



1973 - 2013

**PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION
OF CENTRAL OHIO
Our First 40 Years**

The 1970s

In the 1970s, there were many firsts for this new association:

- **1973:** Six paralegals get together to form a paralegal association with the name the Legal Assistants of Central Ohio (“LACO”).
- **April 1976:** The first LACO newsletter is published.
- **May 1979:** A business relationship begins between the Columbus Bar Association (“CBA”) and LACO, as the CBA approved LACO’s participation in CBA lunches, committees and Continuing Legal Education courses.
- **October 1979:** LACO becomes a voting member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (“NFPA”), a national association of numerous regional paralegal associations providing guidance and support to members in a number of ways, including the publication of a quarterly magazine called *The Paralegal Reporter*, tracking federal legislative initiatives affecting the paralegal profession, and hosting conferences for member associations.

The 1980s

In the 1980s, LACO began to grow and carve a niche, not only in Central Ohio, but across the State of Ohio.

1980s: LACO works with the CBA and the Ohio State Bar Association (“OSBA”) to develop Lawyer-Legal Assistant committees and establish associate membership in both legal associations. LACO also assists in drafting the definition of “Paralegal” (later adopted almost verbatim by the American Bar Association or ABA). The ABA models its associate member category after the CBA’s proposed category.

- **January 1980:** LACO successfully spearheads opposition to an OSBA proposal regarding certification of paralegals.
- **October 1980:** Membership grows to 132 members.
- **1981:** LACO hosts the first statewide meeting of all Ohio paralegal associations.
- **1980-1981:** a LACO member serves as NFPA Region Director.
- **1987:** a LACO member serves as NFPA Treasurer.

The 1990s

In the 1990s, LACO goes national, changing its name to reflect changes in the paralegal profession.

1990s: LACO members serve as NFPA Vice President of Development, Vice President of Administration and Region III Director. LACO members testify before the Ohio Supreme Court UPL Task Force and the ABA Commission on Non-lawyer Practice.

- **1991:** The CBA creates an associate member classification for paralegals.
- **April 1992:** LACO is the first association within NFPA to have a code of ethics and a disciplinary committee.
- **1992:** LACO is instrumental in developing NFPA's Model Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility (adopted in 1993).
- **September 1995:** LACO changes its name to the Paralegal Association of Central Ohio ("PACO") in order to establish a preferred term more reflective of the education and training of its members.
- **April 1996:** PACO hosts the NFPA National Convention.
- **1996:** PACO is instrumental in developing NFPA's Model Disciplinary Rule (adopted in 1997).
- **April 1998:** PACO member Nancy Heller achieves national recognition as the William Robie Award winner.

The 2000s

In the 2000s, PACO remains a mainstay in the Central Ohio legal arena.

- **2004:** PACO and the CBA enter into a yearly-renewable contract for the performance by the CBA of many of the administrative duties for PACO, including dues collection and processing, membership tracking and maintenance, newsletter publication, freeing the PACO Executive Board to focus on member services, including Brown Bag Lunch seminars and other educational opportunities, membership drives, student outreach and social events.
- **2006:** The OSBA establishes a new Ohio Paralegal Certification Program. The first year of this program witnessed 88 Ohio paralegals become certified; 42 paralegals became certified in 2006. Ohio becomes the seventh state to now offer a Certification program for its paralegals.

- **2008:** PACO members join forces with the CBA Probate Committee and Judge Lawrence Belskis of the Franklin County Probate Court to aid lawyers in the “Wills for First Responders” program in the preparation of over 510 estate plans for 282 First Responders in Central Ohio.
- **January 2010:** PACO’s Mentoring Program was created by Executive Board Member Mindi Schaefer to give students and prospective paralegals insight, guidance, and real world knowledge about the paralegal profession.
- **Early 2010:** PACO begins hosting Corporate Roundtables under the guidance of PACO members Pam Lillie and Barbara Kempton as well as Sustaining Member Gina Schultz of National Corporate Research to allow corporate paralegals to come together to share ideas and changes in the area of corporate law.
- **May 2010:** PACO holds its 1st Wills Clinic focusing on wills preparation for senior citizens under the leadership of Pro Bono Chair Teresa Scharf.
- **September 2010:** PACO’s own Teresa Scharf, Chairperson of PACO’s Pro Bono Committee, was awarded the Individual Pro Bono Award for Exhibiting Outstanding Dedication in the area of Pro Bono Service to the Public by the NFPA.
- **November 2010:** PACO sponsors the 1st OSBA Paralegal Certification Study Group created by Mentoring Program Chair, Mindi Schaefer. The course is designed to help prepare qualified paralegals to take the OSBA Paralegal Certification Exam.
- **November 2011:** PACO and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus sponsored PACO’s Pro Bono Wills Clinic CLE, hosted by Nationwide Insurance, for paralegals and attorneys that volunteer at Pro Bono Wills Clinics held in Central Ohio. One hundred fifteen attorneys and paralegals attended the CLE.
- **March 2012:** Public Relations Representative and Chair Mindi Schaefer created Member and Sustaining Member Spotlights as an avenue to promote members and sustaining members to network and get to know fellow members as well as promote their own accomplishments in the profession.
- **Summer 2012:** Mentoring Program Chair Mindi Schaefer created Litigation Roundtables as a mechanism to gather litigation paralegals to discuss litigation trends, processes, and the future of litigation paralegals in Central Ohio.
- **August 2012:** PACO held the 1st Annual Summer Picnic at Alum Creek State Park. This family driven event provided members an opportunity to share their PACO “family” with their family.

- **September 2012:** To prepare for the Paralegal Core Competency Exam (“PCCE”), a new certification exam for new paralegals sponsored by NFPA, PACO member Erin Cafferkey created PACO’s PCCE Study Group.
- **November 2012:** PACO member Tricia Mays is named as NFPA’s CLE Co-Coordinator and PACO Executive Board member Mindi Schaefer is named as NFPA’s Public Relations & Advertising Coordinator.
- **January 2013:** PACO Executive Board Member Erin Cafferkey becomes PACO’s 1st Core Registered Paralegal (“CRP”) through NFPA’s PCCE process.
- **February 2013:** To prepare for the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (“PACE”) sponsored by NFPA, Mentoring Program Chair Mindi Schaefer created PACO’s PACE Study Group.
- **April 2013:** PACO members Mindi Schaefer and Sarah Brown received their Registered Paralegal (“RP”) designation after passing the NFPA PACE exam. Mrs. Schaefer and Ms. Brown are the only current PACO members who hold the designation of RP.
- **April 2013:** PACO, in collaboration with the Columbus Bar Association, holds its Annual Continuing Education Conference for Legal Professionals, with attorneys and paralegals attending the event of 6.0 CLE hours.
- **April 2013:** PACO has 260 members.
- **May 2013:** PACO Executive Board member, Karen Stone, began PACO’s 1st Immigration Roundtables to allow immigration paralegals to collaborate on ideas and processes in their area of specialty.