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# Fall 2023

# Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar

## Newsletter



**WELCOME:**

We are excited to present the 2023 Fall Quarter Newsletter. Welcome to all our fellow members within the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar. We genuinely appreciate your support and are excited for another year. If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback, we invite members to reach out to any Board member individually or send an email to the Paralegal Division at [utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com](mailto:utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com).

[Utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com](mailto:Utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com)

## Welcome the 2023-2024 Paralegal Leadership

### **LIBERTY STEVENSON**

*Division Chair | Executive Committee*



Liberty Stevenson has over twenty years of experience as a paralegal working primarily in Domestic/Family law. She is currently employed at Bean Family Law as paralegal to Melissa M. Bean. Liberty has had the privilege of working with some of the best family law attorneys in Salt Lake City, including Melissa M. Bean, Christina I. Miller, Stephen C. Clark, Mary C. Corporon, and the Honorable Judge Elizabeth A. Hruby-Mills at Richards Brandt Miller Nelson, before Judge Hruby-Mills took the bench. Liberty has so much appreciation for the knowledge and experience she has gained from each of the attorneys she has worked with throughout her career. Liberty completed the paralegal program offered through both Weber State University and Utah Valley University, and she became a NALA Certified Paralegal in June 2023. Liberty has one son and two dogs, and enjoys time spent with her extensive family.

### **TRINA KINYON**

*Chair Elect | Director At Large | Officer | Executive Committee*

Trina Kinyon is employed with Black Rifle Coffee Company as their Sr. Manager, Legal Compliance & Corporate Securities. She has her bachelor's degree in criminal justice and associate degree in paralegal studies. Her paralegal career began in 2009 working as a bankruptcy paralegal before going in-house in 2016. Trina's in-house experience includes: international legal affairs, IP, contracts, corporate governance, and legal operations. Trina co-founded the Women of Filevine group whilst working at Filevine.



In late 2021, Trina was crowned United States of America's Ms. Utah 2022, where she served the State of Utah by volunteering as a mentor and career coach for People Helping People. Trina is currently competing for the title of Ms. USA Continental Worldwide, where her community involvement includes volunteering as the Utah County Regional Leader for the Battlin' Betties, and the community chair for the Thanking Heroes initiative for the Glow Together Foundation.

**LESLIE BULLARD**

*Secretary | Director At Large | Officer | Executive Committee*



Leslie Bullard works as an in-house corporate paralegal at C.R. England, Inc., one of North America’s largest transportation companies offering dedicated contract carriage and logistics services. She is a trusted leader within the legal department recognized for her work in handling litigation support from catastrophic fatality accidents to class actions, her understanding of complex insurance policies and collaborative teamwork amongst the support staff. Leslie graduated from Weber State University with a bachelor’s degree in political science, a minor in legal studies, and paralegal certification. She is enthusiastic about her work as a paralegal and is excited about continuing to grow within this field. She has two dogs and enjoys music, reading, and rock climbing in her free time.

**JACOB CLARK**

*Finance Officer | Director At Large | Officer | Executive Committee*

Jacob Clark received his Paralegal Studies degree from Ensign College in 2017 and has since been employed as a legal assistant and paralegal at Smith Hartvigsen, PLLC, specializing in water law, land use, and civil litigation. He has extensive experience performing title and property research at recorders’ offices throughout the state. He also monitors and manages all water rights filings for nearly 2,000 collective water rights for various clients of Smith Hartvigsen. Jacob has been married to his high school sweetheart since 2010 and is the proud father of four boys.



**SHALISE MCKINLAY**

*Parliamentarian | Elections Committee Chair | Director At Large*



Shalise McKinlay has worked in the legal field for over twenty-five years. She is currently a Paralegal at Dominion Energy Questar Corporation. Before becoming employed at Dominion, she spent 25 years at the law firm of Richards Brandt Miller Nelson. Shalise also works as an Adjudication Officer for Park City Municipal. She attended Weber State University and obtained her paralegal certification through the University of Phoenix. Shalise has experience in a wide variety of cases, including personal injury, insurance defense, employment discrimination claims, products liability, workers’ compensation, domestic, and business. Shalise has a love for golf and enjoys being outdoors.

**KYM MAY**

*Education Committee Co-Chair | Region 1 Director*

Kym May graduated from Mountain West Junior College with an associate degree and paralegal certificate in 1989, when the paralegal profession was still pretty new. Since then, she has witnessed many changes in the technology related to being a paralegal, how attorneys have come to appreciate the profession and how they have come to recognize the utilization and profitability of using a paralegal. Her experience includes estate planning and probate, family law, criminal law, bankruptcy law, personal injury defense and most recently medical malpractice defense with Snow, Christensen & Martineau. She has greatly enjoyed being a paralegal and the opportunities it has provided, and as importantly, the friendships she has made. She is the mother of four, grandmother of three and is married to her wonderful husband, Pete.



**MARCI COOK**

*Education Committee Co-Chair | Director At Large*



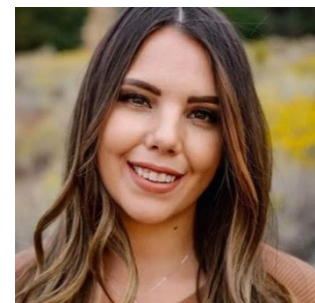
Marci Cook is currently employed as a Paralegal at Snow, Christensen & Martineau, where she has been for over 20 years. Her specialty (and true love) is medical malpractice defense. She enjoys learning new things with each case and working with doctors and clinics/hospitals, as well as highly regarded medical experts across the country. She also has extensive experience in personal injury, class-action litigation, product liability, and general insurance defense. She graduated with her Associate of Arts Degree in Paralegal Studies in 1997, where she earned the honor of class valedictorian and was on the Dean’s List. She now has over 26 years of experience in the legal field. Her ability to fully assess and work up cases has made her a valuable asset and created a career and environment she thrives in.

Marci loves the outdoors, dogs, books, and yoga. She has one son and loves spending time with him and her husband, Jim.

**ALEX VAKAUTA**

*Community Service Committee Co-Chair | Director at Large | Yount Lawyer’s Division Liaison*

Alexandra Vakauta is a Paralegal with over 11 years of experience. She has experience in Social Security Disability law, state, and federal civil litigation, and is currently working for the Utah Attorney General’s Office in their Environment Division. She graduated from Salt Lake Community College with an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal Studies. She has a passion for advocating for others and being a voice in this profession. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and 2 daughters.



## **GRETCHEN LOWE**

*Community Service Committee Co-Chair | Director At Large | Young Lawyer's Division Liaison*



Gretchen Lowe is a Utah native and has been a Paralegal since her graduation from SLCC in December 2005. During her time as a Paralegal, she has spent the majority of her education in the areas of Bankruptcy and Family Law, and has worked in multiple additional areas including personal injury, trust/wills, and litigation to name a few. She is currently a Corporate Paralegal at Pura in Utah County.

Gretchen has also been a mediator since 2006 and within a year became a Master Mediator with the State of Utah where she was a full-time domestic mediator for approximately 5 years and still continues

to conduct domestic mediation as called upon.

Gretchen has completed all education requirements to proceed with her Licensed Paralegal Practitioner interests. Gretchen is a member of NALA and is currently assisting NALA with the testing requirements as a subject matter expert. Gretchen is also studying to take the exam herself. Gretchen is very close to her family which includes three children and six grandchildren.

## **CHERI CHRISTENSEN**

*Membership Committee Co-Chair | Region 3 Director*

Cheri L. Christensen has worked in several areas of law including Social Security Disability, business and contract law, civil litigation, and personal injury. She's been a paralegal at Sean Nobmann PC law firm, in Springville, Utah, since 2017. Prior to that she worked at Fillmore Spencer, and Myler Disability. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Paralegal Studies in 2016 from Broadview University. She's been a member of the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar since 2020, and is the current Region 3 Director, covering Juab, Millard, Utah, Wasatch, Duchesne and Uintah Counties. She performed with and served on the board of the Timpanogos Chorale for 10 years, worked with the Timpanogos Arts Foundation, and worked as assistant to the director of the Stadium of Fire Chorus. Currently, she enjoys hiking, photography, and family.



## **STEFANIE RAY**

*Membership Committee Co-Chair | Director at Large*



Stefanie Ray graduated from Utah Valley University in 1994 and has over 29 years of legal experience. Stefanie is the Senior Paralegal and Manager at dōTERRA International, LLC. She manages their trademarks in over 48 countries as well as litigation support, contract management, and IP Marketing review. Prior to working at dōTERRA, Stefanie was a personal injury paralegal for Abbott & Walker in Provo, Utah, for over 14 years. She is the mother of three children and enjoys gardening, and reading.

**PETER VANDERHOOF, LPP, CP**

*Communications/Social Media Chair | Region 2 Director*

Peter Vanderhoof is a Licensed Paralegal Practitioner in the State of Utah. He is licensed to practice in Family Law (temporary separation, divorce, parentage, cohabitant abuse, civil stalking, custody and support, and name change), Debt Collections, and Landlord/Tenant disputes. Peter is a Certified Paralegal through the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) and is a current member of the Utah Paralegal Association (UPA). Peter Vanderhoof is an LPP at Vanderhoof Legal, in Salt Lake City. Prior to that he worked at Wrona Law in Park City, Utah for four years. He has worked on a wide variety of litigation matters including: real estate, contract disputes, family law, debt collection, unlawful detainer, medical malpractice, and personal injury. Peter is also a Librarian and Certified Records Analyst and has extensive knowledge in records organization and management.



**JENNIFER CARVER**

*Marketing/Publications Committee Chair | Director At Large*

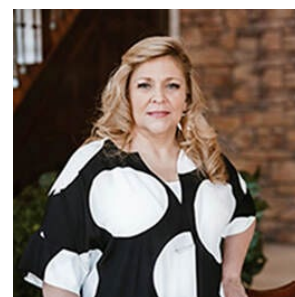


Jennifer Carver graduated from Salt Lake Community College with an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal Studies. She joined the Disability Law Center (DLC) in 2019 as their sole paralegal. She successfully managed 11 attorneys on her own for most of that time, while also creating a paralegal program for other paralegals that join the DLC. The goal of this program is to build a paralegal team to support the DLC’s legal work while also focusing on learning and advancing paralegal careers. Jen currently supervises and coordinates the work of the paralegal team at the DLC. She is experienced in state, federal, and appellate litigation. She has experience in a variety of cases including employment, housing, and education. She is dedicated to advocating for the rights of others. In her spare time, she loves spending time with her family and doing nails.

**SUZANNE POTTS**

*Ethics and Professional Service Committee Chair | Region 4 Director | UPA/NALA Liaison*

Suzanne has been a paralegal for over 25 years. She is employed as a paralegal with Snow Christensen & Martineau and joined their team in September 2022. Previously, Suzanne was employed by Clarkson & Associates in St. George, Utah, working primarily in civil litigation. She also worked for Bradley C. Harr & Associates and Injury Smart Law in St. George, Utah, working primarily in personal injury. Suzanne is a mediator having completed basic Mediation Training through the Utah State Bar and Alternative Dispute Resolution. Suzanne is very active in the community having completed the Leadership Dixie program and



thereafter was elected to serve on their Board of Directors. Suzanne spent many years as a public panel member for the Supreme Court Ethics and Discipline Committee, a volunteer for the Southern Utah Community Legal Center as well as a paralegal member of the Southern Utah Bar Association.

Suzanne is a longtime volunteer for the St. George Marathon. She also provides foster and transport for Lily's Pad Rescue, a registered 501c(3) non-profit organization who facilitates care for medically fragile bulldogs in need of loving, accepting devotion.

### **KATIE LAWYER**

*Immediate Past Chair | Ex Officio Member | Bar Commission Liaison*



Katie Lawyer works in the Civil Litigation Division of the Utah Attorney General specializing in personal injury. Katie earned her Paralegal Studies degree from LDS Business College (now Ensign College) and earned a bachelor's degree in history and political science from Colorado State University. Throughout her career she has worked in various legal areas such as water law, employment, and criminal law. She currently advises the Paralegal Studies program at Ensign College. Katie lives in Bountiful, Utah with her husband and Corgi, Gimli.

## **Member Spotlight**

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter spotlight is to honor a Utah paralegal who, over a long and distinguished career, through their ethical and personal conduct, enthusiasm, and fortitude, rendered extraordinary contributions and service to the paralegal profession.

The Paralegal Division is pleased to announce that the Member Spotlight for this Quarter is:

### **Wendy Trujillo**

Jessica Andew, Esq. submitted a beautifully written nomination form for Wendy Trujillo for the



2023 Distinguished Paralegal Award: "Some folks believe that only lawyers influence the professionalism and quality of a practice area, with big verdicts or appellate rulings. I can confidently say that Utah's civil plaintiffs bar is materially better, and its professionalism improved, and, consequently, justice for all Utahns who seek redress in our courts is also increased, by reason of the work and influence of Wendy Trujillo for the past 30 years. Those who have been lucky to work with Wendy praise her quality of work, confidence, and judgment in every aspect of her paralegal role and say she is a gift to those around her."

Wendy first began working in law when she was 18-years-old as a receptionist in a small law firm. She went to school and obtained a Certificate of Completion in the paralegal studies program at Salt Lake Community College and has been a paralegal for 30 plus years, mainly working in the Personal Injury field. During her career as a paralegal, she has had the opportunity to work with some exceptional attorneys and has learned so much from all of them. In the Spring of 2021, Wendy was asked to help to put together and co-chair the paralegal division of the Utah Association for Justice (UAJ). Wendy was always envious that the attorneys had their own listserv email where they could reach out to their colleagues for forms, suggestions, or advice on how to handle a particular issue they were dealing with. That envy turned to ambition, and now, thanks to Wendy's ambition, the paralegal division of the UAJ has their own listserv email. One of the main reasons that Wendy has stayed in the Personal Injury field for so long is that she likes the feeling of being able to help people who are at a point in their life where they are suffering and have no idea where to turn. The reason Wendy says she will continue in this field is because of the sense of accomplishment and gratitude she feels when a client's case comes to an end and they tell her how much they appreciate her help, and more importantly, the sense of relief that they have at the outcome of their case.

Wendy's skills and knowledge of her craft are second to none. She knows her way around civil procedure, discovery practices, trial preparation and countless other large and small areas of the Personal Injury practice better than most Personal Injury lawyers do. This is a direct result of Wendy's own initiative to constantly learn and to grow her knowledge and skills. She seeks out formal and informal training for herself, and she encourages others to do the same. From participating in bar or UAJ sponsored skills workshops for paralegals, to organizing an informal training session for her paralegal team to learn TrialPad, Wendy is constantly improving and inspiring others to improve as well. She is a person whom other paralegals go to when they have a question, need advice or support, or want to learn from.

Wendy is a person who others are drawn to, who senses needs and quietly meets them, who, through her extensive knowledge and experience, is able to assist her attorneys with any legal issue or challenging personality she encounters, and who continuously raises the bar for the paralegal profession. Other paralegals seek her counsel, and lawyers quite literally fight to have her join their team. She is in demand, and for very good reason.

**If you know of anyone that you would like to elect to be in the Member Spotlight section of this newsletter, please send us an email at: [Utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com](mailto:Utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com)**

## Exciting CLE Opportunities:

Free Brown Bag Lunch CLE Events:

**Date:** November 15, 2023

**Time:** 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

**Speaker:** Richard Gale

**Topic:** "Basics of Criminal Defense"

December and January CLEs will be announced via Social Media. outplease watch for our announcements on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



The Education Committee is in the process of planning additional CLE events for the coming year. In addition to the CLE put on by the Paralegal Division you can also always sign up for a CLE opportunity offered through the Utah State Bar website: [Utah State Bar Member Practice Portal > Events \(utahbar.org\)](https://utahbar.org/Events) **Please watch our social media for more CLE opportunities.**

Your next CLE Reporting Period will be July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. The CLE requirement for members of the Paralegal Division is 10 hours of accredited CLE, to include 1 hour of legal ethics and 1 hour of professionalism and civility. All CLE opportunities sponsored by the Paralegal Division are offered as hybrid attendance and can be attended either in-person or remotely, except for the Brown Bag Lunch CLE's, which are offered remotely.

## Community Service Opportunities

The Paralegal Division extends an invitation to place wreaths on the headstones of American heroes as part of National Wreaths Across America Day on December 16, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.; the event will last until all the wreaths have been placed. Please feel free to bring your family and friends, as all are welcome in honoring Utah's Veterans. Utah State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery can accommodate as many volunteers that wish to participate in this all-ages event. For your reference, a registration number is included below, but please note that it is not required for admittance:

Registration No: UTSVCB-233343

[UTSVCB - Utah State Veterans Memorial Cemetery](#)

17111 So. Camp Williams Rd

Bluffdale, UT 84065, United States

Start: 12/16/23 at 10:30 am

End: until wreaths are placed

Participant Limitations: No limitations, please bring as many family members and friends as you wish, this is a meaningful event for all ages. Additionally, Wreaths Across America has an option to donate monetarily to sponsor wreaths on their website.

Thank you for your support in our mission to honor American heroes at the Utah State Veterans Memorial Cemetery. We look forward to seeing you there! More information forthcoming - please watch for emails and social media announcements from the Paralegal Division

Please watch our social media for more announcements to come regarding additional community service opportunities sponsored by the Paralegal Division – we have great things coming your way!

### [Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake is looking for paralegal volunteers:](#)

The Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake is always looking for paralegals to volunteer to help in their events. This is a great opportunity for paralegals to hone their skills, or develop new skills, in

family law. Paralegals can volunteer at Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake Family Law Clinics at the Matheson and West Jordan courthouses. They are looking for paralegals help to give patrons information about the legal process and help access court forms on the court's website. At these clinics, paralegals do NOT provide legal advice, but can provide information about the legal process, access to legal forms (on court website and hard copies) and assist in scheduling hearings with the court clerk.

Paralegals can also volunteer at the Third District Court "Document Preparation Day", which is the 4th Tuesday of every month at 9:00 a.m. with Commissioner Sagers at the Matheson Courthouse, for individuals whose cases are agreed upon, but need assistance in drafting Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law and final Orders or Decrees.

**We will be adding additional information regarding dates and contact information for participation on our social media.**

**Utah Legal Services is looking for paralegal volunteers:**

Utah Legal Services is always looking for paralegals to volunteer to help in their events during the evenings and on the weekends. Utah Legal Services need paralegal help with client paperwork, gathering medical records and other documentation, and they are planning to do an expungement clinic next year. **We will be adding additional information regarding dates and contact information for participation on our social media.**

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A myriad of opportunities awaits you as a member of the Paralegal Division. If you are interested in participating on a committee or perhaps assisting on a specific project, please contact a member of the Board of Directors. We welcome and encourage your participation.

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