



2016 Distinguished Paralegal of the Year Award

On May 19, 2016, the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar and the Utah Paralegal Association held the Annual Paralegal Day Luncheon at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake City. Appellate Court Administrator Timothy Shea spoke on Paralegal Practitioners: Improving Access to Civil Justice and Improving Consumer Protection.

One of the highlights of this event is the opportunity to recognize the individuals who have achieved their national certification through the National Association of Legal Assistants. This year there were five individuals recognized for passing the Certified Paralegal Exam: Lexi Balling, Nicole McCullough, Kathryn Peterson, Kelsi Wall, and David Yeager. Also, there were three individuals recognized for passing the Advanced Certified Paralegal Exam: Lexi Balling, Erin Stauffer, and Suzanne Williams.



Paralegal Day is also the day to recognize the Distinguished Paralegal of the Year award. The purpose of this award is to honor a Utah paralegal who, over a long and distinguished career has contributed to the profession with his or her service.

This year we received many great nominations and are pleased to announce that the winner of the 2016 Distinguished Paralegal of the Year award is Shari Faulkner. Shari was nominated by her attorney Margaret Plane. Shari is retiring in June after nearly thirty years as a paralegal. She has worked for VanCott Bagley Cornwell & McCarthy, Durham Jones & Pinegar, and for a short time, the Utah Attorney General's Office. The last six years, Shari has worked for the Salt Lake City Attorney's Office.

Shortly after becoming a paralegal, Shari joined what was then

known as the Legal Assistants Association of Utah (LAAU). She served as chair of the CLE committee and on the board of LAAU for several years. She is a founding member of the Paralegal Division of the Bar and is committed to enhancing and serving the legal profession. For example, for five years, Shari was a member of a screening panel for the Utah Supreme Court's Ethics and Discipline Committee. As a member of the panel, she volunteered her time to hear and consider lawyer discipline matters, a difficult but important aspect of the legal profession.

Shari is also a master mediator and enjoyed mediating family law matters before joining the City Attorney's Office. In order to foster and support the professional competence of new paralegals, Shari served as an adjunct professor in the Westminster College Paralegal Program.

During her legal career, she has been a Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for the Utah Guardian Ad Litem's Office, served on a Foster Care Review Board for children in foster care, and has presented to the Utah State Court's Divorce Education for Parents Program. In 2004, Shari authored an article for the *Utah Bar Journal* advising attorneys on how to effectively use a probate paralegal. We are pleased to recognize Shari's accomplishments and are proud to present her with this award. Congratulations, Shari Faulkner!

The Paralegal Division would also like to thank Judge Shaughnessey, Angelina Tsu, Kamie Brown, Jodie Scartzina, and Heather Allen for their work as a committee evaluating and choosing the Paralegal of the Year.

The Heather Johnson Finch Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Paralegal Day is also a time when we reflect on Heather Finch who was serving as the Chair of the Paralegal Division at the time of her tragic passing. Her husband Doug graciously attended the Twenty Year Celebration in April. Heather was the consummate professional and model for what every paralegal should be. She devoted over twenty years to the profession.

To honor the life and accomplishments of Heather Finch, the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar created the first-ever endowed scholarship for students pursuing undergraduate degrees in Paralegal Studies at Utah Valley University. Heather's life was given to hard work and service to the legal community through countless hours of volunteering.

In 2009, Heather was given Utah's highest award available to paralegals: the Distinguished Paralegal of the Year Award. In Heather's honor, this scholarship was created on September 15, 2010. Heather's legacy and dedication to the paralegal profession will live on through this newly endowed scholarship. Dedicated, aspiring, service-oriented students majoring in Paralegal Studies at UVU will be able to benefit from pursuing the best paralegal education available. In order to receive this scholarship, UVU has outlined the following criteria:

1. Students who are in good academic standing, as determined by UVU
2. Student completed the first year requirements of Paralegal Studies Program, on track toward completion of Program's requirements

3. 3.0 GPA or higher
4. Student is considered to be one of the top students in the Paralegal Studies Program, and is someone who has tremendous promise as a professional
5. Must show recent and ongoing community service
6. Character assessment, having high moral values
7. Student interested in involvement with the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar

This is the third year the scholarship has been awarded. This year's winner is Janée Krekelberg. Janée is a student at Utah Valley University who already holds an Associate's Degree and is furthering her education by working toward her Bachelor's Degree in Legal Studies with a minor in Economics. Education has always played an integral role in Janée's life.

When she is not studying or working Janée loves to travel. She recently traveled to Australia and New Zealand, broadening her horizons and encountering new perspectives of life and culture. She hopes to bring this new found knowledge into the legal profession.

Janée would like to express her gratitude as a recipient of the Heather Johnson Finch Memorial Endowed Scholarship. She feels that this scholarship can, and will, push her with a new vigor to finish her degree and make an impact in the paralegal field just as Heather Finch had.

20th Anniversary Celebration of the Utah State Bar

On April 22, 2016, the Paralegal Division of the Utah State Bar held a 20th anniversary celebration at the Grand Hall at the Gateway. There was entertainment, dinner, and remarks from the first chair of the Paralegal Division, Peggi Lowden, past Bar President Steve Kaufman (president during the founding of the Division), Bar President Elect Rob Rice, and Jacey Skinner, General Counsel to Governor Herbert. It was a memorable evening!

