



JACKSON LEGAL PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

Volume 21 March 2006



Message from the President...

Whew, what a month it has been! Bosses' Night and the Award of Excellence was a wonderful experience. I have been working on hand-outs for the Certification Board in Tulsa and trying to keep up with all that is happening in our little corner of the world as well. Cheryl Wadsworth, PP, PLS, and Evelyn Harper, PLS, held a cram course for those testing in March and I've heard good things about that. However, one of the attendees, Michelle Fayard from the Gulf Coast ended up staying over when her husband was transported to the Baptist Hospital because of a heart attack. I spoke with Michelle this morning and they were being discharged and heading back home. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

President's Message Continued on Page 2...



Happy March Birthdays to...

- 2 Kelly Rozas
- 19 Alicia Petty
- 20 Pamela Moore
- 21 Camille Bearden
- 25 Mae D. Hazzard
- 27 Karen S. Shearer



JLPA March Meeting...

The JLPA March meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 22, 2006, at Mardi Gras Restaurant. This is our annual business meeting, so please plan to attend.



Boss of the Year/ Award of Excellence Dinner and Winners



Fred Krutz, Esq. with his assistant, Marilyn Mills



Evelyn Harper, Certified PLS, with Clifford B. Ammons, Esq.

Jackson Legal Professionals Association, a division of NALS the association for legal professionals, held its annual Boss of the Year and Award of Excellence Dinner at River Hills Club in Jackson on

February 16, 2006. This dinner is held each year in February to name our Boss of the Year and our Award of Excellence winner.



The Boss of the Year is chosen from nominations made by support staff and voted on by the membership of JLPAs. This year's Boss of the Year is Fred Krutz, Esquire, a partner with the Jackson law firm Forman Perry Watkins Krutz & Tardy, LLP. He was nominated by his secretary, Marilyn Mills. Mr. Krutz was unable to attend the meeting due to out of town obligations, so the award was accepted on his behalf by his secretary, Marilyn Mills. When speaking with Mr. Krutz later, he stated, "Among the recent publicity I have received due to the silica work, including having my picture in Fortune Magazine, the New York Times and many other media, none compares to the honor it is for me to receive the award for Boss of the Year. I feel this award far outweighs any other recognition I have received." He also stated that "the award should not be called "Boss of the Year" but "Assistant of the Year" and that belongs to Marilyn Mills."

The Award of Excellence winner is nominated by JLPAs members and judged by a panel of three judges, consisting of attorneys who are not associated

with the law firm he or she works for and judged on the following criteria: years of experience in the legal profession; service to national and state associations and local chapter; professional activities; education; and other information provided. This year's winner of the Award of Excellence is Evelyn Harper, Certified PLS, of the Jackson law firm Watkins & Eager, PLLC. Evelyn has been a legal secretary for many years and has worked with Clifford B. Ammons, Esquire at Watkins & Eager, PLLC, for the last 28 years.



Renee Dean
Boss of the Year/Award of Excellence Chairman

Board Meeting...

The JLPAs Board Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 21, 2006, at the Mississippi Bar Center, located at 643 North State Street** at 12:00 noon. Lunch will be provided by The Clarion-Ledger and Foreman Perry.

The good lawyer is not the man who has an eye to every side and angle of contingency and qualifies all his qualifications, but who throws himself on your part so heartily, that he can get you out of a scrape.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson~

President's Message **Continued From Page 1...**

We have a lot coming up. First, Tulsa's Leadership Conference is March 8-12; then we have to start really working on the Annual Meeting for the State Association which will be held in May. It will be a grand renaissance affair and should be fun for all. I hope you will make your plans to attend.

Member of the Year is coming up for votes as are the revisions to the Bylaws and Standing Rules. Bonnie has worked very hard this year trying to bring us up to date with our Bylaws and Standing Rules.

Installation of new officers will take place at our April luncheon and we look forward to installing our new officers.

I'm sure I have forgotten something, but with so much going on at this time, that is easy to do.

Thank you again for all your support and I look forward to many more years as a member of this association.

Reba Peden, PP, PLS
JLPAs President 2004-2006

Study Group...

Starts February 2, 2006 and every Thursday night.

Location: Watkins Eager Conference Room, Emporium Building on corner of Capitol and Congress Streets.

Time: Thursdays from 5:15pm until 7:15pm

We would like for all who are interested to come and

participate. You will need the most current books and study materials as outlined by NALS for your particular test. A list of these materials and ordering information can be found at NALS.org.



We will be hosting a weekend cram session before the March deadline--we will let everyone know what weekend later.

Please contact us by e-mail
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Word tips....

The Word Screen

The toolbars and the menus in my old version of Word looked different. What happened?

The **Standard** and **Formatting** toolbars can share one row in later versions of Word, or they can be displayed on two rows, as in the older versions. Also, the menus can show a basic set of commands, with the recently used commands shown first, or you can show all commands.

1. Choose **Customize** from the **Tools** menu.

2. Click on the **Options** tab.
3. Use the check boxes to make your selections.

What's going on with the document windows when I have more than one file open?

New documents open in a separate window (in previous versions of Word, a new document took over the Word window). You can switch from one document to another by choosing a document from the list on the **Window** menu or by clicking the document's button on the Windows Taskbar. To view all open Word documents at the same time, choose **Arrange All** from the **Window** menu. You can also switch documents (or applications) by pressing **Alt+Tab**. To see more rows of buttons on the Windows Taskbar: Position the pointer on the inside edge of the Taskbar (the pointer becomes a two-headed arrow when it is in the correct position), then click and drag its border toward the center of the screen.



Our 2005-2006 Award of Excellence Winner, Evelyn Harper, PLS, being congratulated by our 2004-2005 Award of Excellence Winners, Karen Shearer on the left and Bonnie Parkison on the right.



From left: Stephanie Floyd, PP, PLS, newly elected NALS Region 6 Director; Renee Dean, newly elected JLPV Vice President; Roberta Welch, PP, PLS, newly elected JLPV President; and Marshall Ramsay, Cartoonist for the Clarion-Ledger, our speaker for the Boss of the Year/Award of Excellence dinner.



Rose Jones is our Employment Chairman. The list of jobs available is provided to our members once a month. If you need a copy in the meantime, please e-mail Rose at rjones@watkinsludlam.com.

NALS Online Learning Center...

On Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m. Central Time, join NALS President Mary Jo Denman, PP, PLS, for **discussions and Q&A sessions**.

March 1 Test Taking Tips

March 8 No Chat

March 15 No Chat



The Legal Writer

By Judge Mark P. Painter

Some legal writing texts start out by explaining how legal writing is *different* from other writing. But it should not be. While certain documents — complaints, briefs, deeds — may have a standard *form*, their content should be in plain English.

Most legal writing is atrocious. Fred Rodell, Dean of Yale Law School before most of us were born, had it right when he said, "There are two things wrong with most legal writing. One is style. The other is content." This was in a fascinating article, *Goodbye to Law Reviews*, which should be assigned reading for all law students.

Where did we learn to write? Grammar school is certainly not that any more, but we learned rudimentary rules in grade school. Unfortunately, some of those "rules" were not rules at all. The grade-school teacher who told you not to start a sentence with *and* really meant not to write "I have a dog. And a cat. And a parakeet." As we will discuss in future columns,

the use of "and" and "but" to begin a sentence is one mark of good writing.

Some of us honed our writing skills in high school and college. We learned from reading examples of good literature, and other writing — from journalistic to persuasive. Unless we fell victim to academic jargon illiteracy (a subject for a separate treatise), we usually got better with practice. Though we may still have been handicapped by some false rules from grade school, some of us became at least passable writers before we entered law school. Then the roof fell in.

A Haystack Of Verbiage

One problem in law school is that we read older cases by dead judges. Of course, Cardozo, Holmes and Jackson were great writers, but most judges are not, especially the older ones. I pulled out a random Ohio Supreme Court case from 1946, and quote the first paragraph:

"The appellant complains that the trial court erred in holding that an attorney at law representing a loan association in the distribution of the proceeds of a loan to be made by such association could refuse to answer questions concerning such distribution on the ground that to answer would disclose a confidential communication to his client; and that the trial court erred in holding that a garnishee ordered by the court to appear for examination as to his indebtedness to the judgment debtor was the witness of the judgment creditor and could not

be called for cross-examination by the latter."

This is not a terrible example, it is just random. But it could be translated in to plain English fairly easily. Restated, it could be two sentences, and contain about half of its now 100 words.

It is not just that many judges write badly. Cases are selected for casebooks not because they are examples of good writing, or even clarity, but because they illustrate the precepts of law in that course. Even when edited, many of these cases are wordy, redundant and confusing. Perhaps there is value for the law student in this situation — it provides training on how to pick out the needle of law from the haystack of verbiage. But reading all this Lawpeak and generally bad writing causes the student to internalize it. If judges write this way, then it is the language of the profession to be emulated.

Indecipherable Writings

The problem is compounded exponentially by law students' encounter with other legal writing — leases, contracts, pleadings — some hardly changed from Norman times. Of course, there is also the red meat of the law, statutes. For sheer unfathomability, statutes are probably the champions. An Ohio example:

"Subject to division (B)(4) of this section, if, within six years of the offense, the offender has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to one violation of division (A) or (B) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code, a

