



Propagating Paralegal Punditry

by Aaron L. Thompson

In all my years working in the paralegal profession one alliteration has forever influenced my daily decisions; "Prior Preparation Prevents Pretty Poor Performance."

I recently became the newest Chair of the Utah State Bar Paralegal Division. With the welfare of our division weighing heavily on my mind I can not help but naturally assume the role as its Chief Cheerleader, incessantly proclaiming the diverse benefits that paralegals provide to the legal profession. And yet this single resounding alliteration continues to reverberate the inherent significance of our state's paralegals ever so naturally.

As a paralegal I haven't taken the normal career route. The State of Utah has a large portion of paralegals that work for law firms. However, this is metaphorically where the two roads diverge and having taken a different route has provided me a greater understanding of how valuable our paralegals are to the State of Utah, our legal profession, and our local and national communities.

Having felt the paralegal call to service through civic duty to continually strive to fight for justice and the betterment of my local and national communities, I equally divided my time working between the legal profession as well as political causes. In so doing I have seen the many ways that paralegals are being utilized in other states that have yet to occur in our great state of Utah.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the many years working as a paralegal in the political environment with local and national elections. I have learned that paralegals can be found in so many industries assisting the efforts for something as simple as college and university legal departments all the way up through the inner workings of the recent Presidential elections. As we lived our lives leading up to the 2008 November General Election, paralegals were being sent to various states to perform Advance Staff logistics working with local contractors to ensure the various events would run smoothly. Paralegals were being employed in opposition research, rapid media response, E.E.C. and campaign expenditure

filings, as well as working with local attorneys in various states to protect against voter intimidation and voter fraud. Paralegals have also been found conducting multifaceted domestic and international event scheduling for the State Department, writing speeches, talking points, press releases, conducting surveys, as well as implementing logistical plans for the past Presidential inauguration. Paralegals inherently multi-task and carry a diverse set of tools in their holsters somewhat like a Swiss Army knife.

We all are experiencing the financial market crises now being scrutinized by our legislators and senatorial committees. All these matters and more are predominantly on the minds of the Utah State Bar Paralegal Division Board of Directors. Accordingly, we are working hard to bring a comparative economic value to the work we perform.

We have already begun a new plan to communicate our efforts more efficiently through the recent development of a new user-friendly web site. As a Board we are additionally proud of the design of a new Division logo recently completed and originally drafted by a local Utah graphics art talent, Jonathan Turner from Logan, Utah. As with any logo, a lot of planning, research, and discussion went into drafting this logo to find a symbol that conveys the significance of our role as directors, paralegals, and members of the legal community. Contained within this logo you will find the year our Division was established, the scales of justice, the gavel, the state flower, and the state symbol of the beehive. As paralegals we are industrious by nature with a

AARON THOMPSON is a paralegal specializing in risk management and diverse commercial insurance exposures with Headwaters Incorporated and the current Chair of the Utah State Bar Paralegal Division.



glowing sense of pride in the progress of our local and national community. We love to help bring down the costs of hiring legal professionals and making legal services more affordable. We thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities we have to continually support attorneys. Like the symbolic nature of the colors laden in the artwork of our Division's logo, we are driven by our idealism and bound by our judicial loyalty to those we work for in our individual paralegal expertise, albeit corporate law, medical malpractice, or criminal law among various other specialties. Our Division members are utilized in a wide-range of legal and non-legal professions in this country and within our state. Our members work as paralegals for a variety of public, private, and governmental institutions in Utah.

As we round out the final months of this year, I hope you will

take my advice to heart and examine those paralegals who work around you and value them for their tireless problem-solving efforts. Paralegals naturally execute the optimal work product understanding the spirit of this little statement that "prior preparation (always) prevents pretty poor performance." I hope you will continually lean on the diverse skill set of paralegals, realizing their extensive economic value. Additionally, in the next year as a Division we hope to hone our skills while becoming more integrated in various aspects of the Utah Bar's work to ensure a fair and impartial judiciary. We also hope that you will follow our initiatives to better the paralegal profession through unfettered professional dedication, civility, and contributions to improve our legal and local community.