

Disclosure | AAPP Newsletter

From the Desk of the President, Ryan McDougall

Happy New Year!!!

I hope everyone has enjoyed time off doing whatever it is that revives your soul.

I am excited to represent the AAPP in the role of President of the Board in 2025. Legal support staff and paralegals are often the backbone of legal practices. We are professionals whose contributions can go unrecognized. The AAPP recognizes the many talents of legal support professionals and endeavors to aim the spotlight on these amazing professionals. Much like nurses to doctors, we are capable, intelligent, and accomplished individuals with important skills to offer.

My professional career has had me working in the non-profit sector as a paralegal and administrator, moving into independent practice in 2021, offering legal support to Albertans dealing with family law matters. I obtained certification as a Conflict Resolution Expert in 2012 and have been mediating family law disputes since that date. Seeing the need for accessible legal services, I completed a Master's Degree in Justice Studies to better equip me in advocating for greater accessibility to legal services in Alberta.

Twenty-twenty-five will be a year of movement and activity! Our board has set a lot of goals that will see the Association grow and become an even stronger advocate for our profession.

Some of the AAPP's goals for 2025 include:

- Continuing discussions with the Government of Alberta regarding the role of paralegals and how we can assist with the Access to Justice Crisis.
- Increasing our offerings and perks to our members.
- Growing our membership numbers.
- Enhancing our professional development offerings.
- Creating a spectacular 2025 Conference and Professional Excellence Awards Gala.
- Enhancing our mentorship program. Initiating network opportunities for members to support, share stories, and learn from one another.

Town Hall Meeting in February

Regulation of the paralegal profession continues to be an ongoing discussion and a topic for which there are many questions. I will be hosting a Town Hall meeting via zoom in February where I will answer all questions relative to the regulation of the profession. If you have ever considered providing paralegal services to Albertans, this Town Hall meeting will be instrumental. If, as an employee of a firm, you have questions about how regulation may affect you, this Town Hall meeting is for you. Watch for this event registration email coming soon. Members only! Apply for membership now if you haven't done so yet.

As a profession full of patient, smart, kind, responsible and reliable individuals, we will continue to connect and support in 2025. I look forward to seeing/meeting/working with you.

Warm regards,
Ryan McDougall
President of the Board, AAPP



Alberta Association of
Professional Paralegals

**ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF
PROFESSIONAL PARALEGALS
YOUR ELECTED 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Alberta Association of
Professional Paralegals

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Exciting Changes and Opportunities for 2025!

As we step into the new year, we are thrilled to share some exciting updates and opportunities with you. At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October 2024, we elected a few new Board members, and we are eager to introduce them to you. We also saw a significant leadership transition, with our former President, Heidi Semkowich, stepping down and our long-time Vice-President stepping into the President's seat. Let's meet our new board members and look forward to an incredible year ahead!

Meet Our New Board of Directors:



Ryan McDougall, MA, ARP, Q. Med, PM-President Ryan brings over 24 years of expertise as a legal support professional and independent paralegal practitioner as well as a mediator. She is passionate about access to justice and providing Albertans with outstanding, professional and ethical paralegal services. Her expertise on the issues of accessible justice will be instrumental as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of 2025.



Veronica McGuire, ARP-Vice-President With a background in legal education and provincial prosecutions, and ongoing standing with the Law Society of Ontario as a licensed paralegal, Veronica brings a wealth of knowledge relating to the regulation of paralegals. Veronica also fulfills the role of Conduct and Disciplinary Director ensuring that AAPP's independent paralegal practitioners are accountable to a high standard of practice.



Crystal Hallett, ARP-Treasurer We are thrilled to have Crystal remain as the Treasurer for the AAPP. This is Crystal's 3rd year in this role, and 4th year on the Board. Professionally, Crystal is employed in the non-profit legal world and works as a Tenant Advocate often representing clients before administrative tribunals.



Michaela Rutherford, ARP-Secretary We are also thrilled that Michaela returns to the Board and remains in the role of Secretary. Not only does Michaela tend to all things "secretary", but is willing to jump in to assist with other projects and initiatives. Starting in 2025, Michaela is looking forward to building her paralegal practice in Red Deer, Alberta.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS—CONT.



Vanessa Wilson, ARP-Membership Vanessa continues with our Board in the membership role! Vanessa has ____ year of experience as a paralegal in various fields. She is an engaged community member volunteering with other boards as well as AAPP. For all things membership, please reach out to Vanessa



John McDonald, ARP-Sponsorship John returns to the Board in our sponsorship portfolio. John is an independent paralegal practitioner offering legal support to the public in small claims and debt collections, to list a couple. The AAPP is happy to offer advertising opportunities to firms, relators, mediators etc. and have various sponsorship packages available. Please reach out to John if you would like information on sponsoring the AAPP and our yearly events.



Kristine Jeffels-Mentorship Kristine is also a name familiar to many and she is returning to the Board in our Mentorship role, which we think is a perfect fit! Kristine has been an instructor with the Bow Valley Legal Assistant Program for years and mentorship is something she is passionate about and knows the value of it. We look forward to renewing our mentorship program in 2025.



Kristi Mahieux, ARP-Education Kristi will be creating and organizing our monthly webinar offerings. So, if you have a specific area you'd like to learn more about, please reach out to Kristi. Also, if you are the “go-to” person in your firm on a specific topic, and would like to present at a lunch hour webinar, please reach out!



Aimee Auclair, ARP-Communications and Social Media We are thrilled to have Aimee remain as the Communications and Social Media director. This is Aimee's 3rd year in this role. Professionally, Aimee has over 20 years experience in both the public and private sectors as a litigation paralegal, specializing in e-discovery. Please reach out to Aimee about job postings for our website or post suggestions for our social media platforms!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS—CONT.



Ashley Stasewich, MA.Ed, ARP-Credentialling To many, Ashley needs no introduction. Ashley is an instructor with the paralegal program at MacEwan University in Edmonton and also continues her work as a paralegal. Ashley has completed her Master of Arts in Education and is currently working on her doctorate focusing on the education of paralegals in Alberta. Ashley joins the board offering extensive knowledge on education and is tasked with creation and future implantation of the credentialling exam.



Tanya Dechaine, ARP-Awards and Events Tanya returns to the Board after a brief hiatus to see her kids graduate from high school. Tanya is an independent paralegal practitioner in the Cold Lake area. We are so excited to see what Tanya puts together for the 2025 Awards and Gala. AND, watch for other networking events, such as a provincial bowling competition, maybe??

Looking Forward to a Bright Future

Our collective Board of Directors is poised to lead us into an exciting and prosperous 2025. With their diverse expertise and dedication, we are confident that they will drive our association forward, creating new opportunities and enhancing the value we provide to our members.

Please join us in welcoming our new Board of Directors and embracing the many exciting opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we will make 2025 a year of growth, success, and professional excellence.

The 2025 Chapter of the AAPP

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Heidi Semkowich for her years of dedicated service as President. Her leadership has been instrumental in shaping our association. We are excited to welcome our long-time Vice-President as the new President, bringing continuity and fresh perspectives to our leadership team.

Exciting Opportunities Ahead

We are committed to providing exceptional support and opportunities for our members. Here's a glimpse of what's to come in 2025:

- **Mentorship Program:** Connect with experienced professionals who can provide guidance and support in your career.
- **Member Perks:** Enjoy exclusive benefits designed to support your professional and personal growth. Some of the Member Perks include:
 - Discounted insurance through Johnson Insurance: <https://www.johnson.ca/>
 - Highlander Wine Club: <https://highlanderwine.com/>
 - Perkopolis Membership: <https://www.perkopolis.com/> (contact secretary@alberta-paralegal.com for membership code)
 - Private Shopping events at Ricki's: <https://www.rickis.com/>
 - Discount on courses offered by the ADR Institute of Alberta: <https://adralberta.com/>
 - Discount on LESA courses (up to 1 day) (contact president@alberta-paralegal.com for discount code)
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Access ongoing training and education to stay ahead in your field.
- **Exclusive Job Opportunities:** Take advantage of job postings available only to our members.
- **Networking Events:** Build valuable connections with fellow paralegals and industry leaders.
- **2025 Conference:** Join us for an inspiring conference featuring expert speakers, workshops, and more.
- **Professional Excellence Awards and Gala:** Celebrate the achievements of outstanding paralegals and legal support professionals at our annual Professional Excellence Awards Gala.

Stay Connected

Facebook Page:



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LinkedIn Page:



[Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals](#)

Facebook Members Only Group:



[AlbertaAPPParalegal](#)



A new year has begun, which means it is time to start our 2025 mentorship program. Whether you are a seasoned legal professional who would like to share your knowledge, or are new to the industry and would love to have someone to chat with regarding your current position or other matters relating to being a legal support professional, the Mentorship Program is for you.

Sharing knowledge and networking is often one of the reasons a person joins an association such as the AAPP, and we hope you all consider a role in our Mentorship Program.

Watch your inboxes for an email from our Mentorship Director, Kristine Jeffels, where we will be asking for a response indicating your interest in joining our Mentorship program.

MEMBERSHIP



is the best value

Welcome all of our members to the New Year! We have a couple of exciting updates from the Membership side of the AAPP.

New Membership Certificates

We are thrilled to announce a new membership certificate is available for purchase for all member levels. This certificate is a great way to showcase your membership with the AAPP in your workspace. Each year you renew your membership, you will receive a seal to add to your certificate, reflecting your years of membership. Certificates are only \$10.00 and are now being offered for purchase with all new membership applications.

Ordering Your Certificate

If you have already renewed your membership or are in the process of renewing, you can order your certificate by contacting our Membership Director, Vanessa Wilson, at membership@alberta-paralegal.com.

ARP Seals

The ARP seals for the 2025 year will start being mailed out in mid to late February. This allows Paralegal members time to get their renewals in.

Paralegal members who joined after September 2024 or Paralegal members who did not receive their re-issued certificates in the Fall of 2024, will receive their seals and certificates at the same time.

Didn't Receive Your ARP Certificate?

If you believe you should have received an ARP certificate but haven't, or if your address has changed, please contact our Membership Director, Vanessa Wilson, at membership@alberta-paralegal.com.

Join Us for Case Management Coffee



Are you a professional paralegal looking to enhance your skills, network with peers, and share insights?

The Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals is excited to invite you to our upcoming virtual Case Management Coffee.

This ongoing virtual meeting is designed specifically for paralegals and legal support professionals who are eager to delve into the nuances of case management. Whether you're a seasoned expert or just starting in the field, our meetup offers a welcoming space for everyone to connect and collaborate.

What to Expect:

- Networking: Meet fellow paralegals and legal support professionals expand your professional circle;
- Insightful Discussions: Participate in conversations about best practices, challenges, and innovative solutions in case management; and
- Coffee Breaks: Enjoy a relaxed atmosphere where you can sip your favorite brew while discussing hot topics in the paralegal community.

When: the 4th Wednesday of each month

Where: on Zoom at the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89129476313?pwd=dCjFFRkmJzN8XUZ37W4bDpT04lO7WW.1>

Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance your practice and build meaningful connections.

For more information, visit our website at <https://www.alberta-paralegal.com/news-events> or contact our Sponsorship Director, John McDonald sponsorship@alberta-paralegal.com

Grab your favorite hot or cold beverage, log into the Zoom link, and let's chat about Case Management!

You voted and we listened!!

The results of our Facebook poll are in and the 2025 AAPP Conference & Awards Gala will be held in Leduc on **Thursday, June 5, 2025, and Friday, June 6, 2025**.

Thank you to all who voted in our poll on our Facebook page! Make sure you follow us on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/AlbertaAPPParalegal>, as well as become a member of our member's only group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/459831694523776> for more information and to participate in discussions or feel free to post in a safe environment of your peers.

