DIXIE DIGEST

www.alabama-als.org

August 2024

A Message from our President

Sonia Smith. CLP



Hope everyone's Summer so far has BEEn a great one! I want to begin this report by thanking all of you who are serving as Officers, Committee Chairpersons, and Co-Chairpersons for your continued efforts to keep our Association going and growing! Each of you are to be commended for your continued and tireless dedication to AALS! Again, thank you!

As we *buzz* on into the next few months I know we are all looking forward to our next conference. We will convene in Birmingham September 13-14! I know that BLSA is working diligently to assure the speakers, meeting space and fellowship will be, yet another way AALS grows from our continued education and networking opportunities. The information for our Fall Board Meeting will be in the pages to follow. I'd encourage you to invite someone to join us!

The NALS National Legal Educational Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, October 13-15. NALS will be celebrating 95 years!! NALS holds the honor of being the oldest association formed for legal support staff! Early Bird Registration ends on August 18, so hurry and get your registration in! The last day for registration will be October 7th. You can also register on-site! I am super excited about the agenda topics! If you haven't checked out the agenda you should, it may just help you make up your mind to attend!! I'll be honest though, only thing I am apprehensive about is how **cold** it might get in Portland in October!! This Gulf Coast Girl loves her southern temperatures! Haha!

I might also encourage you to peruse the NALS webpage to look at the upcoming Webinars.

Remember, you only get out of this Association what you pour into it! Keep on BEE'ing about Growing in AALS!

VICE PRESIDENT

Julie Nims

I cannot believe it is August already!! Where did the Summer go?

Do not forget that if you sponsor a new member, email me a copy of their application and let me know you sponsored them and so you can get into the drawings!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Board Meeting. I hope you all have a blessed and safe Summer! If you have any questions, suggestions, comments, and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

SECRETARY

Kristi Skipper, PP-SC



I received a thank you note from Blayklee Swann, a copy of which is included below. Blayklee is the granddaughter of AALS Past President Deborah Whitman, PLS. She is a hardworking, dedicated young lady who is already hard at work at Jacksonville State University, where she is a member of the Marching Southerners.

I look forward to seeing you all at Fall Board Meeting!



Dear AALS,

Thank you so much for my scholarship award. It will help me pursue my education and achieve my dreams!

blaykleedwann -Blayklee Swann

TREASURER Ed Clark, PP-SC



We are getting ready to finish the current term; please submit your expense reimbursement form to be at ebc@phm-law.com or USPS mail to my attention at:

Ed Clark PHMMI 22 Inverness Center Parkway, Ste. 600 Birmingham, AL 35242

If you have a question about your committee budget, please email me. I look forward to seeing you at the AALS Fall Board Meeting.

CHAPLAIN

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



Since my June report I have continued to pray over the requests I received at Annual Meeting and those received since then and have sent some cards out to various members. I want to say that over the past couple of months I have come to realize, even more than I have before, how important and effective prayer is and can be in our lives. For me, personally, God has answered many prayers, and lately, one in particular that was basically an impossibility, but God provided an enormous blessing, and it reminded me just how Great and Mighty our God is, and how powerful our prayers can be. Don't ever underestimate the power of prayer. God absolutely loves doing the impossible for his children. I am always happy to be a fervent prayer warrior for you, even if it is an unspoken need, just let me know you want me to pray for you, and I promise that I will do so.

I am pleased to report that our sweet member Harriet Piper's recovery is going well, and she is even back at work. Harriet is definitely an amazing lady and an inspiration to all of us!

As a reminder, I am still working on a contact database of member information, birthdates, etc., to send cards and messages electronically. That information is being taken from the NALS member directory, which, I know for a fact, is not completely accurate. I just saw a member birthday today for October 31, 1829! So, I am asking again for everyone to please take a few minutes to check your NALS contacts for accuracy and let me know if you make any changes.

↓ I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13 - KJV)

Please text or email any new prayer requests, praises or other announcements or updates to me so that I can address each one appropriately. Send them to me at: jwhigham@joneswalker.com and/or 251.689.9303 (cell/voice/text). Until I see you in the Fall, please take care and know that I am praying for you.





DIXIE DIGEST PATRONS 2024-2025

Melissa Cooper, CAP, BW, HR, OM, PM, RM, PLS	BLSA
Debby Holmes, PP, PLS	BLSA
Deborah Rutherford	BCALP
Susan Turner, PLS	NOCA
Alison Schemmer, PP, PLS	MLPA
Teresa Moore	BLSA
Myra Beckham, PP, PLS	BLSA
Harriet Piper	DCLSA
Barb Hanley, PLS	MALS
Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS	MLPA
Kristi Skipper, PP	MALS
Judy Whigham, PP, PLS	BCALP

In Memory of Barbara Malone, PP, PLS by Judy Whigham, PP, PLS

In Memory of Talley Brathovd, PLS by Gina Harbison, PP, PLS

Growing With AALS



2024-2025 AALS DIXIE DIGEST PATRON AD

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Please use a separate form for each ad; however, one check may be used for multiple ads if mailed together in the same envelope. Make check payable to AALS (\$10 per ad) and send with form to:

Penny Castleberry (205) 492-7768 cheykaymom71@gmail.com 140 Water Vista Lane Jasper, Alabama 35504

CHAPTER REPORTS

BCALP - Baldwin County

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



As if Summer isn't hot enough, BCALP is really hot these days too! For June, our meeting was held at the Delta Grocery Restaurant in Fairhope. We did not have a speaker and instead, held our annual birthday meeting to celebrate 33 years as a chapter. I was an MLSA member (n/k/a MLPA) at the time when a few of us helped get BCALP going – primarily Barbara Malone and Babs DeKeyser. I remember when it all came together and the excitement of those eager legal beagles from Baldwin County! I have now been a BCALP member myself for quite a few years (maybe around 15), and I can attest to why BCALP is still around – the core members are Ride or Die when it comes to BCALP! We can count on each other, and everyone lends a hand with our projects, and everyone has a voice. We really are a special sisterhood. There were vintage BCALP photos and lots of cake, and even an installation for Treasurer Sandy Doerr, who could not attend our April installation meeting. Congratulations, Sandy, and Happy Birthday, BCALP!

Our July meeting was also very exciting. We met at the Original Oyster House on the Causeway in Spanish Fort, where we had a *Two for One* and combined the meeting into a Joint CLE Mini Seminar and Membership Drive. We were pleased and honored to have AALS President Sonia Smith, CLP, in attendance. We were equally honored to have attorney Sam Irby as our guest speaker. Mr. Irby gave an informative and timely presentation on the Corporate Tax Act. After our mini seminar, BCALP awarded two full-year memberships to Joan Latour and Jeanine Walker who were guests at the seminar. We were so excited to make the membership presentation and even more excited because the membership awards were made possible through the AALS Professional Development Grant awarded to BCALP at the 2024 Winter Board meeting. Thank you AALS!

In addition to our membership presentation, we were thrilled to award the 2024 BCALP Scholarship in the amount of \$500 to Miss Olivia Creel, the daughter of our member and BCALP Chaplain Tracey Creel. Olivia will attend Coastal Community College in the fall in their Nursing program. It is always exciting to see young people rewarded for their hard work and life goals, but even more so when it is one of our own! Way to go, Olivia! We couldn't be more proud!

Mini Seminar, Membership Giveaways, Scholarship Awards, oh my! But that's not all the news. We added a third new member to the BCALP roster in July! Michelle Mirabelli, of the Kesling Law Firm in Orange Beach, also joined BCALP! We certainly didn't need fireworks in July – we were making our own!

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 15th with details to be announced. In the meantime, the BCALP members are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Board Meeting.



2024 BCALP Scholarship awarded to Olivia Creel with proud Mama Tracey Creel looking on!



President Gina Harbison, PP, PLS and BCALP Treasurer Sandra Doerr, ALP



Memberships Awarded to Jeanine Walker & Joan Latour



New Member, Michelle Mirabelli



Speaker extraordinaire! Attorney Sam Irby

Comic Relief!
(A/K/A President Sonia, Judy Whigham and Brianna Rutherford, plus one unidentified hand!)





BLSA – Birmingham



Kayla Bassett, PLS

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. BLSA members have had a busy one. We are meeting monthly at local restaurants and BLSA's members have been bringing donations to a local food bank to our monthly meetings.

It is indeed the pleasure of BLSA to host the upcoming Fall Board Meeting on September 13 and 14, 2024. Please note the registration and hotel deadlines listed on the registration form included in this edition of the Dixie Digest. The Hoover Hyatt Place nightly rate of \$139 includes breakfast, parking, and Wi-Fi. An updated speaker schedule will be circulated when it is finalized.

Governors, please bring five door prizes to the meeting.

We hope that all of you plan to attend the conference. We look forward to great legal education and having fun fellowship with you.

DCLSA - DALLAS COUNTY

Harriett Piper, Governor Pro Tem

Hello, all my AALS friends out there in lala-legal-land! I know everyone is waiting breathlessly to hear how my surgery went. Well (and this will be my great conversation-starter and ice-breaker from now on), let me tell you about my operation!

This June I got a new hip BUT – like Jimmy Buffett – I blew out a kneecap. Wasted again in Margaritaville! Actually, Mr. Buffett blew out a flip flop – that's cheaper than a kneecap! To help stabilize me, Dr. Handsome put a big, tight brace on my old kneecap just below my new hip. So, the saga of replacing Harriet's parts will go on. You know, that kneecap <u>was</u> a replacement part I got in 2005. Now, even my replacement parts need re-replacing!

While recuperating, I listened to two episodes of NALS' podcasts – Collaborative Talk. A Paralegal's Journey was Stephanie Jones' story of transitioning from a receptionist to a successful paralegal. Learning the Ropes in Legal Support featured Jocelyn Enriquez who transitioned from a corrections officer to a legal support professional in criminal law.

I enjoyed both productions. They were very interesting, informative and professionally presented. I recommend looking in The NALS Legal News Brief for the next episode plus the past episodes are available on NALS' website. While you're poking around looking for Collaborative Talk, you will probably stumble upon some other beneficial gems of your membership.

The beneficial gem of my membership will be seeing Ya'll At Fall board!!



Webpage: www.alabama-als.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/aalsalabama

Twitter: https://twitter.com/aalsinfo

MLPA – Mobile

Danielle Baker



Hot town, summer in the city! MLPA has definitely been trying to stay cool in the summer heat!

We hope everyone had a safe and fun Fourth of July and are having a great summer!

Summer kicked off with The Honorable Judson Wells speaking to MLPA at our June luncheon on mediation. He helped provide us with the knowledge on how we can help our attorneys settle a case and provide the best possible outcome for our client's without having to go to trial. I don't know about you, but I like it when a case settles!

We then swam into July with a little Probate knowledge. MLPA's own Vicki Lundy, PP, PLS spoke to us on apostille, civil notary, CTA and a hodge podge of probate/notary items. It is always insightful and as the saying goes "You learn something new every day" when Vicki talks to us about what she does! Thank you again, Vicki!

MLPA's birthday is coming up next month and we look forward to reporting on our celebration. Our EC has been hot on it with scheduling speakers who are able to provide us with the most up-to-date knowledge there is in the legal field! We truly appreciate everything you have and continue to do for us!

Fall is coming up and we look forward to seeing everyone at the Board Meeting in September. Find some shade to stay cool in and let the ice in the fresh glass of lemonade be the only thing that melts in the summer heat!

MALS – Montgomery

Barb Hanley, PLS



What's are those busy bees known as the MALS Gals up to these hot, HOT, summer days....

After the successful annual meeting and the gems of MALS and NOCA rested, regrouped and replenished their energy they SWARMED into a new year.

Kristi Skipper, PP is the Queen bee of this hive and she her leadership will allow our hive to grow, produce lots of honey with education and will keep us buzzing.

Did you know that bees dance. Yes, when bees are excited about pollen, they will dance more quickly to convince other bees to follow them. Well for the MALS Gals...our dancing days have just begun. I am thinking about a network meeting at a dance studio for these MALS Gals.

Kristi Skipper, is the Queen of our hive and her leadership will allow our hive to grow and produce lots of honey and new bees. Our Queen is learning to run the audio-visual system at church, writing a book about her life and wedding planning is keeping her buzzing.

Brenda Martin is our "beekeeper" keeping track of how much honey we have in the hive. Yes, she is our Treasurer and also you might say the nurse bee of the colony...even though all of us tend to be nurse bees...she is buzzing around her grandchildren, taking care of her her triplet sister, Glenda, who is living with her and keeping track of Linda and her "swarm-husband, daughter, son-in-law, granddaughter and grandson" and looking forward to retirement whenever that might come.

So for me, a worker bee, I have been busy as a bee can be with Jerry's Mom, grandchildren, visiting family and lots of friends and work. I had a scary mishap this summer when I did not decide to, but did, roll my car over on Interstate 85 and totaled it. I am fine and a very lucky bee – ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT and say your prayers. I have traveled to Memphis, Chicago, Atlanta and ready to travel to the FALL Board Meeting of AALS.

So now about the dancing....when bees are excited about pollen, they will dance more quickly to convince other bees to follow them. Not sure about the "waggle" but I am excited to announce a new member will soon, if not already, but part of our cluster....Debbie Whitman, PLS, will be re-joining and for this "B" and I am sure for many members of AALS...we are happy for her return!

We will introduce our newest "bee" named "D"ebbiein our next report.

Don't let the excessive heat or water make you want to abandon your hive - FALL and cooler days are around the corner.

NALS OF CENTRAL ALABAMA

Susan Turner. PLS

I want to say again what a great time we had at Annual Meeting in Montgomery. It was such a fun filled weekend with lots of entertaining speakers and the 1920's party was a huge hit! There is no doubt that we have a couple of academy award winners in our midst! Barb and Kristi were flawless! (Watch that hem, Barbie. (Watch that hem)))))

For those interested, the NALS Annual Legal Conference is scheduled for October 13-15, 2024 in Portland, Oregon. The conference is open to all legal professionals even if you are not a member! The link to register is: 2024 National Legal Education Conference - National Association for Legal Support Professionals

We are looking forward to our next meeting. Until then, try to stay cool and dry.

UPCOMING NALS EVENTS

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

Member-at-Large Gathering: Essential Knowledge to Navigate Bankruptcy

8/13/2024 **Time:** 1:00 pm ET

Export to Your Calendar Register



Wednesday, August 14, 2024

NALS of Nashville | Cognitive Overload - "Oh, crap! Did I just make an accidental misstep?"

8/14/2024

Time: 12 - 1 P.M. Central Export to Your Calendar



Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Chapter Leadership Development | All you need to know about 990s

8/27/2024

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 PM Eastern

Export to Your Calendar Register



COMMITTEE REPORTS

CERTIFICATION

Alison K. Schemmer, PP, PLS

Sometimes recycling has a higher purpose than meets the eye. Below was previously reported by me as Certification Chairperson.

In 1994, I had a temporary disability that kept me from doing a lot of the things I really like to do - yard work in particular - as well as just about everything else that was considered strenuous. I had previously joined NALS in 1981 and had to leave in 1984 so I had been "out of touch" for ten years. In late spring of 1994, I had a conversation with Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS and we ended up talking about her PLS certification which was new for her at the time. Her excitement and enthusiasm about the exam, the certification, her PLS certificate and pin were contagious and I was hooked.

I decided that since I was a prisoner in disguise (I could only go to work and then go home and do nothing) I would use the down time to determine just exactly where I was in my legal professional skills. I read, and mocked, and mocked, and read. Babs encouraged and supported me all the way through as I was studying on my own. I was fortunate enough to have the benefit of a great CRAM experience from Barbara Malone, PP, PLS - a weekend CRAM at her office the week before the exam. This was back in the days when the exam was 7 parts given over a two-day period. I was really nervous because I hadn't "been to school" in eighteen years and this was important to me. Babs (no coincidence in my book) administered the exam to four of us in September of 1994, and then we went home to wait.

Needless to say, when the NALS envelope arrived at my home the week of Thanksgiving, I totally failed to notice that it was addressed to Alison K. Schemmer, <u>PLS</u>. So, I didn't know until I opened it and read the contents that I had passed! What a powerful and positive impact the passing of a certification exam has on your self-esteem, self-image, affirmation as a professional and attitude towards your job, not to mention your marketability.

How you study for and take the exam has changed but the result is the same – you are CERTIFIED. GET CERTIFIED – it's a passport to success!

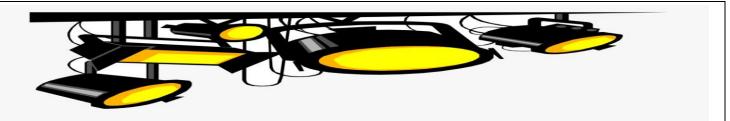
LEGAL EDUCATION

Melissa Cooper, CAP, BW, HR, OM, PM, RM, PLS

The members of BLSA are looking forward to hosting the AALS Fall Board Meeting and Education Conference and have been hard at work planning. The dates for the meeting are Friday and Saturday, September 13-14, 2024, and we will again be meeting at the Hyatt Place Hotel, 2980 John Hawkins Parkway, Hoover, Alabama near the Galleria Mall. The agenda and registration form are included in the Dixie Digest. We have a block of rooms at the hotel, and they can be reserved at: https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/alabama/hyatt-place-birmingham-hoover/bhmzh?corp_id=G-BLSA. I look forward to seeing everyone in September!

FUNDING COMMITTEE: Magan and Laneay are excited to serve as your funding committee and look forward to seeing you all at future events.

It's our hope to further "Grow with AALS" and plant lots of excitement. As preparations begin for Fall Board, think about what makes you feel cozy as the seasons begin to cool and a change!



Let's Talk About – Deborah Rutherford by Judy Whigham, PP, PLS













We want to take this time to mention a very special member – Deborah Rutherford. Debbie is an amazing lady and member. Everything that Debbie undertakes to do or works on, she jumps in with both feet, and then goes knee-deep! She can be relentless and bossy, but that's just her drive to get things done. She is incredibly smart at her job and knows every single thing about Domestic Relations – even though she doesn't actually work in that field anymore! True Story: I work in Mobile and had to call the Baldwin County Domestic Clerk's office one day to ask a routine question, not being familiar with the local rules, and, no lie, the clerk told me to call Debbie Rutherford and gave me her number! I told the clerk that I knew Debbie personally and I knew she didn't work at the clerk's office. The clerk said she was aware of that, but Debbie is still the person I should talk to. She said Debbie could tell me everything about filing something in Baldwin domestic court better than anyone at the clerk's office! I will never, ever forget that! I have also seen her completely take over a restaurant when the people working there weren't moving at her preferred pace! But I didn't complain because she got things moving along!

On a serious note, Debbie is a professional and puts 110% into everything she does. She is a charter member of her local chapter, BCALP and is adored and respected by her employers and colleagues. She has held nearly every office and committee in her local chapter and on the state level, including serving as AALS President for 2012-2013. She has received the AALS Member of the Year Award for 2013, and named BCALP Member of the Year multiple times, most recently in 2023. Debbie's drive, spirit and tenacity contribute to her success as an outstanding member, but she also has another quality, which has shone through very recently. She is an AALS go-getter! She tries to recruit everyone she comes in contact with and has a take no prisoners attitude in her recruitment tactics – in a good way! She is one of the most prolific recruiters of new members in BCALP. In July she recruited a new member, Michelle Mirabelli. She also invited two guests to our meeting and both guests ended up becoming members through our membership drive made possible through the AALS Professional Development Grant that BCALP received at the 2024 Winter Board Meeting. Everyone else at the meeting who were eligible to receive the memberships were already members, so, thanks to Debbie inviting them, BCALP gained two new members. That's what I'm talking about!

Debbie actually has a softer side too. She's a devoted wife, mother, and daughter – especially since her parents moved to Alabama from Tennessee, she has been very hands-on in their care and day-to-day needs and challenges. All in all, Debbie is a remarkable person, legal support professional, family gal, and friend, and she deserves to be in the Spotlight!











AALS Fall Board Meeting and Education Conference September 13-14, 2024 Hoover, Alabama

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Make checks payable to <u>AALS</u> and mail registration with check to:

Melissa Cooper, CAP, BW, OM, PM, RM / PLS AALS Legal Education Chair 471 Fieldstone Drive, Helena, AL 35080 (205) 218.8410 / scrapbookskippy@yahoo.com



AALS Fall Board Meeting and Education Conference September 13-14, 2024 Hoover, Alabama

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

12:30 pm Registration

1:00 – 2:30 pm **TOPIC**

Speaker

2:30 – 3:00 pm Break

3:00 – 4:00 pm **TOPIC**

Jay St. Clair

4:00 – 5:00 pm **TOPIC**

Speaker

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

8:30 am Registration

9:00 – 10:30 am **Updates in Alabama Notary Law**

Michelle L. Riley, BA, Founder of Notaries for Alabama

10:30 – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am Lunch

Immediately Following Lunch: Board Meeting

CLE: 5 hours

FUNDING

Magan W. Bedwell Laneay Yates, ALP

Happy Summer! We are excited to serve as your funding committee and look forward to seeing you all at future events.

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COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS 2023-2024

COMMITTEE	CHAIR/CO-CHAIR	EMAIL
Audit Committee (2024-2025 Books)	Deborah Rutherford Tena Mathews, PP, PLS Debby Holmes, PP, PLS	drutherford@cwalawfirm.com capreesmom@aol.com debby@assetlaw.com
Audit Committee (2024 Annual Meeting)	Gina Harbison, PP, PLS Teresa Moore, PP, PLS Harriet Piper	gharbison@pci-nsn.gov teresam357@bellsouth.net harrietpiper@yahoo.com
Bylaws, Standing Rules & Procedures Manual	Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS	babs.dekeyser@att.net
Certification	Alison Schemmer, PP, PLS	aks6451@aol.com
Corporate Sponsors	Ed Clark, PP-SC	ebc@phm-law.com
Dixie Digest Patron Ads	Penny Castleberry	pacastleberry@csattorneys.com
Dixie Digest	Margaret Dawson, PLS	aalsdixiedigest@gmail.com
Finance	Ed Clark, PP-SC	ebc@phm-law.com
Funding	Magan Bedwell Laneay Yates, ALP,	mwb@cunninghambounds.com laneayPLS@hotmail.com
Installation	Myra Beckham, PP, PLS	myrabeckham@bellsouth.net
Legal Education (Banner & Tablecloth)	Melissa Cooper, PP, PLS	scrapbookskippy@yahoo.com
Marketing/Membership	Julie Nims	inims@raineslawfirm.com
Member of the Year	Margaret Dawson, PLS	thistldome@gmail.com
New Member of the Year	none	
Nominations & Elections, Credentials	Tracy Creel	traceycreel@gmail.com
Resolutions	Judy Whigham, PP, PLS	jwhigham@joneswalker.com
Scholarship	Kayla Bassett, PLS	kjbassett55@outlook.com
Student Chapter Liaison	none	
Technology	Danielle Baker	danielle@longandlong.com
Web Page	Margaret Dawson, PLS	thistldome@gmail.com