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Spring 2024

Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar

Newsletter



WELCOME:

We are excited to present the 2024 Spring Quarter Newsletter. Welcome to all our new members just joining the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar. We appreciate your support and are excited for the new year. If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback, we invite you to reach out to any Board member individually or send an email to the Paralegal Division at utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com.

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

Mind & Energy Management: Resilience Strategies for Paralegals

Presented by Martha Knudson, JD MAPP

On January 26, 2024, Martha Knudson spoke to the Paralegal Division about paralegal well-being. Paralegals care a great deal about helping those around us. Whether we are helping clients, coworkers, or our attorneys, we need to know how “full our fuel tank is.” We all may know the paralegal duties of ethics and professionalism, but mental, emotional and physical well-being can have an impact on our ability to be the helping hands we want to be.

Caring for our health is a part of our professional responsibility. Elevated well-being has been scientifically linked with better job performance, a greater ability to overcome obstacles, higher job satisfaction, increased job commitment, increased physical health, and buffering against burnout, depression, anxiety, compassion fatigue and suicidal ideation. Elevated well-being has also been linked to lower absenteeism, decreased turnover rate, better personal relationships, improved executive functioning, higher motivation, increased perception of work/life balance and a better ability to handle stress.

According to Martha Knudson, *stress plus rest equals growth*. Sometimes the stress of the job can be overwhelming. Being resilient is the ability to successfully adapt to a difficult or challenging experience through mental and emotional behavioral adjustments. This allows us to respond in a healthy way to stressful situations, including the many setbacks that may come with this profession, such as disappointment, losses, and significant transitions. One of the many things that sets paralegals apart from other professions is our ability to face challenging situations and bounce back from those situations stronger than ever.

Our bodies have a way of learning from the stress we are under. Biologically, stress can improve our physical and mental functions to meet the demands of the situation in order to survive and learn from that experience. The best way to recover and be resilient in the face of stress is to allow yourself to rest. We all have reasons we feel like we cannot rest: urgency of deadlines, lack of boundaries, or just never feeling like we have a spare moment to take care of ourselves.

Taking care of ourselves involves allowing our bodies and minds to relax. Martha suggested giving ourselves permission to take a break, and really looking at the task at hand to see if it is as important or urgent as we are making it out to be. Will resting help us perform better? Is the purpose of what we are doing a numbing behavior or a nourishing behavior? Are we mindlessly scrolling social media in an effort to stop ourselves from thinking about the task at hand?

Martha explained why it is important to set boundaries inside and outside of the workday. However, in order to set boundaries, you need to understand what a good boundary looks like. For example, “you can’t email me on the weekend” is not a boundary you can control. You cannot control when others email you. On the other hand, a good boundary that *can* be controlled would be “if you email me on the weekend, I will respond as soon as I can on Monday.” It is crucial to be able to set boundaries to prioritize health. We cannot fully help those around us if we are not taking care of ourselves.

Energy requires that we take a few minutes to ourselves to eat and move during our day. Stepping away from a task that we may be struggling with or stuck on can help us to see more clearly when we return to the task. K. Anders Ericsson’s landmark studies of elite performance recognized that resting more frequently boosts achievement.¹ If you can, work in bursts with frequent breaks to avoid exhaustion and stay sharp.

The Utah State Bar has benefits we can all take advantage of to help us throughout our day. For example, the Unmind app, available to all members of the Paralegal Division, allows you to select a well-being focus that will then offer many different tools, such as a one-minute daily boost that can be done before work, a two-minute recording about mastering the art of acceptance that can be done while on a break at work, or meditation exercises of varying lengths for after work. Different tools are available depending on what you would like to focus on.

The Utah State Bar has also made Tava available, which offers virtual mental healthcare for every Utah State Bar member, including Paralegal Division members, as well as their dependents. Members receive six sessions per person, per year. After those six sessions you can continue sessions with insurance or pay \$125.00 per session out of pocket.

The Paralegal Division would like to thank Martha Knudson for sharing her knowledge and expertise in this important subject.

For more information, please visit:
<https://search.unmind.com/team>
<http://care.tavahealth.com/signup>

¹ https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/a_new_theory_of_elite_performance

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:

Michelle Paramoure



Many current and past colleagues nominated our current Spotlight. Michelle seemed genuinely surprised that her coworkers had taken the time to praise her professionalism and dedication to the field. Nonetheless, many colleagues did notice her dedication and hard work throughout her tenure and wanted others to know as well. This nomination merits a place in our newsletter. When asked what makes Michelle stand above the rest, paralegal Gretchen Lowe said “Michelle goes above and beyond, is incredibly wise and teaches her attorneys something new every single day. She is the type of person that takes charge and will FIND the answer. She is very good at not giving legal advice even when prodded by clients or attorneys. Attorneys often come to HER with the situation and ask for the next best step. She is so amazing at customer service and some of the most difficult issues are sent to her to manage. She is a very strong leader, great listener, she always smiles and has a great laugh. She is very dependable and ‘does’ for everyone! She is a cut above for sure!”

Michelle graduated from Salt Lake Community College. She currently works at Ascent Law where she does family law. When asked what makes family law her favorite to work in, Michelle said, “This is where I feel like I actually can make a difference for people. I love feeling like I am helping people in bad situations. When a case is finally done and clients say I made the hardest time of their lives a little easier, it means the world to me.” Michelle was initially a paralegal in California years ago and then switched directions. When Michelle moved to Utah six years ago, she learned about the Licensed Paralegal Practitioner (“LPP”) program and decided to get back into paralegal work here in Utah and work to become an LPP.

One of the biggest strengths of a good paralegal is someone who has an amazing memory for details and has a natural way with people. Michelle prides herself on knowing clients’ stories and understanding them and their legal situation. The biggest thing Michelle brings to the team at her firm is that she is able to build rapport with clients and can help them understand things about their case that do not always make sense outside of the legal world.

When encountering difficult staff, Michelle tries to remember that everyone has a tough job and deals with people in what can be the worst season of their lives. When the stress level is high at the office, things can get tense. Michelle reminds herself that it is not personal, and it will pass.

When asked what advice Michelle would give newer paralegals, she said, “One thing I am passionate about is the true value of paralegals for clients and for attorneys – but becoming a true paralegal takes time. It is not just graduating from a program, having a degree, or working with lawyers. Understand what a true and valuable paralegal is and become that. Everyone has to start somewhere but it truly takes time, experience and knowledge in the field to become a true paralegal.”

One of the many colleagues who has nothing but wonderful things to say about Michelle said, “Michelle Paramoure is one of the most genuine people I have ever met. She takes great pride in her accuracy and dependability. Michelle’s ability to not just handle multiple cases at the same time but multiple attorneys and to keep it all straight is amazing. Michelle loves pickleball and her yearly girls weekend in Las Vegas, but what she loves the most is her boys and how proud she is of the accomplishments they have and do achieve. Michelle will do anything for anyone no matter the cost to her at times.”

If you know someone 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

Exciting CLE Opportunities:

Annual Paralegal Luncheon CLE

Date: May 16, 2024

Time: 12:00 pm to 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: Maribeth LeHoux

Topic: Unauthorized Practice of Law

Location: Orangerie Room at Red Butte Garden

Cost: \$75 per paralegal and \$90 per attorney

This cost also includes a free pass to the gardens for the rest of the day for those who come in person. Attendees are welcome to wander through the gardens after the luncheon.

Please keep an eye out for more information on our Annual Paralegal Meeting at the Utah Law and Justice Center on June 28, 2024

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

The next CLE reporting period will be July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. The CLE requirement for ongoing members of the Paralegal Division is 10 hours of accredited CLE, to include 1 hour of legal ethics. All CLE opportunities sponsored by the Paralegal Division are offered as hybrid attendance and can be attended either in-person or virtually, except for the Brown Bag Lunch CLEs, which are only offered virtually.

Community Service Opportunities

As part of our ongoing efforts to foster community support, the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar has an opportunity to serve at our local Volunteers of America, Geraldine E. King Women's Resource Center. This organization needs volunteers to serve meals to their clients during the lunch hour. Volunteers simply show up, assist with light meal prep, help serve the meal, and assist with light clean up. Meal service is a two-hour commitment.

“and Justice for all” is holding their annual Law Day 5k Run on April 27, 2024. The Paralegal Division Board and members who have signed up under our code will be participating in this event as a team. This is an amazing cause that raises awareness and funds for civil legal aid. You can find more information on this event here: <https://andjusticeforall.org/ajfalawdayrun/>. This is a family friendly event, and can be walked, run, or you can just come and cheer on your fellow paralegals. There are different classes for wheelchairs, strollers, and even your fur babies - there is fun for everyone! The cost of the event is \$36/person. If this is something you would like to participate in, please contact us by April 17, 2024 at utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com and put "Law Day Run" in the subject line. We will get back to you with our sign-up code. Every participant that pays a fee will receive an “and Justice for all” 5k Run t-shirt that may be worn the day of the event. Shirt sizes will be asked for when you sign up under our code.

We are excited to show support for both these worthy causes, and to spend some time with our Division members. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at utahparalegaldivision@gmail.com.

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 to give patrons information about the legal process and help access court forms on the Court's website. This is a wonderful 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](#). At these clinics, paralegals do NOT provide legal advice, but can provide information about the legal process, access to legal forms (on the Court's website and hard copies) and assist in scheduling hearings with the Court Clerk.

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

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 needs paralegal help with client paperwork, gathering medical records and other documentation, and at an expungement clinic this year. **We will be adding additional information regarding dates and contact information for participation on our social media.**