

Paralegal Rainmakers Digest

Monthly Newsletter of Paralegal Rainmakers
October 2012 Volume 1 Issue 2



Job Security Games: Unweaving the Web

Does your firm or organization lack a streamlined process for managing cases or is every paralegal left to their own to create a system that works best for them? This may seem to be a inconsequential issue but lets explore it and dissect how this practice of not having a synchronized system in place can hinder you from working as efficiently as possible and cause other serious issues. Lets say that you work for a firm that gives the paralegals the latitude to create their own organizational system as long as deadlines are met and billable hours are on target. So you have your own tickler case management system set up that works for you and the other paralegals have their own tickler case management system that works for them. This seems to be working fairly well from the standpoint of meeting deadlines and meeting billable hour requirements. Until one day one of the other paralegals is sick so you have to take over their caseload. You both have the same skill level so you feel pretty confident that you can step in and take care of the pressing matters before they return to the office. This confidence soon fades into pure confusion when you open up your co-workers computer and see a color coded array of tasks and calendar items with at least 50 folders with no clear organizational system. And it doesn't stop there. You then go on to open the desk to find the same rainbow display with the physical files. You have no choice but to read through each physical and electronic folder until you determine how this Rainbow Brite system works (Cont'd on page 3).

Domestic Violence Issue

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEWS

[Domestic Violence Law Applies to Rooming House Borders](#)

[Governor Proclaims October Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Delaware](#)

[Women killed by ex-boyfriend while at work](#)

PARALEGAL NEWS & STORIES

[Paralegal Rainmakers Membership & Social Networking Community Team Managers](#)

[Litigation Support Today: 3rd Annual Salary Survey](#)

[Paralegal Blows Whistle on Ex-Boss](#)

[Combating the "Hire an Out-of-Work Attorney Trend"](#)

NO MORE

TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

Why She Stays: Dispelling the Myths

When stories of abuse are told the first response is usually why doesn't she just leave or why doesn't she go to the police and get help or file a restraining order. On the surface this seems like a simple solution to what seems to be an easily solvable problem, but when taken in light of statistics this surface level solution must be analyzed from a more pragmatic and multi-faceted approach. Studies show that victims increase their risk of being killed by the abuser by over 70% when they leave an abusive partner, are compromised of immigrants who fear being deported if they contact police, and that a large portion of homicides perpetrated against women occurred after the women ended the relationship with an abusive partner. Well meaning friends, family, and ill informed individuals may unknowingly expose a victim to a great deal of danger and harm when suggesting that she "just leave" without taking into consideration these factors.

Domestic violence is a serious and complicated issue that should not be addressed without the assistance of a lawyer who can advise the victim of their rights and protections from an abusive partner. There are several organizations that provide free legal, financial, and counseling assistance to victims and should be referred to when attempting to assist a friend or family member that is looking for help to leave an abusive relationship.



Domestic Violence Resources & Fact Sheets

[National Domestic Violence Facts](#)

[Domestic Violence, Reproductive Health & Pregnancy](#)

[Unemployment Benefits for Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors](#)

[Employment Rights for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence](#)

[Domestic & Sexual Violence Workplace Policies](#)

[How to Help a Friend](#)

International Trade in Abused Wives

Currently the market for mail order brides goes almost unregulated from the standpoint of protecting the women who are "purchased" and imported as brides into this country. This environment is ripe for the abuse of women that come mostly from poor and underdeveloped countries. Without reconciling the recent changes to the Violence Against Women Act and the Immigration Marriage Fraud Act these women will continue to suffer in silence. [Learn More about IMFA](#)

Violence Against Women Act

Domestic Violence Victims Invisible Under the Current Law

1. Current laws in some states exclude protecting victims of same sex relationships (Delaware, South Carolina, and Montana have specific language excluding same sex relationships in Domestic Violence Laws)
2. Although, over 50% of Native women are in relationships with non-native men there partners can not be prosecuted. Even if the abuse occurred on native land non-natives can not be prosecuted due to a 1976 Supreme court ruling that does not allow non-natives to be prosecuted by natives.
3. Immigrant women experience domestic abuse at a higher rate than other women in this country, but lack the legal protections to safely leave the relationship.

Competing with Attorney-Paralegals

Leveling the playing field with higher education

Recently there have been numerous stories and discussions about attorneys taking jobs as paralegals in order to land jobs in law firms. Some have attributed this trend to the economy and others have cited it to attorneys that have been disbarred looking for ways to remain in the legal field. Although, most paralegals do not see this new trend as a threat to their ability to land jobs or advance in their careers it is a trend that should not be so easily dismissed. Paralegals may want to consider what the ramifications of this new trend can mean to the current paralegal role.

Unlike attorneys who must go through extensive training and licensing to practice law a person can become a paralegal simply by working for a firm that bestows the paralegal title upon them. This title can be earned with no prior education and with little or no experience. From an employers standpoint if they can hire a person with the expertise and knowledge that has been gained through a rigorous law school program and a person that has experience with no education or education but no experience the employer may see the attorney-paralegal as a better investment. Now it can be argued whether an attorney trained paralegal has the necessary skills needed to successfully work as a paralegal but in essence the only real difference between what a paralegal that is being used to their fullest capacity and an attorney is that the attorney can provide advice to clients, set fees, and appear in court on their clients behalf. As far as the other functions like managing caseloads, typing documents, and calendaring hearings these are all administrative tasks that can be easily learned by reading articles on the systems website and referring to how to manuals and guides.

A paralegal is not being utilized for their administrative abilities but are being used to reduce the cost to a firm. The lower cost is the advantage of using a paralegal instead of an attorney. This advantage diminishes when attorneys are taking jobs as paralegals and allowing a firm to bill their expertise as an attorney at the rate of a paralegal. With this view in mind paralegals may want to rethink the notion that attorney-paralegals do not pose a threat to their careers and look for ways to place themselves on the same playing field as their attorney-paralegal counterparts by adding education and/or paralegal credentials to their experience.

Job Security Games

(Cont'd from page 1)

In order, to decipher the color coded system to locate any pressing matters you work an additional 30 hours that week, where half your time was spent trying to figure out the system your co-worker had in place.

This is not an unfamiliar situation. It happens in a lot of offices when an employee is out for an illness or leaves the company voluntarily or involuntarily and the other staff members are left to manage their workload. Creating some sense of job security is oftentimes the reason why some employees create systems that only they can understand, but this is not a business practice that should be mimicked. It can lead to sanctions, complaints, and other issues when appointments, hearings, and deadlines are not met if you're out of the office due to an illness or other unforeseen issue. Instead of creating complex systems that no one can understand the best job security is being knowledgeable about your job and allowing your employer to see the contributions you make to the organization or firm.



Paralegal Rainmakers Spotlight

Trina N. Brown

This month's Paralegal Rainmaker Trina N. Brown works in the areas of corporate/transactional law and contracts litigation within the oil and gas field.

She has studied legal procedures since 1993 and has practiced as a Paralegal since 1996. Her background includes (but is not limited to) corporate law/litigation, corporate governance, contract law/litigation, labor and employment, insurance defense and mass toxic tort litigation.

She received a Legal Studies Certificate in 1993 from Liberty Academy of Business; a Paralegal Certificate in 1997 from ACTAS; a Bachelor's Degree in 2004 from Immaculata University (with high honors) and is currently working towards a Master's Degree in Paralegal Studies from George Washington University.

She was commissioned as an American Alliance Certified Paralegal this year and is a member of the State Bar of Texas' Paralegal Division and an Associate Member of the American Bar Association.

She is very active within the Paralegal profession and has accepted various Board appointments and chair positions throughout the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex area.

In addition to all of her other accomplishments she was sworn in as a Tarrant County Court Appointed Special Advocate in 2010 and currently volunteers with the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition.



Rainmakers Spotlight

If you're interested in being included in the Rainmakers Spotlight submit a 200 word or less post about what makes you a Paralegal Rainmaker. Please send submissions to info@prainmakers.com in Word or PDF format . Submissions should be made no later than October 20th for consideration for the November issue of Paralegal Rainmakers Digest.

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Upcoming Events

Paralegal Rainmakers

October 2-31, 2012 Live CLE Courses

More information available at <http://www.prainmakers.com/Training-Topics.html>

American Association for Paralegal Education (AAFPE)

October 10-13, 2012 31st Annual Conference

More information available at <http://www.aafpe.org/Conferences/national.asp>

YWCA USA

October 14-20, 2012 Week Without Violence

More information available at www.ywca.org

National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA)

October 15, 2012 Pace Review Course Begins

More information available at <http://www.paralegals.org/default.asp?page=61>

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