



DEBRA L. OVERSTREET, ACP

Candidate for the office of: Vice President

Paralegal, since: 1987

NALA Member, since: 1999

QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Bacone College Adult Education Program; Department of Justice National Advocacy Center Career Center; US Army Corps of Engineers Career and Leadership Programs

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/AWARDS: CP and ACP designations; 2007 and 2008 Affiliates Award; US Army Corps of Engineers Excellence in Client Care and Legal Services Award; US Attorney's Capital Trial Team Award; United Way Combined Federal Campaign Loaned Executive Achievement Award and Federal Campaign Gold Award; US Army Corps of Engineers Volunteer Achievement Award

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: NALA secretary 2018-Present; NALA Treasurer 2014-2018; NALA Executive Committee 2014-Present; NALA Executive Search Committee 2019; NALA Budget Committee 2014-Present; NALA Regional Director 2013-2014; NALA Professional Development Committee 2012-2014; NALA Leadership Enhancement and Preparation (LEAP) presenter and/or mentor 2010-2016; NALA Affiliated Associations Director 2010-2012; NALA Affiliated Associations Secretary 2009-2010; NALA Member Exchange presenter 2001 and 2008; OPA Past President and Regional Director; OPA Vice President 2019-2020; TAPA Community Service, Election, and Mentoring Committees.

MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER ASSOCIATIONS: Oklahoma Paralegal Association; Tulsa Area Paralegal Association

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS OR COMMENTS: I am a Senior Realty Specialist/Team Lead with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa, OK. I am currently serving and have served in leadership positions of several non-profit organizations, including positions as Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and chair of multiple committees of the Porter Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors of Community Baptist Church, and Secretary/Treasurer of Tulsa Speedway Booster Club. Through my service on the NALA Board of Directors and as a graduate of NALA's leadership development program, I understand NALA's mission and vision. NALA's Board of Directors, committees, and association staff work as a team to assure that NALA provides outstanding certification, continuing education, and professional development. I am honored to represent our members and am excited about the future of our association and the paralegal profession.

QUESTION RESPONSES

WHY DO YOU WANT TO SERVE ON THE NALA BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

The words passion and servitude sum up why I wish to serve on the NALA Board of Directors. It is our duty to pay it forward by mentoring and encouraging paralegals, paralegal students, and affiliates to excel in this amazing profession. The NALA Board of Directors are no different than you or I. We remember conquering the certification test, reading our first *Facts & Findings* magazine, and attending our first NALA Conference. We recognize how important this organization is to our profession. It is an honor to represent each member and affiliated association. I want to be a part of the NALA team that looks forward, continually enhancing the benefits offered to our members, affiliates, and paralegals across the United States and internationally. NALA's Board of Directors are innovative. They are not afraid to evaluate programs, adapting to the changing needs of our profession. I have witnessed the transformation of NALA over the past twenty years. It is exhilarating to be a part of a team that exhibits passion and visionary talents with one common goal – to assure NALA remains the premiere paralegal association offering certification, continuing education, networking, and professional development for all paralegals.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PRIOR BOARD OR SIMILAR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES?

There are two ways to describe leadership experience. One is my volunteer board service. Past NALA service includes: Affiliated Associations Secretary and Director; PDC Committee and LEAP Mentor. I have past and present service on NALA's Executive Board as Treasurer; Budget Committee; 2019 CEO Search Committee; task force and committee appointments; and currently

NALA Secretary. Current service on volunteer boards: Oklahoma Paralegal Association Vice-President and Seminar Chair. Past board experience: Porter Chamber of Commerce Secretary; Porter Lions Club Vice-President and Festival Chair; Community Baptist Church Board Secretary; Tulsa Speedway Booster Club Secretary-Treasurer; Oklahoma Paralegal Association Publication Committee Chair, Seminar Chair, Regional Director, and President; Corps of Engineers' Care Council and Hispanic Committee Secretary; and Tulsa Area Paralegal Association's Mentorship, Community Service, and Election Committees. The second description of leadership experience comes through teamwork. I have many rewarding experiences serving NALA's members and affiliates. One of my favorite memories was serving on the search committee for NALA's Chief Executive Officer, Vanessa Finley, MBA. With the help of NALA's amazing staff and past and present Board members, the committee was successful in selecting NALA's CEO in less than two months. The committee displayed amazing teamwork and professionalism.

WHAT SPECIFIC SKILLS AND STRENGTHS WOULD YOU BRING TO THE BOARD TO HELP NALA MOVE FORWARD?

It is extremely important to be professional. A board member's actions represent the entire organization. Being a team player requires commitment to the organization. You must put aside personal goals for the good of the organization. I possess several team player characteristics:

Value - *Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage.*

Actions - *Influencing, Communicating, Decision Making, Planning, Developing, Problem Solving.* Part of being a good leader is listening. It is essential to consider different points of views and compromise should the situation arise.

Skills - *Interpersonal, Conceptual, Technical, Tactical.* I can coordinate tasks and work well with others. I understand strategic planning and believe we must be visionary thinkers to keep NALA in the forefront of changes to the legal profession.

Attributes - *Mental, Physical, Emotional.* I have served paralegal associations in various roles locally, statewide and nationally, while balancing my personal and professional life.

These attributes allow me to be a valuable team member and 100% commitment by each team member results in the successful accomplishment of the goals of the NALA Board for the benefit of all members.

WHAT MAKES NALA'S MISSION MEANINGFUL TO YOU?

Approximately 20 years ago I was searching for a way to market my skills as a paralegal. I discovered a NALA advertisement in a legal directory. I researched the association and joined for NALA's certification program. After obtaining my certification I attended my first convention. I witnessed the comradery and professionalism of NALA and its members and realized how important NALA is to the paralegal profession. NALA's certification and professional development programs are an integral part of the success of my career. NALA's mission, *Advancing paralegals through certification and professional development*, embodies the spirit of NALA's formation. In the early 1970s, a task force was formed to investigate the need for a national certification exam and professional development for legal assistants. The result of that task force was the formation of NALA. The task force, thereafter the original NALA Board of Directors, paved the way for all certified paralegals. The NALA staff, Board of Directors, committee members, and many volunteers are committed to the members and the paralegal profession. NALA's mission allows paralegals to come together with a common purpose. Not only are certification and professional development excellent ways to market your skills, the programs are empowering.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS ANY POSSIBLE DISRUPTIVE FORCES IMPACTING NALA?

There are several disruptive forces that could impact NALA. Foremost on everyone's mind is the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Many firms have allowed paralegals to telework, some that are considered essential employees continued to work in the office, while others have been laid off due to lack of business. NALA has and will continue to monitor the pandemic and the impact to our members and the paralegal profession. NALA has also been monitoring legislative movement by many states to restrict organizations from nongovernmental certification or registration. Restricting organizational certification can be detrimental to state and national paralegal associations and paralegals that have worked to further their career through voluntary certification. Finally, several states have authorized Limited License Legal Technicians to practice law in a limited capacity. Some see this as a disruptive force; however, this could be another avenue for NALA Certified Paralegals to utilize their skills to help narrow the gap for those with limited resources to hire an attorney. Over the years NALA has steadfastly supported, and will continue to advocate for, our members and the paralegal profession.

Each candidate was also asked to create a video with their own personal message to voters.
Those videos can be found on the NALA Youtube channel.



NALA - The Paralegal Association