

# IN BRIEF

CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

"The Paralegal People"

Accredited by the Council On Occupational Education • Approved by the American Bar Association

Spring, 2003

## IT'S TIME For Action

Well known humorist Will Rogers once made the statement, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." In the past few issues of *In Brief*, we have made mention of significant changes that we are undertaking at the Center. They are part of our continuing effort to better serve our students. It is more than talk, however. We are executing, rather than just sitting there. For instance, recognizing that intellectual property is becoming the most highly sought-after specialty, we have augmented our faculty to include three learned legal specialists in that field. This trio – Barbara Williams, Pam Wilson

and Michael Garrett – all have considerable expertise in the area reported by *Legal Assistant Today* as the fastest growing according to their recent salary survey and the hottest practice area for the next decade. We are updating our website to provide useful information as well as visual tours of our library, computer labs and classrooms (see related article). With the expansion of our computer lab, we have provided the software package that is most frequently demanded by law firms, *Summation*. The suite lets its user manage the growing volume of documents and testimony found in the litigation environment of today.



Doyle Happe, Co-Founder and Director

Working knowledge of state-of-the art tools like this helps makes our graduates more competitive in the marketplace.

The results are paying off. Our applications for enrollment are at an all-time high, and we are graduating an increasing number of bilingual students who are in high demand by the Houston legal community. Recently, we were featured in a special professional careers section *The Houston Chronicle*. Not only were we the main source referenced in the article about paralegals, but a photo of our academic dean Tom Swanson graced the cover of the supplement. We are being noticed because we are executing our plan to keep on top of our profession. That's why we're known as the *Paralegal People*.

## 2002-03 3RD SEMESTER

### Class Start Dates

Day classes: April 28

June 9

Evening classes: May 27

July 28

# Register

**800-446-6931 Call for your appointment**

**Applications Accepted Now!**

# CENTER Launches New Website



On May 1, the Center will post a new, enhanced website principally designed to provide information for students, prospective students and alumni. The user-friendly site provides extensive information about the Center, including a visual "slide" tour of its law library, computer lab and

[www.  
paralegalpeople.com](http://www.paralegalpeople.com)

classrooms. Additionally, the website provides complete information on the profession, the Center's offered programs and curriculum. The Center's faculty is showcased with photos and biographical sketches, as is its advisory committee, a key part of the Center's success. The new site will continue to be expanded in the future. [www.paralegalpeople.com](http://www.paralegalpeople.com) is a site worth checking out.



## Meet ERIC HAPPE

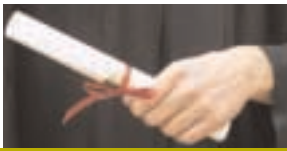
The first thing one notices about Eric Happe is that he doesn't sit still very long.

Perhaps that is because he has a lot of projects in the works and considerable responsibilities that keep him continually on the move.

Eric graduated from the Center 15 years ago and then worked to complete his degree at the University of Houston before joining a Houston law firm that specialized in personal injury litigation. While there, he received hands-on experience in the many duties of a paralegal.

More than five years ago he joined the Center in an administrative role, putting his educational and paralegal experience to work. Since that time, he has expanded his role been involved in multiple facets of the Center's operation. He has been interviewing instructors, determining class schedules and

helping to shape the curriculum to keep the Center ahead of the ever-changing legal industry. He has worked in student admissions, screening prospective students and advising soon-to-graduate students on their opportunities in our profession. A self-confessed and self-taught computer aficionado, Eric has been maintaining the Center's computers even before coming to work here full time. He has been responsible for the transformation and enhancement of the computer lab, upgrades to the computer network, and exploring the potential for offering distance education programs for students in the future. He currently teaches two courses – Business Computer Applications and Computers and the Law. Eric also took the lead in the recent revamp of the Center's website, making it a highly useful tool. When not working, Eric enjoys getting in an occasional round of golf and spends a lot of time with his 15 year-old daughter, especially rooting her on during soccer season.



# Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX) Inductees

## Graduate Gratitude

"The Center guided me in the right direction by allowing me to take a proactive approach in becoming certified as a paralegal. Without the support of tremendous professors, I would be in the same dead-end, ho-hum job I was in before enrolling."

Gaye Weintraub, *graduate*

"I enjoyed the classes and feel the information provided was relevant. I also enjoyed the fact that teachers took time to present "real world" information and not just textbook information."

Scott Rice, *graduate*

"The Center for Advanced Legal Studies has opened new doors, not only in employment, but also in knowledge. I have a self-confidence I never had before, and it shows!"

Suzanne Dickerson, *graduate*

"Excellent education preparation program for the legal field as well as hands on training for all educational levels and interests."

Jennifer Jacobs, *graduate*

"The Center has been a great place to attend. Their schedules are flexible, and the staff takes care of everything. You just need to attend classes."

Adriane Kelly, *graduate*

The following students have qualified for induction into Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX), the national honor society in paralegal/legal assistant studies. The society is sponsored by the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE).

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Sylvia Alvarado  | Benjamin Cunning     |
| Denise Duensing  | Jennifer Donovan     |
| Karyn Hendee     | Marlin Ted Edenfield |
| LaWanda Lewis    | Laura Longoria       |
| Sabrina Mendes   | Shiwana Murphy       |
| Christina Phlegm | Virginia Rankin-Ward |
| Mindy Seeley     | Margaret Sandoval    |
| Imelda Vigil     | Christina Solomon    |
| May Yuquimpo     |                      |

These students have demonstrated "superior academic performance," a standard which is determined by each institution at which a chapter of LEX is established. The Center's standard is 95% attendance, 95% grade average and completion of at least two-thirds of the program.



## Facts on File

### Graduation

Saturday, June 14, 2003, 10:00 a.m.  
Westin Galleria Hotel

### Bankruptcy Seminar

Friday, April 18  
Center for Advanced Legal Studies

### Notary Public Seminar

Friday, May 16  
Center for Advanced Legal Studies

### CLA Review Seminar

To be announced  
Center For Advanced Legal Studies  
Registration deadline – Please call for information

### CLA Exam

Friday, July 18 and Saturday, July 19  
Center For Advanced Legal Studies  
Registration deadline – May 1  
[www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

**Call for reservations**

**Register** 713-529-2778

*The dictionary is the only place that success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must pay for success. I think you can accomplish almost anything if you are willing to pay the price.*

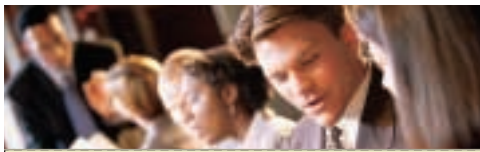
Vince Lombardi

## A NEW National Organization



The American Alliance for Paralegals has recently formed as a new national organization. Its focus, the organization says, is solely directly toward individual paralegals as opposed to being a conglomeration of local associations. Its membership is non-restrictive and the dues are nominal at \$20 for paralegals with six years of formal education and/or paralegal experience. For more information, contact [www.legalassistanttoday.com/assoc\\_links.htm](http://www.legalassistanttoday.com/assoc_links.htm).

*Legal Assistant Today March/April*



## ADDING an Incentive

The Center for Advanced Legal Studies strongly believes in the Certified Legal Assistant exam and the recognition and benefits it provides for holders of the CLA credential. We provide an in-depth review seminar taught by our Judge Ana Otero, who has dedicated more than 15 years to helping paralegals prepare for the exam, and we provide our

facilities as a testing site. For those who take the review seminar, Judge Otero's vast knowledge and thoroughness greatly help the chances of success on the exam. In addition, as a monetary incentive, we will provide a \$100 stipend to those Center graduates who attend our review course, take and pass the next available exam. Call us to find out more.

## SALARIES Continue To Climb

The trade publication *Legal Assistant Today* recently completed its 2002 Salary Survey and concluded that approximately two-thirds of those paralegals interviewed felt that they were fairly paid. The average national salary, according to this study, was



\$43,461, a 4.5 percent increase from the prior year's findings. It appears as if the growth rate, precipitated in part from the "dot.com" boom, has flattened a little (the 2001 growth rate was 9.4 percent). It looks, though, that the paralegal position is still among the healthier segments of a flat economy, and based only one percent of the respondents having been downsized or lost their job, it seems to be among the most

The survey also drew several other conclusions. The highest average salary was paid to paralegals in large firms (greater than 100 employees). Paralegals in the securities industry commanded the highest salaries, followed by those in tax firms and environmental law firms, respectively. The "hottest areas" as identified by the survey were intellectual property, mergers and acquisitions, corporate and banking/finance.

As part of the South region, the survey revealed that average salaries in our area were up 7 percent. Salaries in the region rose 12.2% for those with a bachelors' degree and 3.8% for those with an associate's degree.

*Legal Assistant Today* March/April 2003



# Placement News

"Placement News" includes a list of graduates from the Center who have obtained permanent employment. Employed graduates are eligible to continue to use the Center's placement services.

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Kristin Alexander | Adriana Kelly   |
| Aaron Alor        | Laura Longoria  |
| Carol Brand       | Maya Lopez      |
| Janice Brown      | Aralia Magos    |
| William Burley    | Janie Mata      |
| Ben Cunning       | Beth Myerly     |
| Mike Diaz, Jr.    | Patrisha Myers  |
| Suzanne Dickerson | Susanne Nye     |
| Stacey Draper     | Sandra Pellmore |
| Denise Duensing   | Andrea Raider   |
| Andreience Fields | Kevin Riley     |
| Koyton Gant       | Debbie Soza     |
| Edna Guerrero     | Jennifer Stutes |
| Melissa Hinojosa  | Imelda Vigil    |
| Stephanie Johnson | Gay Weintraub   |

## CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

- Program Director  
*Doyle Happe*
- Compliance Liaison  
*Robyn LaRocca*
- Academic Dean  
*Tom Swanson*
- Placement Director  
*Shannon Underwood*
- Admission Team  
*Debra Garcia/Director*  
*Marsba Elam*
- Financial Aid Director  
*Lori Baggett*
- Secretary  
*Brooke Weeks*
- Administrative Assistant  
*Pete Becerra*
- Librarian  
*Dianne Dallman*
- Project Development/IT  
*Eric Happe/Director*

*The mission of the Center for Advanced Legal Studies is to provide students with the skills, practical knowledge and requisite abilities which will allow them not only to succeed, but also to excel as paralegals as they meet the growing and constant needs of the legal, governmental and corporate environments within the community.*

Address Service Requested  
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