

In Memoriam: Karen Kunze

by Devasta "Dede" De'Toles-Dugan with contributions from Theresa Rettinghouse



It is with great sadness to report that Karen Kunze, a stellar member of the San Francisco Paralegal Association (SFPA) and the SFPA Pro Bono Committee, passed away unexpectedly on November 1, 2016. Karen was born on September 20, 1947 in Martinez, California to Elsie and Lowell Kunze. She is survived by her brothers Kent and Carr, and her nieces and nephews.

Karen was an integral part of the SFPA for several years, and she was especially known for her years of commitment and involvement with the SFPA Pro Bono Committee for volunteer opportunities and services. For the past two years Karen offered to hold the quarterly Pro Bono Committee meetings in the spacious meeting room of her apartment building conveniently located near beautiful Lake Merritt in downtown Oakland. Karen had a contagious smile that could light up any room! She will best be remembered for her kindness, her sincerity, her ability to sort through and bring order to difficult situations, her consistency, and her perseverance. She will truly be missed.

Besides her contributions to the SFPA, Karen also worked for over 10 years at Bonita House, one of her favorite charities, a private non-profit agency providing services for adults diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities and substance use disorders. SFPA will be making a donation in honor of Karen. If you would like to make an individual donation, please mail it to 6333 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609, or you can make the donation online at www.bonitahouse.org and click and follow the prompts at icon "DONATE NOW THROUGH NETWORK for GOOD." 

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

"A View from the Probate Examiner's Desk (SF Court)," Trusts and Estates Practice Section, **March 14, 2017**, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., 1 MCLE general hour, SF State University (Downtown), 835 Market Street, Sixth Floor, San Francisco.

Next **SFPA Social** tentative for **mid-March or mid-April 2017**, 5:30 p.m. in Oakland, CA. Exact date and location to be announced soon.

"Protecting Clients' Assets Through Bonding," Trusts and Estates Practice Section, **April 18, 2017**, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., 1 MCLE hour, SF State University (Downtown Campus), 835 Market Street, Sixth Floor, San Francisco.

Community Legal Assistance Saturday Program (CLASP) - Opportunity to Volunteer with Alameda County Bar Association. Held on the first Saturday of each month at the

Alameda County Law Library, 125 12th Street, Oakland (across from the Rene C. Davidson Courthouse, and three blocks from the Lake Merritt BART station). To volunteer please contact in advance Christina Wiellette at (510) 302-2216, or christina@acbanet.org.

Paralegal Day, May 6, 2017, Bar Association of San Francisco, 301 Battery Street, 3rd floor, S.F. Details to follow.

SFPA 45th Annual Meeting, October 13, 2017, Bar Association of San Francisco, 301 Battery Street, 3rd floor, S.F. Details to follow.

For more info., including additional Pro Bono, career and training opportunities, please see www.sfpa.com.

Are you riding the horse in the direction it's going? by Chere B. Estrin

It's a whole new world out there for paralegals. If you are not riding the horse in the direction it's going, you are going to be left behind. Why? Because whether you are seeking a new position, looking to expand on your role at your present job or merely suiting up and showing up (let's be honest here), staying complacent and ignoring the trends is, well, death to your career. Here are just a few of the most recent trends of which you need to be aware:

- 1. Hottest, most requested software package for litigation paralegals: Relativity.**
Employers can't get enough litigation paralegals with solid Relativity skills. If you are not familiar with Relativity, get on the bandwagon now. Even if your firm doesn't use it in-house, you may be required to oversee the vendor of your choice who is using it.
- 2. Most requested skills - Real Estate transactional:**
Real estate is heating up. Law firms are seeking the experienced paralegal who can review title reports, surveys, prepare lease summaries, purchase and sale agreements, participate in closings and due diligence. Biggest mistake you can make: Pushing your real estate license. I know you're proud of it. But, in fact, law firms hate to hear about it. Yes, you did learn about easements, title reports, and escrow accounts

in your real estate license course and you've sold a lot of houses. But law firms don't want that skill. Why? It's not transactional paralegal work. They discount the real estate license and I mean big time. It's a huge turnoff and doesn't help in most cases.

- 3. Biggest, newest step-down or step-up? The Paralegal hybrid: Paralegal/Legal Assistant:**
By combining your paralegal and secretarial skills, the firm saves money. No longer do attorneys need a full-time secretary, so by combining the paralegal with the legal assistant, they think they save money. However, they do lose the billable time the paralegal provides while saving the dollars they put out for the secretary. You must have great typing skills, know the court system and be able to tolerate clerical duties such as meeting and greeting clients, getting coffee, booking travel arrangements, typing correspondence, and answering phones. If you can do that, you might make a very decent salary. Good legal secretaries can earn upper \$70K's to lower \$80K's in major metropolitan areas. Who knew?
- 4. Why the paralegal pool seems smaller: It isn't, really. Paralegals are moving into other roles with different titles such as Litigation Support or eDiscovery.**
Employers are hiring paralegals with excellent technology skills. These paralegals now have titles such as Litigation Support Analyst, Coordinator, or Manager and earning very decent salaries. If you check the backgrounds of highly

successful eDiscovery Case Managers and Litigation Support professionals, you probably will find a paralegal background. This is a great area for you to move into. Garner and develop your technology skills. This is where you find the money and upward movement. Salaries can range from \$80K - \$110K or higher, depending upon the level of management duties, sophistication of computer background and region.

- 5. Speak another language? Foreign language skills in demand:**
We're seeing more requests for bilingual abilities in many practice specialties including Spanish for legal support professionals.
- 6. Want to work in your jammies? The joy of telecommuting and the virtual law office:**
More and more employers are offering positions based on home office or virtual law office that leads to controlled overhead and better work/lifestyle balance. However, be aware that this can be a lonely adventure if you are used to a lively environment and colleagues around you. It takes a certain personality and strict discipline to be able to work from home. Salaries remain comparable to those found in offices.
- 7. You absolutely, positively must have knowledge of eDiscovery:**
I can't tell you how many candidates I talk with who tell me they know nothing about eDiscovery. In fact, they repeat the question with, "Do you mean eFiling?" Come on, folks! eDiscovery has been around for

(Continued on page 4)



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SFPA 2016 Annual Meeting Recap

By Devasta "Dede" De'Toles-Dugan

On October 14, 2016, the San Francisco Paralegal Association (SFPA) held its Annual Meeting at the Bar Association of San Francisco with five speakers and 5.0 hours of mandatory continued legal education (MCLE) credit in Ethics. It was a well-attended event of SFPA members, students, sustaining members, and associates. The event also included fun raffle prize give-aways, the election of Board Members and Officers, and the Presentation of the Student Essay Scholarship Award.

Keynote speaker Ann Pearson of National Center for Paralegal Studies, founder and Training Director of The Paralegal Bootcamp, presented "7 Habits of Highly Effective Paralegals" and emphasized that successful paralegals stay current, proactive, informed and master ever-changing trends in technology to be ahead in their professions. Ms. Pearson trains and motivates paralegals who

want to stay "on top of their game" and more information can be found about this on her website at <https://ncps-edu.com/>. "Employment Law - Ethics" was presented by Stephen R. Jaffe, Esq., the principle and employment law trial attorney of The Jaffe Law Firm specializing in protecting employees' rights in the workplace. Mr. Jaffe spoke about prevailing ethical practices, statutes and regulations in employment law to inform and protect paralegals and legal professionals. The Jaffe Law Firm's website is <http://www.jaffetrial.com/>. Miles B. Cooper, Esq., personal injury attorney at Emison Hullverson LLP, presented "Ethics of Law Firm Marketing and Social Media" emphasizing current methods and resources for uncovering information about potential clients and defendants. Mr. Cooper can be reached at Miles@bicyclelaw.com. Vincent (Vince) Avellino, JD, Paralegal Studies professor at San Francisco

State University presented "Legal Ethics - Some Constitutional Perspectives" covering the importance for paralegals to remain ethical in all facets of the legal profession. The final speaker was Natalie Jones, Esq., Pro Bono Director and Staff Attorney at the Eviction Defense Collaborative (EDC), a non-profit organization that assists low-income tenants with eviction lawsuits. Ms. Jones shared about the work involved and the role paralegals play at EDC to assist clients, professionally and ethically, to seek remedies under attorneys' supervision for keeping clients in their residents. The EDC website is <http://evictiondefense.org/> and the EDC 2015 financial report can be viewed at <http://evictiondefense.org/eviction-report-2015/>.

Barbara Occhiogrosso was chosen as the lucky 2016 recipient of the SFPA annual Student Essay Scholarship Award for the theme "Introduction to HIPPA Compliance for New Paralegals", and she received a \$1,000 check. Ms. Occhiogrosso is a student at City College Paralegal Certificate Program in San Francisco. For the 2017 election of Board Members and Officers, SFPA voting members re-elected Elizabeth Olvera for a second term for President, Brian Gallagher for Vice President, Albert Chen for Secretary, and Thomas Farrell for Treasurer.

Stay tuned for more information about exciting upcoming SFPA events, socials, and trainings in 2017!

UPDATE: As of the date of this publication, Elizabeth Olvera resigned as the SFPA President and Vice President Brian Gallagher is currently acting as the interim President. 

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years and years now. You are not going to get anywhere in your career without understanding eDiscovery and the EDRM. Take free webinars from vendors. Get signed up for seminars, webinars but understand eDiscovery. If your firm or in-house legal department “isn’t into it”, it is dying, dying, dying and eventually, you’ll be out of a job. Then what?

8. **Of course, we all have enhanced communication skills: What I mean is.....**

Another major trend is a focus on legal writing, communication and marketing. Many employers believe that paralegals today lack necessary oral and written communication skills and are asking for a writing sample from prospective candidates. Be sure that you take continuing legal education not only in legal writing but good old fashioned business writing as well.

9. **It’s all about the Internet and Distance Learning:**

Distance learning, also known as e-learning, is one of the fastest-growing segments of continuing legal education. Media and interactive technologies have increased the e-learning possibilities in the academic setting and the workplace. The flexibility of taking classes at any time from any location is now the norm. Distance learning appeals to all employees, and is especially popular with experienced, busy paralegals on limited CLE budgets or those with families.

Online continuing education classes are an excellent way to make yourself more marketable, not only if you are looking to change jobs, but also if you are seeking to advance right where you are now. Be sure to let your employer know that you have taken a class. It’s a great way to get more sophisticated assignments and move up in your firm.

10. **The way we find a job and present ourselves professionally: You must have a LinkedIn profile.**

If you don’t have a LinkedIn profile or haven’t paid any attention to the one you do have, you are shooting yourself in the career foot. Employers today spend 2 seconds reviewing your resume for keywords and look you up on LinkedIn to see a) whether your profile matches the resume; whether you are promoting yourself as a paralegal (and not an actor or something else) and yes, to view your professional picture. They also want to see your summary that indicates a bit of your personality. They are checking to see if you are the modern employee and if you professionally keep up with social media. The more you are up-to-date, the more they feel they are getting someone who is savvy enough to work for them. If you are not

seeking employment, you still need to be on LinkedIn as quite frankly, it’s the professional thing to do.

*Chere Estrin is the CEO of Estrin Legal Staffing (www.estrinlegalstaffing.com). She has written 10 books on legal careers including *The Paralegal Career Guide 4th Ed.* Her blog, *The Estrin Report* has been around since 2005. Chere has written hundreds of articles, is a national seminar speaker and has been interviewed by the LA Times, Newsweek, the Chicago Trib, Above the Law and other publications. She is the CEO of the Paralegal Knowledge Institute and President and Co-Founding Member of the Organization of Legal Professionals. Reach out to her at chere@estrinlegalstaffing.com. 📧*

About the San Francisco Paralegal Association

The San Francisco Paralegal Association is a nonprofit organization created to represent the paralegal profession as an independent, self-directed profession, to enable paralegals to enhance their professional development, and to support the expansion of the delivery of legal services in an economic and effective manner.

More information about our Board of Directors, bylaws, committees and practice sections can be found in the **About** section of the SFPA site.

Please visit our **Calendar** to find out about upcoming events.

If you’re interested in joining the SFPA, information about how to do so can be found in the **Membership** section of the SFPA site.

Please note: SFPA updates occur frequently, so please contact us directly for the most up-to-date information.

Our Featured Paralegal

Thomas Farrell

Thomas is the owner of Bay Legal Support, which specializes in general legal support for lawyers and small firms, including contract paralegal services.



Thomas will soon be expanding his services to include legal self-help consultation, as well as registering as a Legal Document Assistant and Unlawful Detainer Assistant in San Francisco.

Thomas’s background includes multiple internships, including working with the Social Security Administrations Legal Dept. and the Hon. Charles Haines. He is an experienced litigation paralegal, has worked as a Lead Paralegal/Office Manager for a tenants rights firm, and has been the SFPA Treasurer since 2015.

Thomas earned his B.A. in History, as well as his A.B.A. Paralegal Certificate from SFSU.