

A Bite from the Big Apple

Written by Jane D. McKinnon, CP

Before any association came into existence, there was a moment when someone decided “We need our own association.” There is a common need that causes people to work together to pursue goals. By definition, associations exist for the mutual protection and advancement of their members. Simply put, associations are groups of like-minded people who find strength in numbers. We call ourselves by many names: associations, organizations, federations, alliances, institutes, guilds, societies, foundations, clubs, congresses, coalitions, centers, networks, unions, chambers, bureaus, fraternities, or sororities. Each is an association, sharing the goals of helping members and advancing in society. It is said that nine out of 10 adults in America belong to at least one association. There are more than 135,000 associations in the United States. These associations represent nearly every industry, profession, charity, hobby, cause, and interest.

Starting an association is much like starting a business. It requires hard work and careful planning. The founders build the foundation, and their decisions affect the success, effectiveness, and longevity of an organization. Their first responsibility is to find a core group of leaders to serve as the organizing committee. Next comes developing a mission statement, followed closely by: choosing an organizational structure, drafting bylaws, planning a tax status, deciding how to finance the start-up of the organization and planning out the services the association can offer. Not until these time-consuming, labor-intensive efforts are complete is the work of the founders finished. After all this work, the birth of a new organization can be extremely rewarding. As the organization grows, the founders have the satisfaction of knowing that at least a degree of the organization’s success is due to their early planning and decision-making.

NALA is excited to have a newly formed affiliate: the Greater New York Paralegal Association! Danielle Brooks from New York attended the NALA Conference & Expo in Las Vegas in July 2016. While she was there, she was one of those folks who said, “We need our own association.” She left Las Vegas determined to put together a group of paralegals to accomplish her mission. The team of New Yorkers have worked very hard to get everything started. The founding officers of GNYPA include: Danielle Brooks, *President* and *NALA Liaison*; Jennifer Grabowski, *Vice President*; Cassie Caruso, *Secretary*; Sean Alley, *Treasurer*, and Olivia Curley, *Parliamentarian*. They already are 27 members strong and growing!

Join me in wishing a huge NALA welcome to GNYPA as NALA’s newest affiliate. They have brought the “BIG APPLE” to NALA. We look forward to assisting in any way we can.



Jane D. McKinnon is a Certified Paralegal with the Birmingham law firm of Marsh, Rickard & Bryan, P.C. where she specializes in plaintiff’s litigation. She previously worked 16 years in insurance defense before arriving at Marsh, Rickard & Bryan. Jane earned her bachelor’s degree in Paralegal Studies from Samford University and is now pursuing a Masters in Health Law & Policy. She served as the President of the Alabama Association of Paralegals, Inc. for three terms. She is a member of the National Association of Legal Assistants and was awarded the Affiliates Award in 2005. Jane also serves on the University Paralegal Studies Advisory Board.

Greater New York



Paralegal Association