

GEARS OF LAW

Volume 6, Issue 1
November 2016

Gears of Law is provided by the Paralegal Student Association and sponsored by Student Life.

“North Hennepin Community College is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and an Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer. For disability accommodations call 763-493-0555. Minnesota Relay users may call 1-800-627-3529.”

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Twenty Questions 1

Paralegal “Speed Networking” Event 2

Current Events 3

Spring Registration 4

Paralegal Student Association Meetings 5

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Each issue we are giving readers a glimpse into the lives and interests of legal professionals through a series of twenty questions and answers. Each issue will feature a different professional responding to the same twenty questions.

This issue's profile features Bruce Klopffleisch, one of our very own professors at NHCC.

1: What is your name?

A: Bruce Klopffleisch.

2: What is your title/position?

A: Instructor in the Paralegal Department at NHCC, teaching Litigation I and II. I also teach an online American Government class for Central Lakes College in Brainerd and an Introduction to Macroeconomics class at St. Cloud Technical & Community College this semester, as well as being in private practice as an attorney.

3: What has been your largest success or achievement (academically or professionally)?

A: Academically, it was graduating from law school and passing the bar exam. I went to night school and was working full time during law school and studying for the bar exam, and I made it!

Professionally, as an attorney, there are three. The first one was terminating the parental rights of the parents of three teenagers who were not providing for them. These children were later adopted by a loving couple and I received thank you cards from them for a number of years.

The second was pursuing the civil commitment of a sex offender even though some professionals argued against it, but the victims wanted it. The victims won.

The third was winning the Advocacy Achievement Award from the Northwest MN Legal Services Program. I believe lawyers have an obligation to help people who cannot afford lawyers in civil cases. Poor people need a lawyer as much as anyone else. I applaud NHCC and its paralegal department for participating in its Legal Services Clinic. Paralegal students should take advantage of the opportunity to volunteer with this program.

Continued page 2

TWENTY QUESTIONS CONTINUED

4: What is the biggest challenge you have faced in regards to the legal profession and how did you overcome it?

A: For me, it was it was learning how to deal with clients and tell them no sometimes. In law school, we were taught theories about a lot of things and practiced some client relation techniques, but it is much more difficult out in "the real world." It is hard to tell a client or potential client no or they don't have a case, but it is a needed skill.

It gets easier the more you do it. I was fortunate enough to begin practicing law in an office with experienced attorneys who I could bounce some of these issues off of and get advice from.

5: Do you live by a motto? If so, what is it?

A: "Not one that I live by. However, I use three with my students. The first one is "When theory meets reality, reality always wins." The second is "Looking for the answers to the questions you have found." The third one is "The more you learn, the more you learn how much you don't know."

The first one is rather obvious: there are all kinds of theories involving all kinds of things, but often times reality shows the theories do not work as claimed. The second one I borrowed from an old Rush song called "Something for Nothing." I think it applies to education really well. When a question pops up, find an answer for it. The third one I used a lot in study skills classes I taught in the past, and in my own education. The more you learn, you realize how much more is out there that you don't know - so you should learn about it. And keep learning. I was a student over the summer taking a Political Science and an Economics course to keep learning more about these topics.

Continued on page 4



Want to Write for Gears of Law?

If you have something you would like to share for the next newsletter, please contact Sonia Nelson at sonia.nelson.7345@my.nhcc.edu

PARALEGAL "SPEED NETWORKING" EVENT

The Paralegal Student Association hosted a panel of local legal professionals and paralegals in an event for students on Saturday, October 15th.

Students who attended heard from recent grads as well as established professionals. The panel answered questions about how they chose their specific field of law, gave tips on interviews and internships, and advice on what students could expect as they entered legal offices to begin their careers.

The panel had legal professionals working for private companies, large public companies, and government offices, giving a varied perspective on topics and advice. One recent grad described how she used her skills and dedicated work effort to gain a better job position in her firm, even though she did not have as much experience as some other employees.

Several on the panel also talked about the importance of volunteering. By volunteering, students can not only show employers that they care about giving time and effort in their community but also gain valuable experience in different fields.

The panel format was structured, yet informal in order to allow students a chance to ask all their questions. All who attended enjoyed a lunch and some information conversation before and after the scheduled event. Overall, students have a great chance to gain insight from professionals already working in legal field.

CURRENT EVENTS

- Tensions Escalate As Police Clear Protesters Near Dakota Access Pipeline <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/10/28/dakota-access-pipeline-protests>
- Family Of Man Killed By Burnsville Cops Sues <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/10/27/burnsville-police-march-shooting-lawsuit>
- Supreme Court To Rule In Transgender Access Case http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/29/us/politics/supreme-court-to-rule-in-transgender-access-case.html?_r=0
- Filing Of Tukwila Police Dog's Teeth Fails To Prevent Bite-Injury Lawsuit <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/filing-of-tukwila-police-dogs-teeth-fails-to-prevent-bite-injury-lawsuit/>
- Jury Awards \$70M To Woman In Baby Powder Lawsuit <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/jury-awards-70m-woman-baby-powder-lawsuit-n674416>
- Florida City Of Plantation Loses Lawsuit Against Family Over Massive Christmas Display <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-final-decision-hyatt-christmas-20161031-story.html>
- AARP Sues U.S. Over Rules For Wellness Programs <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/25/business/employee-wellness-programs-prompt-aarp-lawsuit.html>
- Denver's Sweeps Of Homeless Camps Latest To Face Lawsuit <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lawsuit-denver-homeless-camp-sweeps-unsuccessful-illegal/>
- Prince Estate Judge Rejects Claims From Would-Be Heirs <http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/music/2016/10/26/prince-estate-judge-rejects-claims-would-be-heirs/92797260/>
- Lawsuit Over Cellphones And Cancer Hits A Stumbling Block <http://www.wsj.com/articles/lawsuit-over-cellphones-and-cancer-hits-a-stumbling-block-1476989802>
- Apple Lawsuit Reveals Most Chargers Sold On Amazon Are Fake <https://www.engadget.com/2016/10/20/apple-lawsuit-amazon-chargers-fake/>
- Federal Lawsuit Filed In Virginia On Voter Registration System Crash <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/19/politics/federal-lawsuit-filed-in-virginia-on-voter-registration-system-crash/>
- It's Finally Legal To Hack Your Own Devices (Even Your Car) <https://www.wired.com/2016/10/hacking-car-pacemaker-toaster-just-became-legal/>
- Apple Vs. Samsung Design Patent Lawsuit Reaches The Supreme Court <http://neurogadget.net/2016/10/30/apple-vs-samsung-design-patent-lawsuit-reaches-supreme-court/44655>

TWENTY QUESTIONS CONTINUED

6: What court case (either past or present) interests you the most? Why?

A: I can't say that there is just one. But the *Citizens United v. FEC* case decided by the US Supreme Court in 2010 allowing unlimited political campaign contributions by corporations is interesting. I personally don't agree with the decision, and many people are criticizing the decision now that billions of dollars will be spent in this year's elections. But this case also was interesting because the Court decided this issue even though it wasn't part of the initial appeal by either side. The Court did it on its own. This doesn't happen very often, but it did in this case. Look what has happened because of it.

7: What do like most about Minnesota?

A: All the lakes, being able to experience all four seasons (fall is my favorite), and the people. I hate driving in the heavy traffic though.

“The more you learn, you realize how much more is out there that you don't know - so you should learn about it. And keep learning.” – Bruce Klopfleisch

8: What do you think the largest change for the legal profession will be in the future?

A: I hope I am wrong about this, but don't be surprised if "Big Law" concerns advance. With many areas in business, the big law firms buy up or buy out the smaller firms who compete with the big firm. More and more mergers are occurring with laws firms, particularly in bigger cities. These larger firms then open offices in other states to expand their business. The more "megafirms" that are out there, the higher the price will be for clients or clients will simply not go to a lawyer since they can't afford it. They will try to represent themselves or use internet-based services like LegalZoom, which is a risky proposition.

I also see less and less lawyers in rural Minnesota. Younger lawyers are not choosing to practice in rural areas. As the older lawyers retire, they are not being replaced. This will make it harder for rural people to find a good lawyer in their town.

9: Describe yourself using three words:

A: Helpful, curious, and inquisitive.

10: What was your favorite subject in school?

A: In high school, it was history. In college, it was history and political science. In law school, it was criminal law.

Continued on page 5

SPRING 2017 REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration for the 2017 Spring Semester is now open! Several important changes are of note for students planning for the future.

First, Mary Fenkse, Paralegal Program Director & Instructor, encourages students to register for classes right away. Since tuition is not immediately due upon registration, students can have time to finalize their plans for the future while the number of students signed up for classes helps the school determine if any classes need to be rescheduled.

Second, an important change to remember for the Summer 2017 session. Two paralegal courses are offered over the summer. PLEG 1111-91 Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies, is scheduled from May 22nd to July 12th. PLEG 2620-91 Property, is scheduled from May 23rd to June 29th.

PARALEGAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Interested in fun experiences and adding interest to your resume? Join the NHCC Paralegal Student Association. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19th at 6 p.m. in CBT Room 168.

If you are interested in being involved as an officer of the club or just attending as time allows, please contact the association president, Yelena Leonovich Yelena.Leonovich.8491@my.nhcc.edu for more information.

TWENTY QUESTIONS CONTINUED

11: Who is your biggest role model?

A: My mother, who raised three young children on her own after my father died when I was two.

12: Share something people would be surprised to know about you:

A: I am a decent bowler. I averaged 217 last season. I am improving with age.

13: What is the number one piece of advice you would give to someone entering the legal profession?

A: As it relates to paralegals, learn as much as you can about the different forms of technology in the legal profession, like e-Discovery. You will be in demand as lawyers hate doing that. As it relates to becoming a lawyer, make sure you really want to do it. Law school is hard and time consuming, is very expensive, and you are not guaranteed a job when you are done to pay off that debt.

14: What is your favorite movie?

A: I don't have a favorite one. But, one of my favorites relating to the law is A Few Good Men. "You can't handle the truth!"

15: If you only had one day left to live, what would you do?

A: Spend as much time as I can with my family and close friends. Nothing more important than that for me.

16: What is one goal you have for the future?

A: Going to Boston to visit all the historical areas around there relating to the Revolutionary War.

17: What is your favorite book?

A: I don't have a favorite. I have read a lot of books over the years. One doesn't stand out for me. But, if my wife's novel gets published, that will be my favorite book!

18: Which country would you like to visit the most if you were given the chance?

A: Australia and New Zealand. People I know that have been there rave about it.

19: If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?

A: Never stop challenging yourself. Keep learning and trying new things. Don't be afraid to ask for help - people love to help you if they can.

20: If you could redo your career and start over, with the option of picking another career, would you redo it?

A: Probably not. I am very fortunate in my career. I have been an attorney for 28 years and counting. I have helped a lot of people over that time - even those that didn't want the help. I am also a teacher helping students reach their career goals and challenging them to become lifelong learners.



North Hennepin
Community College
7411 85th Ave
Brooklyn Park MN
55445

Contact Us

Sonia Nelson
Editor of Gears of Law
sonia.nelson.7345@
my.nhcc.edu