for the board for membership and in particular, our Membership Director Deborah King.

The beginning of May brought great sadness for PAR, the PAR Board members and all those who knew him with the passing of long-time PAR member and Treasurer Doug Kaleta of Harris Beach. He has

and will continue to be sadly missed.

Our annual dinner was held in May, where we thanked Dina Beaudette for her years of service as PAR's President and installed new President Jane Gorski. Dina also received the well-deserved Paralegal of the Year Award from Ralph Merzbach, Esq. The board also welcomed new officers and directors: Debra Drennan as secretary, Reagan Weinhart as co-chair of membership and JP Fountain and Darcia Mancini as directors at large.

The board held its summer meeting in July at the beautiful home of Jill Warner, PAR's marketing director. Sept. 6 marked our end-of-summer networking event hosted by D4 that even Mother Nature's rain could not stop! Many PAR members attended the ESAPA Education & Leadership Conference in Syracuse in mid-September and overall, attendees were impressed with the seminars, speakers and venue. September was capped off by PAR's Second Annual

Nine and Dine at Shadow Lake Golf Club; given its success, plans are already in the works for 2018. President Jane Gorski presented a check for \$1,000 to the Ed Orlando Fund of the Legal Aid Society from the proceeds of the golf event.

NFPA Primary Representative Deborah Wilcox-Mabry and President-Elect Bobbi Ahearn attended the NFPA Annual Convention in New Orleans in October and represented PAR's interests in many policy meetings and events throughout the three-day event. October also saw PAR's Kick-Off and Annual Auction that was held on an unseasonably warm day at Brook Lea Country Club with 57 members and sponsors in attendance who enjoyed not only the beautiful weather, but also the vibrant fall scenery.

PAR was also a sponsor for the 2017 Veterans Expo that was held at the Holiday Inn on Oct. 19. Several member volunteers assisted with the event again this year and we hope to expand PAR's assistance with this and other pro bono events in coming years. PAR held their holiday luncheon on Dec. 13 at the Powers Building and despite a rocky start to the weather that day, we had over 30 members and sponsors attend and all attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network with colleagues.

Seminars

Throughout the year, the board organized and held multiple CLEs for our members that encompassed a broad range of practices and interests. In January, "Paralegal

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Profession: Where We are Headed” was held with speakers Deborah Wilcox-Mabry and Jill Warner, RP. February saw a well-received discussion of Medicaid/Long-Term Planning with speaker Richard Marchese, Esq. Eileen Buholz, Esq. was the speaker for our social media CLE in March and in April, “Employment Law” with speaker Steven Modica, Esq. was held that left attendees feeling more informed about that practice area for professional and personal reasons. In June and considering Monroe County’s consensual e-filing program, we held a seminar titled “E-Filing in Monroe County and the 7th Judicial District” with speakers Sarah Sennett and Lisa Preston from the Monroe County Courts.

August brought an information-packed discussion on collections with speaker Jo-

seph Shur, Esq. Nov. 17 was “The Ethical Use of Paralegals” CLE with speaker Margaret Phillips, Director of Paralegal Studies at Daemen College. Attendees enjoyed Ms. Phillips’ interactive videos and her discussion on do’s and don’ts in the paralegal profession.

We have our first CLE for 2018 scheduled for Jan. 24, 2018 at the Telesca Center with Doris M. Cortes of the Empire Justice Center who will deliver a detailed discussion on Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, including rules and regulations, the prep work, briefs and interviews involved and the appeal process steps. Please visit www.rochesterparalegal.org to register online.

Our country has seen its fair share of highs, lows, sadness and happiness in 2017 from politics to the first solar eclipse in 99 years to Mother Nature wreaking havoc,

but we have also seen fellow Americans step up to fight for their beliefs, appreciate all of the wonders our world has to offer and as human beings, to sacrifice time, effort and generosity assisting those we know and love and in many instances, total strangers, through unimaginable devastation. As 2017 comes to a close, the PAR Board and I would like to send wishes to all for a happy, healthy 2018 and our hopes that we continue to spread unselfishness, kindness and generosity not only locally, but across America and the World. To our members, we say bring it on 2018 — onward and upward!

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