

## Andrea Davis

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**From:** Kate McAllister & Erica McAdoo [ncaj@ncaj.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 09, 2010 9:20 AM  
**To:** Andrea Davis  
**Subject:** LAD Members: Check Out What's Going On!!



## LEGAL ASSISTANTS DIVISION

### Newsletter

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**December 2010**

### Message from the Chair

*2010 is coming to an end and what a great year it's been for the Division!*

**President Baddour's** platform is education...

*Learning from each other...making the best even better*

- To increase our knowledge
- To improve our skills
- To instill our values

Division leadership hosted a *great* Summer Conference for Paralegals at Convention in Wilmington in June; an *awesome* Fall Conference for Paralegals at Mountain Magic in Asheville in October; and has planned a *terrific* Spring Seminar for Paralegals at Embassy Suites in Concord on March 16, 2011. Our conferences are a great way for Division members to get their yearly CPE requirements while networking and having fun!

I understand that it's challenging times for most, however, if you can, take advantage of the membership specials that NCAJ is currently offering -- Sections and NCAJ membership at half-price, all as outlined in detail below.

As we look towards 2011, Division members will have the opportunity to volunteer for Division leadership. I have participated in Division leadership, in various positions, for over ten years and have learned so much from NCAJ and know what it is to be a true "Advocate" for my clients. I've made great friends statewide. I know we all have busy jobs, however, I encourage you to participate in Division leadership - it will only enhance your career.

On behalf of Division leadership, I wish you a happy holiday season and look forward to a successful 2011!

**Best Regards,**  
**Rhonda Rodenbough**  
**Chair, Legal Assistants Division**

### Member Spotlight: Lynne Sizemore

*Submitted by* **Kate McAllister**

Many of our Legal Assistant Division members have heard of *Action Advocate, Inc.*, a Charlotte-area

business which specializes in Social Security disability. Many of our Legal Assistant Division members are also familiar with **Lynne Sizemore**, the owner and driving force behind Action Advocate. **Lynne** recently shared some reflections on her long career and successful Social Security practice.

Born and raised in Norfolk, Virginia, **Lynne** began her professional life with the U.S. Navy, working in the civil service for over four years. She then joined the Office of Hearings and Appeals in Charlotte as a clerk/typist. During the next decade, she absorbed as much as she could about Social Security disability practice and worked her way up to the position of hearing assistant. In that capacity, she worked directly with the judges and her responsibilities were much like those of a paralegal and law clerk - she would summarize files, review medical records, and prepare written questions.

In 1989, **Lynne** left the Office of Hearings and Appeals and joined the law firm of **Charles "Mac" Sasser**. It was a wonderful experience working for over three years with such a "brilliant" attorney; she felt they made a "good team." The firm was involved in the Hyatt III class action case that challenged the way pain was being evaluated in the Social Security disability process. **Attorney Sasser** was supportive as **Lynne** took classes at Central Piedmont Community College, and he encouraged her as she began to handle Social Security hearings.

**Lynne** sensed an opportunity to do more with her experience and education. She felt (and still feels) strongly that the most important thing about Social Security practice is zealous representation of the clients, folks who have suffered, who are often without many resources, and who need the time and energy of a dedicated practitioner. Because of her experience and education, **Lynne** felt that she understood and could operate effectively within the complicated hearings and appeals system. With her husband's support, she decided to strike out on her own. She started *Action Advocate, Inc.* in 1998 with one part-time assistant. Today, the business employs three paralegals, two full-time administrative staff members, two part-time assistants, and an office manager.

**Lynne** attributes much of her own success and that of her company to the importance she places on education. She stresses to each of her employees the benefits of continuing legal education, writing classes in particular. As an author of several federal court briefs, **Lynne** knows firsthand how critical the ability to write well can be to any kind of legal endeavor. **Lynne** periodically offers lectures and training courses to many groups, including NCAJ. In fact, attendees at the Summer Conference for Paralegals in Wilmington in June will remember **Lynne's** presentation, along with her senior paralegal **Melissa Wilson**, on preparation for the Social Security hearing. Along with education, **Lynne** emphasizes the achievement of professional certifications. She is an Accredited Disability Representative and belongs to the National Association of Disability Representatives and the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives, among other professional organizations.

Though there have been many changes in Social Security disability practice over the years, **Lynne's** commitment to education has helped her to adapt to these changes, a commitment which she feels would assist paralegals in all fields of practice. **Lynne** has no plans to retire anytime soon, although she very much enjoys spare time spent with her family, including two grandchildren, and training her beloved Dobermans. **Lynne** can be contacted at [SizemoreL@aol.com](mailto:SizemoreL@aol.com) or (704) 399-8890.

## Holiday Chaos!

*Submitted by Erica McAdoo*

I don't know about you, but as the holidays approach, time management and case movement seem more important than ever. Clients always seem to call more frequently at this time of year and everyone wants their case resolved by December 25th. It's also the year-end for the firm and time for number crunching. And then your own family is in town - or want you to come visit their town - so there's the inevitable issue of trying to figure out how to take time off when it's one of the busiest times in the firm.

In the middle of all the chaos and the seemingly incessant client calls and the pressure, I try to remember several things. I try to make sure to take time for myself, at work and at home, and not feel guilty for not having a clone. And I try to remember that, as stressful as holidays can be for me, I am not injured due to someone else's negligence. I can still stand on my own two feet in my kitchen and make our family's famous (or infamous??) Swedish rice pudding. Many of our clients are in wheelchairs now, or have their dominant hand and arm in a cast. Even the simplest tasks like walking or taking a shower have now been rendered indescribably difficult or impossible. Some of our clients don't have family close by, or even family at all, so on top of dealing with their newly inflicted injuries, they feel lonely.

However, even if I do manage to think about what our clients must be going through and how they might be feeling, that *might* serve to lower my blood pressure by a couple points, but it doesn't change the fact that it's a stressful time of the year. This year, I have decided to find ways to ease that stress at work, more specifically when dealing with impossible, unrealistic client demands and attempted client-imposed deadlines. I have already started employing some of my new strategies, and I think I may be reaping some of the benefits already. For those clients who I know are alone or mostly alone, I have been writing handwritten notes on firm notecards just to let them know I'm thinking about them and that we're here for them. I usually do this periodically throughout the year but during the holiday season, it seems to be having an even bigger impact. I have almost always been getting a return letter, email or phone call from the client telling me how much my note meant to them.

Another thing I always try to do, but even more so at this time of year, is to anticipate client needs, calls, and requests. If I call the client before they call me, it almost always seems to be a more pleasant conversation. During the year, I try to touch base with every client at least once every two weeks, but I try to make that more frequent during the holidays. We have some clients who now can't get out of the house often, or even at all, because of the nature of their injuries. This results in their having more time to sit around and think about their injuries, the incident that caused their injuries, and the unfairness of the whole situation. Often these extensive contemplation opportunities result in anger towards the person who caused them this suffering - and since they can't tell that person how they feel and how they're ruining their holiday, I'm the next best thing. I have found that the handwritten notes and more frequent phone calls or emails seem to be helping head off these types of anger-filled calls. The result has been less stress for me and happier clients who feel that we truly understand and we are really there for them. We always want clients to feel that way, but at this time of year when people feel lonely and the reality of their new limited lifestyle is really hitting home, that extra phone call or email from our end can make them feel less isolated.

Hopefully these new strategies and techniques will make a difference for our clients and for me during this holiday season - so far, so good! If you have ideas and ways of dealing with pressure and stress during this time of year and in other high-pressure situations, I would love to hear about them and maybe share them with other Division members in future newsletters! Email your ideas to Erica McAdoo at [emcadoo@lawmed.com](mailto:emcadoo@lawmed.com). *Happy Holidays, everyone!*

## Announcing NCAJ's Educational Achievement Program...



The North Carolina Advocates for Justice is pleased to announce the establishment of the **Educational Achievement Program** (EAP). EAP is designed to recognize NCAJ members for their commitment to improving trial skills and understanding substantive law as a means to better serve their clients.

- Legal Assistants earn the distinction of an "Advocate" of the Educational Achievement Program by completing 10 CPE hours through NCAJ in one year, or an average of 10 hours per year over a 3-year period (retroactive to July 1, 2010).
- Attorneys earn the distinction by completing 20 CLE hours through NCAJ in one year, or an average of 20 hours per year over a three-year period (retroactive to July 1, 2010).
- Those members who achieve this status will be recognized in the NCAJ membership directory, on the NCAJ website, at Convention, and in other NCAJ publications. In addition, an "Advocate" of EAP will receive a specially designed logo to use in the firm's marketing and communications materials (all as set forth by accompanying NCAJ guidelines).

For additional information about NCAJ's Educational Achievement Program, please visit [www.ncaj.com](http://www.ncaj.com) or contact Kim Williams at 800.688.1413 or [kim@ncaj.com](mailto:kim@ncaj.com).

## Upcoming Events...Calendar These Dates!

**MARCH 16, 2011 - SAVE THE DATE!**

## Spring Seminar for Paralegals

Embassy Suites  
Concord

LAD leadership has put together a great seminar for you that will be informative, fun AND satisfies your yearly 6.0 CPE hours requirements (including 1.0 hour ethics).

Areas covered will be products liability, workers comp, family law, social security, discovery and trust account management. In addition, mid-day, LAD leadership will host a Get-to-Know luncheon for Seminar registrants -- a fun way to "get to know" your colleagues! *Stay tuned for registration details in future issues of the newsletters, listserv posts and mailings!*

*INTERESTED IN OTHER CLE TOPICS?*

[Click here](#) for the full schedule of upcoming live educational seminars and video replays.

## Make the Most of Your Membership – Select Your FREE Section!

Have you taken advantage of selecting your FREE Section yet? As a NCAJ Legal Assistants member you are entitled to one complimentary Section.

Join a Section and be included in a vibrant, statewide community of other NCAJ members who practice in the same area of law and who will provide you with professional support, expertise and idea exchange.

Take advantage of Section-specific resources: listserv, CLE, statewide socials and meetings, electronic newsletters, document banks or online trial notebooks, and much more!

NCAJ supports its members by providing a wide range of Sections - more than most TLAs in the nation: Auto Torts, Civil Rights, Commercial Litigation (free through June 2011), Consumer Areas of Practice, Criminal Defense, Disability Advocacy, Eminent Domain, Employment Law, Family Law, Juvenile Defense, Nursing Home Litigation, Products Liability, Professional Negligence, Small Office Practice, Workers Compensation.

*Already selected your free Section but work in more than one practice area and would like to join an additional NCAJ Section? **NCAJ has got you covered too!** Section membership is now half-price!*

Don't delay - get involved in the NCAJ Community and join a Section today!

[Click here](#) to join your free Section.

[Click here](#) to join an additional Section (at half-price) online using your credit card.

[Click here](#) for the form to join a Section (at half-price) using a check.

Questions? Contact Andrea Davis at [AndreaD@ncaj.com](mailto:AndreaD@ncaj.com) or (919) 836-4215.

## Acquaint Your Colleagues with All that NCAJ Has to Offer...At Half-Price!

Pass along the good news to colleagues who are non-NCAJ-members: *NCAJ membership is now half-price!*

As you are aware, NCAJ has so much to offer your colleagues: Sections & Divisions specific to your practice area; CLEs provided statewide - live, video replay, webcast; Educational Achievement Program; legislative initiatives that positively impact you and your clients; "Trial Briefs" bi-monthly print journal, "Brief Notes" weekly e-newsletter; "e-Clips" daily news updates and other NCAJ publications; print and online membership directory listing, and much, much more!

[Click here](#) to print a Half-Price Membership Application to pass along or let your colleagues know that they can enroll online at [www.ncaj.com](http://www.ncaj.com).

Questions? Contact Lisa White at [LisaW@ncaj.com](mailto:LisaW@ncaj.com) or (919) 835-2807.

## Join the Division Listserv Today!

If you have not joined the LAD listserv, you are missing one of the best membership benefits of being a Legal

Assistants Division member. The listserv is a great way to receive responses, 24/7, to legal practice matters and issues, distribute information on important topics and to survey Division members. Don't Delay - Email [AndreaD@ncaj.com](mailto:AndreaD@ncaj.com) to set-up your listserv account.

## 2010-11 Legal Assistants Division Officers

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