



engage
inspire
enhance
promote

NALS has a strong heritage in the legal field and holds the honor of being the oldest association formed for legal support professionals. Established in 1929 by our founder Eula Mae Jett, incorporated as the National Association of Legal Secretaries in 1949, and renamed **NALS...the association for legal professionals** in 1999, the association has always been a leader in the legal support profession. In fact, some of the very first legal assistants in the profession were members of NALS and today over half of NALS' membership is comprised of legal assistants and paralegals.

As the legal assistant concept began to develop in the early 1970s, NALS realized this new position in the legal field would need ethical guidelines as well as continuing legal education programs and professional goals. NALS created a legal assistant's section in the spring of 1973.

In July 1974, NALS approved the creation of a Certifying Board for Legal Assistants to investigate the feasibility of a national certification for legal assistants. As the knowledge of the planned certification became known, some authorities questioned the establishment of a certification program for legal assistants administered by the National Association of Legal Secretaries. Rather than looking at a name change that would better reflect all the various positions of its current members that included, and still includes, legal assistants, NALS chose another course of action. In the spring of 1975, with the approval of the NALS Executive Committee the legal assistants division of NALS was dissolved to create an additional association. We then transferred assets, activities, and programs to this separate association, the National Association of Legal Assistants. The first date for the Certified Legal Assistant examination was announced in 1976. NALS and NALA shared headquarters and services until the early 1980s.

Meanwhile, the name change issue was one that followed NALS throughout the 1980s and 1990s as the members of the association were, and continue to be, employed in all areas of the legal support profession and not solely as legal secretaries.

In March 1999, the NALS Board approved a name change for the association to better reflect the various positions of all NALS members. It was felt that because of NALS' strong heritage and position in the profession, we would keep the name "NALS" and it would no longer be an acronym but instead be used with a tag line that better described what NALS was and who our members were, thus the tag line "the association for legal professionals" was added. NALS had been serving, and continues to serve, all the various legal support professional fields, and this never changed. Since the birth of the paralegal profession, NALS has had legal assistant/paralegal members.

In July 2002, the NALS Board of Directors adopted the following definition of a legal assistant/paralegal, as also adopted by the ABA: "A legal assistant/paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible."

Again, over half of NALS members are legal assistants and paralegals. In our environmental scanning of what our paralegal members wanted from NALS, they told us that, in addition to excellent education, they wanted a national certification from their preferred national association, NALS. So NALS found itself coming full circle back to the point where it had established a certifying board to create a legal assistant certification. We had the experience, we had the knowledge, we had the history, and we developed what we believe to be the very best certification exam for the paralegal/legal assistant.

NALS has been certifying individuals since 1960, longer than any other legal support professional association. We offer three levels of certifications: Accredited Legal Professional (ALP), Professional Legal Secretary/Certified Legal Professional (PLS/CLP), and the Professional Paralegal (PP).

NALS is a dedicated, ethical, professional association that gives back to the profession as well as its members. In addition to the NALS certifications, NALS offers outstanding educational programs and services to meet the needs of the paralegal/legal assistant and the legal secretary as well as other legal support positions. Additionally, in the spirit of giving back to the profession, NALS offers online continuing legal education **at no charge to members** and nonmembers alike. Please review the many programs and services offered by NALS.

NALS is the association for legal professionals and has truly served the paralegal/legal assistant from the minute the paralegal/legal assistant was introduced to the profession.