

LEGAL ASSISTANTS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Description	Date
Legal Assistants Section Council Meeting	March 31, 2001
Council Meeting	May 3, 2001
All Day Seminar sponsored by the Legal Assistants Section	May 4, 2001
Council Meeting	July 28, 2001
State Bar of Michigan Annual Meeting	September 12-14, 2001
Council Meeting	September 13, 2001
Legal Assistants Section Annual Meeting and Seminar	September 14, 2001

By John Norris Stone

It's been five years since the *Michigan Bar Journal* devoted an issue to the legal assistant profession. In that time, the Legal Assistants Section of the State Bar has celebrated several milestones including the section's tenth anniversary in 2000. As interest in the profession grows, so do the benefits offered to section members. The section is pleased to provide members with a quarterly newsletter as well as employment opportunities found on the job bank maintained by the section at <http://firms.findlaw.com/SB-Mjobank/index.htm> In addition, the section continues to host educational seminars. The next all day seminar is scheduled for Friday, May 4, 2001 at Davenport University in Grand Rapids. The section's commitment to education is also evident in the newly created Michigan State Bar Foundation Legal Assistants Scholarship Fund. Information about the scholarship fund, as well as other items of interest, can be found on the section's website at www.michbar.org/sections/legalassist

In keeping with the theme of education, this issue of the *Michigan Bar Journal* contains four topical and relevant articles of interest not only to legal assistants but also to attorneys.

Margaret Lucas Agius, CLA offers an in-depth discussion on ethics and professional responsibility. To give readers a thorough understanding of these topics, Margaret explores them from three different perspectives: national level, state level, and education. Given the im-

portance of ethics for all legal professionals, Margaret's article benefits both the novice and the pro.

Theresa A. Webster, CLA provides readers with an insightful article on the use of visual techniques and offers advice for creating effective trial graphics. Theresa discusses not only how, but also why certain techniques are more effective than others. Among other things, she stresses the importance of being organized. Throughout her article, Theresa offers readers practical suggestions to enhance their visual impact in the courtroom.

Galia Avramov, Myra MacIssac, and Michele Polito present an article on the rapidly growing practice of immigration law. The authors educate readers by giving them not only a historical perspective, but also by showing how the present global workforce impacts U.S. corporations and institutions. This impact is illustrated locally through a discussion on the metropolitan Detroit area and its proximity to Canada. The authors also demonstrate the important and expanding role legal assistants play in the fast paced practice of immigration law.

While education doesn't necessarily evoke controversy, certification and licensure certainly do. Timothy P. Flynn, Esq. discusses all three topics in his article. Among other things, Timothy offers readers background on legal assistant education, professional development, and national and local organizations. He also offers his opinion on certification versus licensure and the reasoning behind his conviction.

On behalf of the section and the members of the council, I would like to extend my gratitude to all of the authors who submitted articles for this issue. I would also like to thank Kelly A. LaGrave, CLAS for serving as the legal assistant liaison with the *Bar Journal* editorial staff. It is because of Kelly's hard work and dedication that this issue was possible.

In closing, I would like to thank those members, past and present, whose dedication, time, and energy have helped to ensure the continued success of the section. ♦

John Norris Stone has been a legal assistant for more than 13 years. He holds a BS degree from Wayne State University. He is currently employed at Varnum, Riddering, Schmidt & Howlett in Grand Rapids where he specializes in probate and tax. He has served on the council for the Legal Assistants Section since 1998 and is currently chairperson of the section.

First Ever Michigan Legal Assistant Survey

Keeping abreast of changes and trends in the legal job market is vital to the pursuit of a successful legal career. Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that we report the findings of the first Legal Assistant (Paralegal) Survey conducted in Michigan. The survey explores the trends in salaries, benefits, specialties, educational background, firm requirements, and career goals of legal assistants throughout the state. See the survey at www.michbar.org/sections/legalassist/slideshow/index.htm

For a copy of the survey results please contact us:

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Included in the detailed results are salary levels linked to type of employer, years of service, and practice area.

—Jill R. Pace & Sheley DeGraw

