



# LAFAYETTE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

SPRING 2016

## 9 PRACTICES OF PROACTIVE PARALEGALS

Here are 9 practices to follow to be a proactive paralegal:

By Vicki Voisin, ACP



**1. Planning is crucial.** Hold planning sessions with yourself to set specific targets for your future. Put your goals in writing, along with deadline dates, and schedule time in your planner to actually work on them. When you do this, you create your own future rather than allowing unplanned events to dictate your future.

**2. Utilize your planner.** Make use of your planner to record future events and scheduled activities. It doesn't matter if you use an electronic planner or a paper planner. What is important is that you use it. When you can look at future events, you can anticipate possible problems and act before they occur. Just looking at an event, such as a meeting, in writing sets your mind thinking about things you will need for that meeting.

**3. Focus on problem solving.** Instead of bumbling along putting out fires, anticipate problems you might have and plan steps you can take now to prevent them from developing. Recognize that it's never too early to plan and planning too late results in crises and time critical situations.

**4. Evaluate procedures and processes.** Use checklists and processes for all recurring events or activities, such as preparing for trial, handling a real estate transaction, planning a meeting, or going on an interview. Update checklists frequently, adding anything that was missed and considering what works and what does not work. Make notes for improvements and incorporate them.

**5. Automate routine tasks.** Use templates or standard action plans to save time when you work on routine tasks. Include the delegation of tasks to those best suited to do them. Do not try to do everything yourself or, instead of being a proactive paralegal, you will be a burned-out paralegal.

**6. Anticipate needs.** Is any of your workload heavier at certain times of the day, week, month or quarter? What can you prepare in advance to lighten the workload during those

times? For instance, if a trial is scheduled in 90 days, what steps need to be taken to be prepared? Plan when you will take those steps.

**7. Watch industry trends.** Take charge of your career by observing new developments. For instance, if the work in your area of specialization is dwindling, plan how you will move to a specialty area that is in demand. If your firm appears to be downsizing, how can you be prepared so you land on your feet? Be sure to keep your resume updated and your options open. Take charge. Do not wait for someone else to make decisions for you.

**8. Network, network, network!** A support network is one of the most important career success tools you can have. While you should always concentrate on networking events, there are other avenues for making new contacts: utilize social media sites, such as FaceBook, LinkedIn and Twitter; go out of your way to meet people at non-work, such as a United Way meeting or a church social.

**9. Work on your attitude.** Attitude should be your weapon of choice in the battle to be proactive. Having the right attitude means you never resent the work you must do ahead of time to be successful in the future. Instead, you are always looking for ways to make your future easier and better.

**Your challenge:** Become a proactive paralegal by adopting these 9 practices. You will not only avert future disasters, but you will have a positive influence on your future – perhaps even the future itself.

*Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor", delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by setting goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She is the co-author of The Professional Paralegal: A Guide to Finding a Job and Career Success. Vicki publishes Paralegal Strategies, a weekly e-newsletter for paralegals, and hosts The Paralegal Voice, a monthly podcast produced by Legal Talk Network.*

### UPCOMING LPA SEMINARS:

- May 26, 2016  
*Effective Billing Techniques and Time Management*  
Sandy Porciaux, ACP
- June 23, 2016  
*Domestic Violence Cases: What Are They and How Should We Manage Them?*  
Attorney Richard D. Mere
- July 21, 2016  
*Parish Notaries v. Statewide Notaries and Powers Afforded to the Non-Attorney Notary*  
Shane J. Milazzo, Ph.D., iNotaryNow
- August 25, 2016  
*Ethics: Does it Really Matter?*  
Attorney Paul J. Hebert

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 2016 TBA  
*Paralegal Week Social and Membership Drive*  
TBA

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### LPA 2016-17 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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2016-17 Officers

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am humbled and honored to serve as your LPA President for the 2016-2017 year. I became a paralegal in 1980, when the profession was still in its infancy. As LPA begins its 32nd year I hope to follow in the footsteps of our past presidents by contributing something meaningful and of lasting value to an organization that has done much to support our profession. I am excited to be working with the new executive committee and board which is composed of LPA members who are serving as committee chairs for the first time, along with other members who have contributed tirelessly to our organization over the past years. My goal is to keep LPA growing, and to continue serving our membership with monthly seminars that are pertinent to our profession. With the assistance of everyone, I believe that goal will be achieved. March and April of this year started with our membership drive and with getting our new website up and running. Our membership renewal drive has proceeded at an excellent pace and hopefully we will match, if not surpass last year's numbers. Debbie Fontenot did an excellent job of maintaining LPA's website for many years; however, as she absorbed additional responsibilities as president of our state organization, she was in need of new hands to maintain the website. Maranda Pillsbury gave us a jumpstart on a new design and a new web host service. Kaye Pooler was instrumental in assisting with information for the site. Please check out our home page which I believe will be a great value to those of us looking for information about our "next meeting," and those who wish to join our organization. That information, along with newsletters, and our photo album, (among other items), is available to the general public. Our "Members Only" section has job bank listings, our bylaws, seminar materials, and contact information for current members. Check out our website at [lpa-la.org](http://lpa-la.org). Contact me at [cheryl@jankower.com](mailto:cheryl@jankower.com) if you have a suggestion as to content that would be helpful to you!



*Cheryl Dubois, CP*

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## LPA MEMBER ACHIEVES ACP DESIGNATION

Congratulations to LPA Member and Job Bank Chair, Michelle Neef, who recently earned her Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP) designation in E-Discovery following successful completion of NALA's Advanced Certified Paralegal Exam in E-Discovery.

Michelle is a paralegal at Allen & Gooch specializing in legal malpractice and insurance defense.

For more information on applying for a scholarship from LPA to take the ACP or other paralegal exams, please contact Kelly Rhodes at [rhodesk@onebane.com](mailto:rhodesk@onebane.com).



*Michelle Neef, ACP*

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## LPA MEMBER ACHIEVES CP DESIGNATION

Congratulations to LPA Member and Scholarship Chair, Kelly Rhodes, who recently earned her Certified Paralegal (CP) designation following successful completion of NALA's Certified Paralegal Exam. Kelly is a paralegal at The Onebane Law Firm.

For more information on NALA's Certified Paralegal Exam, visit NALA's website at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).

For more information on applying for a scholarship from LPA to take the Certified Paralegal Exam or other paralegal exams, please contact Kelly at [rhodesk@onebane.com](mailto:rhodesk@onebane.com).



*Kelly Rhodes, CP*



## AM I A CERTIFIED PARALEGAL?

The issue of what makes a paralegal “certified” has come up numerous times over the years. Many paralegals who complete an education program and obtain a “Certificate of Completion” apply to be members of LPA under the “Certified Paralegal” category. A Certificate of Completion does not make you a Certified Paralegal! It makes you a “Certificated” Paralegal. A “Certified Paralegal” is a paralegal who has passed a national certifying examination from one of the three national associations that offers such an examination: NALA (National Association of Legal Assistants), NFPA (National Federation of Paralegal Associations) and NALS (National Association of Legal Professionals). To even sit for one of these examinations, a paralegal must meet certain education and experience requirements (similar to paralegals applying to be active members of LPA).

A “Certificated Paralegal” is a paralegal who has completed a Paralegal Certificate course either online or at some institution. Many of these courses simply provide a certificate of completion, which is not the same thing as having the knowledge needed to pass a national certifying examination.

Know the difference!

For more information on becoming a Certified Paralegal, visit the websites of any of the three national associations: [NALA](#), [NFPA](#), [NALS](#).



Microsoft®  
**Outlook®**

## SOFTWARE TIPS

Does your email come in so fast you can't keep up?

One solution is to create an **email filter** to automatically organize the incoming messages.

Do you work for more than one attorney? Have their incoming emails go to their own folders so you can see all of their tasks at once:

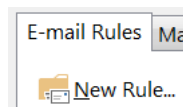
- Click the “File” tab. Click “Manage Rules and Alerts”.



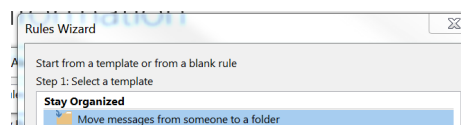
### Rules and Alerts

Use Rules and Alerts to help organize your incoming e-mail messages, and receive updates when items are added, changed, or removed.

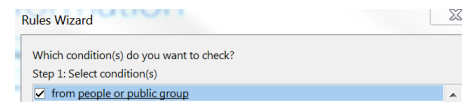
- Click “New Rule”



- The first option should be “Move messages from someone to a folder”



- The first option should be “from people or public group”. Make sure it is checked.



- Under “Step 2” click the links to specify whose emails to filter and which folder to send it to

### Step 2: Edit the rule description (click an underlined value)

Apply this rule after the message arrives  
from people or public group  
move it to the specified folder  
and stop processing more rules

- Enjoy having all your emails from that person automatically routed to its own folder. Now you can click that folder (sidebar of your mailbox) to see all messages sent by that person.

*Hint: Keep the message marked as “Not Read” until the task has been acted on.*



**LAFAYETTE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION**

*Invites you to a  
Dutch-Treat Luncheon and Seminar*

# **Effective Billing Techniques And Time Management**

presented by



## **Sandy Pourciaux ACP**

**Advanced Certified Paralegal  
Onebane Law Firm**

**Thursday, May 26, 2016**

**12:00 Noon to 1:30 p.m.**

**Petroleum Club of Lafayette  
111 Heymann Boulevard**

**ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND**

*Meal Choices: \$14.75 for Plated Served Meal  
Main Line Buffet Downstairs (including Salad Bar) \$18.00  
Beverage only \$3.00 • Non-Members \$5.00 Seminar Fee*

*Please RSVP before 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 25<sup>h</sup>  
to poolerk@bellsouth.net or (337) 247-4540*

Check out our website at <http://lpa-la.org>





## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE

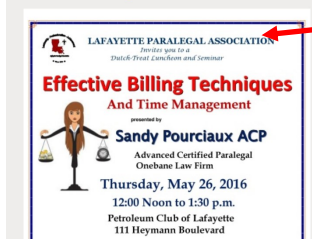
If you have not yet visited LPA's new website, it is worth a look! Check us out at [www.lpa-la.org](http://www.lpa-la.org). Here are a few of the website's best features:

- You can find a full list of **upcoming luncheon seminars** on the right side of the Home Page.

### Upcoming Events

- The Lafayette Paralegal Association offers an average of 10 Continuing Education seminars each year. We urge members and non-members to join us for these interesting and educational events held at the Lafayette Petroleum Club. Hope to see you there!
- May 26, 2016 - "Effective Billing Techniques and Time Management" by Sandy Pourciaux, ACP
  - June 23, 2016 - "Domestic Violence Cases: What are they and how should we manage them?" by Attorney Richard D. Mere
  - July 21, 2016 - "Parish Notaries vs. Statewide Notaries and Powers Afforded to the Non-Attorney Notary" by Shane J. Milazzo, Ph.D., iNotaryNow
  - August 25, 2016 - "Ethics: Does it Really Matter?" by Attorney Paul J. Hebert
  - September, 2016 - Paralegal Week and Membership Drive Social. (Date and location to be announced)
  - 2016 - TBA
  - 17, 2016 - "Medical Planning" by Steven M. Jankower

### May Seminar



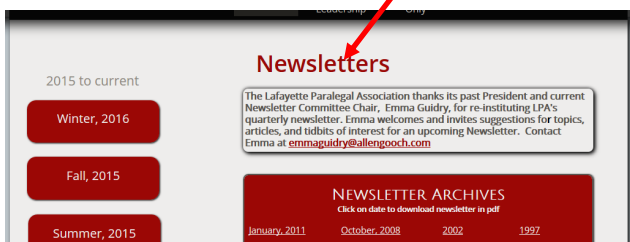
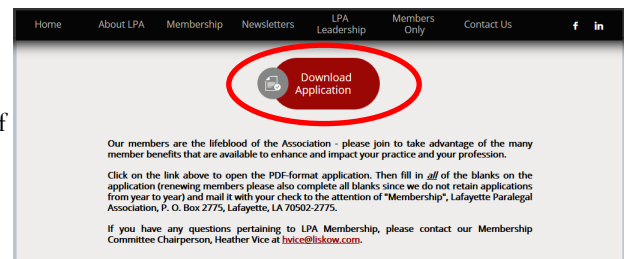
- The left side includes a copy of the flyer for the **most recent upcoming luncheon**.

- The **Photo Album** (under "About LPA") includes photographs from this year's luncheon seminars and events

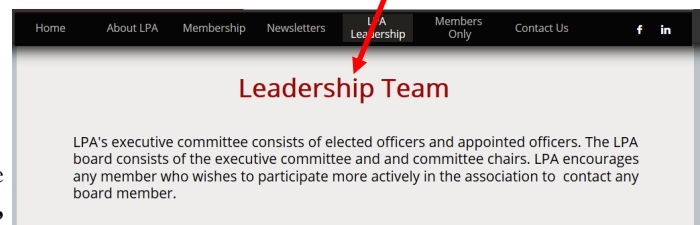


- Download an **application for membership** (under "Membership")

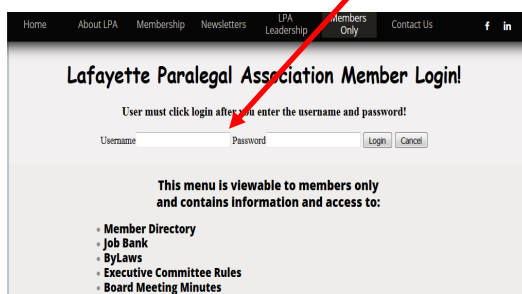
- Access this **Newsletter** and past issues of the Newsletter (under "Newsletter")



- Get to know your **Executive Committee and Committee Chairs** (under "LPA Leadership")



- As a member of LPA, access to the **Job Bank, member directory, Bylaws, Executive Committee Rules and Board Meeting Minutes** (under "Members Only")



- Links to our social media pages



- A **multitude of other information**, including scholarship application information, membership benefits, sustaining membership benefits and application, mission statement, information about paralegals, etc.

## IN-HOUSE PARALEGALS V. LAW FIRM PARALEGALS

An interesting article appeared recently on a great Paralegal blog, The Estrin Report: [http://estrinlegaled.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2016/05/do-in-house-paralegals-get-more-respect.html](http://estrinlegaled.typepad.com/my_weblog/2016/05/do-in-house-paralegals-get-more-respect.html)

The premise of the article indicated that in-house paralegals generally seem happier than law firm paralegals and sought to get to the bottom of why this might be the case. Apparently, corporate in-house paralegals feel like they receive more respect and this is because "the law firm hierarchy does not exist." The management in corporate legal departments appear to better understand the role of a paralegal, whereas in law firms, paralegals tend to be under-utilized and a clear

role is not understood.

"For one thing, corporate work is not a war between litigants, but rather people working together to make the corporate 'machine' function effectively and efficiently." Michele Suzuki, an in-house paralegal at MicoVenton. There is a difference of opinion - some paralegals who have worked both in-house and in law firms, think that they received more respect in the law firm and were treated more similarly to a secretary in-house.

An official survey sent out by the writer of the blog, returned the result of 49.5% of paralegals feeling they were treated better in-house, 24.4% treated equally, 14.1% treated better in a law firm.



## A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Can you identify the LPA Members in this Photograph??



*Harry Connick, Sr. swearing in elected officers*

A few of you may remember the year that Harry Connick, Sr. swore in the elected LPA Officers. A \$5 CC's Coffeehouse Gift Card will go to the first person that can identify the LPA Members in this photograph. Submit your entry by 5:00 p.m. on June 17, 2016 to Cheryl Dubois, [cheryl@jankower.com](mailto:cheryl@jankower.com).

## CONGRATULATIONS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Congratulations to our 2015-16 Scholarship Award recipients!



*Debbie Fontenot presents  
Michelle Domas with a certificate*

Michelle Domas received the scholarship for NALA's CP Examination. She is currently in the process of completing the exam.



*Debbie Fontenot presents  
Michelle Neef with a certificate*

Michelle Neef received the scholarship for NALA's ACP Examination which she has recently completed in the field of E-Discovery.





Richard Petre

## RECENT SEMINARS

April 28, 2016

### **Insurance Law—Recent Updates—** **Richard Petre**



Richard Petre is an attorney with the Onebane Law Firm specializing in insurance coverage, insurer bad faith, personal injury, civil rights, arson, and construction litigation.

Mr. Petre is also the author of a book entitled *Louisiana Liability and Property Insurance Coverage: A Handbook for the Busy Practitioner*. Click [here](#) for information on purchasing the handbook.

Mr. Petre's informative presentation included Powerpoint slides that are available on the members only section of our new website. Click [here](#) to log in and download the seminar materials.



Ken St. Pe'

March 24, 2016

### **Wage and Hour Law—Ken St. Pe'**

Ken St. Pe' of St. Pe' Law gave a presentation on wage and hour law.

His office specializes in a variety of practice areas, including nursing home neglect and abuse, car/motorcycle accidents, wrongful death, offshore accidents, Jones Act claims, product liability claims, medical malpractice, dangerous drug and medical products litigation, admiralty and maritime, employment law, wage and hour disputes and business litigation.



Emma Guidry and Cathy Bacon

February 25, 2016

### **Election and Installation of Officers—Cathy Bacon**

The 2015-16 Officers were elected and installed at the Annual Meeting held on February 25, 2016.

Cathy Bacon, recently retired Division Manager with the United States District Court, told some great stories from her career.

The officers elected for the 2016-17 fiscal year were Cheryl Dubois, CP, President; Heather R. Vice, J.D., Vice-President; Marilyn Lopez, Secretary; Savannah Stephan, Treasurer.



Cathy Bacon swears in the 16-17 Officers

For more information on the 2016-17 Elected and Appointed Officers, see pages 8 and 9 of this Newsletter.



## RECENT EVENTS

April 8, 2016

### *LPA at Downtown Alive!*

Twice a year, LPA volunteers to beertend, caketend and “quality control” at Downtown Alive! It’s a great way to get our organization’s name out in the community and have fun in the process.

This year, the band was Zydeco Radio.

We’d love to have you join us in the fall. If you’re interested in volunteering, contact Savannah Stephan at [sps@trhaplc.com](mailto:sps@trhaplc.com)



## HELP WANTED! SUGGEST A TOPIC OR SPEAKER

Do you have a hot topic or want to recommend a great speaker for a future LPA Seminar? We’d love to hear your ideas!

**Topics?** When considering a Topic, preferably it should be one that will qualify for CLE Credits from NALA, with substantive information relevant to law practices and useful to paralegals in their pursuit of same. Remember that it should be educational in nature and appeal to the professional development needs of LPA members.

**Speakers?** When selecting speakers, attorneys, paralegals, or legal entities are considered to be first in order for members to obtain continuing education credits (CLEs). Speakers should not promote their services, products, or companies in the course of their presentations.

So, who would you like to hear, and what would you like to see covered? Send your ideas to our Program Chair, Kaye Pooler ([poolerk@bellsouth.net](mailto:poolerk@bellsouth.net)) or to any Board Member (<http://lpa-la.org/officerscommittees.html>) so we can start working on your suggestions.

## BENEFITS OF LPA MEMBERSHIP

- Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminars
- \$5 non-member Seminar fees waived
- Opportunity for Educational Scholarships
- Access to the Job Bank
- Access to Membership Directory
- Access to LPA's quarterly newsletter
- Networking Opportunities with other paralegal professionals
- Invitation to Paralegal Week Social
- Discounted admission to Christmas Luncheon



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Monika Arceneaux
- Ashley Bouton
- Charmaine Guidry
- Marcie Henry
- Jaleesa Randle
- Wendy Sais

## **MEET YOUR 2016-17 OFFICERS**

### **CHERYL DUBOIS, CP, LCP, PRESIDENT**



I was in middle school when I knew I wanted to work in the legal profession. I remember the day a few months before my college graduation when a classmate told me about job opportunities for paralegals at Acadiana Legal Services. Within six months after graduating from USL with a degree in Political Science, I began employment as a paralegal and received training in representing clients at social security disability hearings as well as training in legal research. I

moved on to the private sector after about 18 months, and began working for a plaintiff firm, where I continued to work with clients on social security matters and expanded my litigation skills. After about 5 years I left personal injury work and spent the next 20 plus years working as a litigation paralegal for defense firms. Approximately 4 years ago I began working at my present job with Jankower Law Firm, L.L.C., where again I work with an attorney

who assists clients with Medicaid planning. My social security background has proved to be an asset in regard to my current position.

In the last few years I have passed the statewide Louisiana Notary exam and the NALA paralegal certification examination.

My husband, Jude and I have been married for nearly 35 years; we have two wonderful daughters and two awesome grandsons. We both enjoy travel and photography.



### **HEATHER R. VICE, J.D., VICE-PRESIDENT**

Heather R. Vice, J.D. is a Litigation Paralegal at Liskow & Lewis in the firms product defense, energy litigation, business litigation, aviation, toxic tort and environmental litigation and maritime, oilfield, and insurance sections.

Mrs. Vice is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Administration of Justice. She attended classes at the University of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland, towards a Master's of Science in Criminal Justice. She then went on to earn her Juris Doctorate from Widener University School of Law, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

### **MARILYN LOPEZ, SECRETARY**



I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. I have been a notary and paralegal for Acadiana Legal Service Corporation for the past 16 years. While employed at Acadiana Legal Service Corporation I have worked as an Intake paralegal, paralegal and currently as a Senior paralegal. I currently work in the firm's Litigation Unit. I am also the firm's Law Librarian. In addition I do outreach at the Msgr. Sigur Center one day a week in conjunction with the Lafayette Bar Association to assist with the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (H.E.L.P.) program. We obtain certified birth certificates for the homeless or for those who are unable to pay the fees associated with obtaining a birth certificate. Without identification, shelters will not allow a person to stay the night, landlords will not lease, securing a job is difficult and getting minor children in school is virtually impossible. I have been working with H.E.L.P. for the past three years. I am an active member of the Pines to the Gulf Girl Scout Troop 167. I've been an active member of the Lafayette Paralegal Association since 2015 and plan to continue for many years to come.

## SAVANNAH STEPHAN, CP, TREASURER

Savannah Stephan grew up in Monroe, Louisiana, but has lived in Lafayette most of her adult life. After a career in banking that included lending, commercial credit analysis, and branch management, she changed fields and began working at Allen & Gooch, first in database and then as Joel Gooch's paralegal. She completed her paralegal training and sat for NALA's Certi-

fied Paralegal exam, earning her CP in 1997. The bulk of Savannah's experience is in insurance defense, but she has also worked in a general civil practice and in family law. She is employed at the Law Offices of Thomas R. Hightower, Jr.

Savannah has been active in LPA since the early 1990's, serving on the board for most of those years. She has held

every office, including two terms as president, and worked on various committees. She is currently serves as treasurer. Perhaps even more than the professional benefits of membership, Savannah values the many friendships she has gained through LPA.



## EMMA GUIDRY, CP, LCP, PARLIAMENTARIAN

Emma Guidry, CP, LCP was born and raised in Laramie, Wyoming but has resided in Louisiana since her freshman year at Louisiana State University. Her legal career began in Baton Rouge at a small husband-wife firm assisting with the plaintiff side of personal injury, medical malpractice and legal malpractice claims as well as family law, successions, interdictions, wills, trusts and the formation

of business organizations and other entities. She is currently employed at Allen & Gooch APLC in Lafayette and works primarily in workers' compensation and Longshore defense. Since joining the firm, she has obtained her notary commission and the Certified Paralegal and Louisiana Certified Paralegal. She has been an active member of LPA and served previously as Vice-President and President.

Emma holds a bachelor's degree in music performance from Louisiana State University and performs in the cello sections of the Acadiana Symphony and Baton Rouge Symphony. She is currently serving as the Orchestra Committee Chair of the Acadiana Symphony and musician representative to the Board of Directors. She is also an active chamber musician around south Louisiana.



## MICHELLE DOMAS, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

This year, Michelle Domas is serving as Corresponding Secretary of LPA.

She has been employed in the legal field since 1986. Michelle worked primarily for plaintiff attorneys in the field of personal injury, until she jumped ship in 2008 to work for Ottinger Hebert, LLC.

She now works for defense attorneys who specialize in transactional work, contract litigation, and environmental litigation.

Michelle lives in Lafayette with her husband, and is almost an empty nester. She is looking forward to another great year with LPA!







LAFAYETTE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 2775  
Lafayette, LA 70502-2775

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
[WWW.LPA-LA.ORG](http://WWW.LPA-LA.ORG)

PROFESSIONALISM FIRST . . .

The Lafayette Paralegal Association (LPA) was organized in 1984 by a group of paralegals attempting to identify goals and objectives common to the paralegal profession. Bylaws were formulated and, in 1985, the first officers were elected and committees formed in order to implement the goals and objectives of the association.

In 1999, LPA became a not-for-profit corporation.

The number of paralegals in the workforce has more than doubled in recent years, and so has LPA membership. Four classifications of membership are available:

Active [voting]  
Student [non-voting]  
Associate [non-voting] and  
Sustaining [sponsor, non-voting]

LPA continues to pursue the goals identified by its charter members by:

- Offering continuing education through its monthly luncheon seminars;
- Participating in activities with other organizations in the legal community
  - Encouraging national certification

Want to learn more?

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