

## **Houston Paralegal Association – May 2019**

On April 26, 2019, the Houston Paralegal Association (HPA) held its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual CLE conference in Galveston, Texas, at the Galveston Island Convention Center and the adjacent Hilton Galveston Island Resort Hotel. HPA takes a great deal of pride in putting on this annual event, keeping with its mission to provide low-cost, quality CLE to its membership. HPA was chosen to make the Affiliate presentation at NALA's 2018 Annual Conference in St. Louis, "How to Increase Membership with a Stellar CLE Conference".

HPA has found that attendees appreciate the "destination CLE", in that it affords paralegals an opportunity to completely break away from the Houston metropolitan area (where the majority of HPA members work) and convene in a more relaxed setting. The event provides 6.0 hours of CLE, with approval through both NALA and the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS), and includes two social events, which allow attendees to network and connect with other paralegals, the HPA board, and sponsoring vendors.

This year, the CLE event pulled in over 140 attendees, with 23 sponsoring vendors. The vendors were provided tables in exchange for either a monetary, or an in-kind sponsorship (printing of materials, signage, etc.). Almost every vendor shows up with a door prize for a lucky attendee. Each year, these vendors return, stating that the networking opportunities and connecting with paralegals is often the tipping point for the "decision-makers" when selecting events. The HPA conference gives them more than "bang for their buck," and the one-on-one networking opportunities with over 125 paralegals in the greater Houston area are priceless.

The annual event kicks off with a social on Thursday night, with a cash bar and complimentary hors d'oeuvres. Once the social is over, groups of both paralegals and vendors join each other for dinner and more networking.

Throughout the day of the event, over 50 door prizes were given away. In addition, HPA gives away three grand prizes. In order to qualify for the grand prizes, attendees had to visit every vendor table and obtain the vendor's "mark" on their bingo card. This year, the theme of HPA's grand prize was "entertainment". Third place was a \$100 entertainment gift card redeemable for dinner and a movie. The second place winner received a \$200 Visa gift card. HPA's grand prize winner received a \$300 Southwest Airlines gift card.

The event wrapped up with a post-CLE social at the adjacent Hilton hotel bar and poolside, with additional complimentary hors d'oeuvres, music, and lively conversation.

HPA has already selected the dates for the 2020 CLE event, which will be HPA's 17<sup>th</sup> annual conference, taking place during its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. A contract has been signed with the Galveston Island Convention Center and Hilton Hotel for April 23-24, 2020, and HPA will be sending out a "save the date" to both HPA members and

attendees of this year's CLE, and begin its marketing of the event to vendors in September. HPA looks forward to hosting another stellar event in 2020!



Houston Paralegal Association Board Members

Left to right:

Owen Jirka, Sandra-Lee Jordan, CP, Sally Almendarez, LaKeisha Simmons, CP, Linda Carrette, ACP, Jonathan Chan, CP, Montye Holmes, ACP, Gina Holder, Mary Shiloh, Sharon Jones, ACP, Ruth Conley, ACP