

# Our Work and Our Clients

## Letter From the Section Chair

As we embark on the bursts of Spring and early Summer and adjusting to the weather changes, I am sure many members of our section attended the MWCEA conference and other CLE opportunities sponsored by the section. If not we have great news of opportunities to earn some credit at low costs and fellowship with other section members. We have transitioned to a new Editor of the Our Work Our Life newsletter and I am looking forward to working with Chad Shook in pulling together a great spread in the upcoming issues. Please let Chad know how much you appreciate his work in putting together the newsletters for our members.

**Back by popular demand:** The Annual Power Behind the Throne seminar for paralegals will be held at the MS Bar Center on June 14, 2013. The event is an excellent opportunity for professional development of your administrative and paraprofessional staff members. Many thanks go to Judge Lott and Lydia Quarles for the planning of this informative seminar.

**CLE Opportunities:** I hope you all enjoyed a great MWCEA Conference held in April as well as the teleseminar sponsored by the section earlier this month. Wynn E. Clark provided an excellent program on third party litigation in workers compensation. If you were not able to participate, please do not despair as the WC section will offer a few more opportunities for CLE in 2013!!

**MS Bar Convention:** The Worker's Compensation Section and the Labor & Employment Section will team up for a joint section meeting at the MS Bar Annual meeting on the morning of July 12, 2013. Be on the lookout for the registration information in the next issue of the MS Lawyer magazine.

**Who are they?** New officers and executive committee members will take office beginning with the Annual Bar Convention in July. The officer nominations are as follows: Chair: Carlos Moore; Vice Chair: Chad Shook; Secretary/Treasurer: Roxanne Case; Past Chair: Amanda Green Alexander; Executive Committee Members: Apryl Ready (Term: August 2011 to July 2014); Richie Edmonson (Term August 2012 to July 2015) and Alison Goodman (Term August 2013 to July 2016). A current list of officers is included in this issue.

On behalf of the WC Section, we would like to welcome our newest commissioner Tom Webb to the MWCC. The section looks forward to continuing our collaborations with the MWCC in the future. In closing, I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your Chair and to encourage you to increase your participation in the Section.

Sincerely yours, Amanda Green Alexander



Amanda Green Alexander

### Special points of interest:

- A View from the Bench
- Clarks Begin New Careers As Grandparents
- Pace Moves To Another Full Time Job
- Pro Bono Service with The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project
- Calendar of Events

## *A View from the Bench*

**By: Tammy Harthcock**

In order to make the workers' compensation system work, we all have to examine ways to keep the day-to-day processing of paperwork running smoothly. Here are some (hopefully) helpful hints of how to solve problems that we see every day.

First of all, we really need our complete file number on every piece of correspondence you send to our office. That number is usually seven digits then a letter followed by four more numbers. Example: 12 34567-A-1234. Since we scan everything that comes in now, we have to have the full number to make sure that the documents are indexed to the correct file. If you must also put your file number on the document, please clearly mark it as such to avoid confusion. If the files are consolidated, we need the complete numbers for both files.

When a pre-hearing statement is filed, please make sure to comply with the directions. The Legal Assistants tell me that a lot of pre-hearing statements are still filed incorrectly. Make

sure you number the pages. Also, when you complete Attachment #6 (proposed exhibit list), only list the medical providers for which you have the records attached. Please do not list any medical providers without having their records attached. If a medical provider is listed and there are no medical records attached, the pre-hearing statement will be returned to you. You can always supplement to add medical providers and their records later.

Please try to make sure the attorney handling the case is listed in our database. You can have more than one attorney listed, but if the other attorney does not want to participate in the conference calls, please just list one. If you have to change attorneys in the same firm, just send us an e-mail or letter.

If you get a Status Letter Request from our office, you must answer it, or your claim will be dismissed. Sometimes a claim will accidentally be held in abeyance after the discovery period expires. If this is incor-



**Tammy Harthcock**

rect, please just e-mail or call the Legal Assistant and let her know.

If a claim has just been filed and a motion needs to be heard, please file the motion before calling to get dates from the Legal Assistant. Motions need to be filed to be heard on any claim - whether new or not. Make sure the motion is in our office before you call wanting it heard. Also, if you have gotten dates from the Legal Assistant, please make sure to call back and confirm the date. Even if you both agree on the date, if the Legal Assistant is not notified, the hearing will not

## *A View from the Bench, continued*

be on the Administrative Judge's schedule.

Requests for discovery extensions must be filed in writing. If opposing counsel does not agree to the extension, the matter must be set for a telephone conference, or the request will be denied. You must put in the written request that the other side either agrees or disagrees with the extension request. Please talk to the other side before asking for an extension. It does not help to just copy the other side because we will have to get a response before approval of the extension.

If you send in medical records for any other reason than for the pre-hearing statement, you must send a cover letter stating why you are sending them. If the medical records are attached to a motion, they will be scanned and indexed with the motion. If you have to send more records later, just put in the cover letter that you are sending the medical records for the motion hearing, status conference, etc. Be sure to put the complete file number in the cover letter. Medical records sent in without ex-

planation will be returned by the Docket Room.

With regard to medical records, please try to be reasonable on the number of pages. I allow over the suggested limit of 50, but keep in mind that the Legal Assistant has to scan each page, and I will have to read each page. No one in my office minds hard work, but recently we received a pre-hearing statement with over 600 pages for just one medical provider. I do not want anyone to take out a record that is important, but please try not to file hundreds of pages for each provider.

As for me, e-mailing is a good form of communication. However, be sure to copy the other side and put our complete file number in the e-mail. If the opposing counsel or unrepresented claimant/employer does not have an e-mail address, do not use e-mail. Please remember that the ex parte rule applies to e-mails.

As always, you can call our Legal Assistants for any questions. We have just added two Paralegals to our department. Ronnie Isaac works for Judges Best, Dix-

on, Wilson, and me. Elizabeth Alexander works for Judges Arnold, Lott, Mounger, and Thompson. Right now, they are working with the Judges and training. We are very happy to have them here.

The Commission is changing to a new domain - mwcc.ms.gov. You can now reach us by e-mail with the first letter of our first name and then our complete last name @mwcc.ms.gov. Example:

[tharthcock@mwcc.ms.gov](mailto:tharthcock@mwcc.ms.gov).

We are in the process of changing to that new domain at the present time. Our website is now accessible by [www.mwcc.ms.gov](http://www.mwcc.ms.gov). The Commission is currently accepting electronic filings in limited circumstances. Please go to the following link for more information: <http://www.mwcc.state.ms.us/services/atos.asp>.

## *Clarks Begin New Careers As Grandparents*

**By: Chad Shook**

On May 31, 2013, MWCC Secretary Phyllis Clark and MWCC Senior Attorney Scott Clark enter a new phase of their lives - moving from their role as the Commission's "power couple" to the relaxation of retirement and their new careers: grandparents to their new grandson, Gray, who made his entry to the world in April 2013. And, maybe world travelers in their spare time.

Phyllis, originally from Yazoo County, joined the MWCC as a docket clerk in 1985. After serving in various capacities with the Commission for 20 years, she became the Secretary of the Commission in 2005. "I have enjoyed my work with the Commission more than any job I have ever held," Phyllis said. "The most important day for me while working for the Commission was the day that Scott walked through the front door!" Phyllis and Scott met at the Commission and were married in 1993.

Scott, a native of Wayne County, earned his law degree from Ole Miss in 1988, and in 1992, joined the Commission as Senior Attorney. Scott shares Phyllis' sentiment about the most important day during his work with the MWCC, though on that first

day on the job, he did not know that he and Phyllis would one day marry and blend their families. "Though," Scott noted, "I knew fairly soon how special Phyllis was. . .and, 20 years later, she still is."

Phyllis and Scott have three children, Bethany

Robinette, Shannon Clark, and Michael Clark, son-in-law, Taylor Robinette, and one grandson, Gray Robinette. The Commission's "power couple" look forward to retirement but will leave behind many good friends and happy memories. Congratulations to the Clarks on their distinguished service to the Commission and on their entry to grandparenthood.



**Proud grandparents: Phyllis and Scott Clark with new grandson, Gray**

## *Pace Moves To Another Full Time Job*

**By: Chad Shook**



**Mickie Pace**

May 31, 2013 marks the end of Pre-Hearing Supervisor Mickie Pace's 26 year career at the MWCC when she enters the retirement ranks - at least as her work with the Commission is concerned. Joining the Commission in 1988 as the coordinator of Full Commission Hearings, Pace served in that role for 12½ years, and in June 2005, she took on her current title and position

of Pre-Hearing Supervisor.

Married to Jim Pace, Mickie and Jim live in Pearl. They have 2 children, Mike Pace and Sherry Stew-

art; 4 grandchildren, James, Stephanie, Wesley, and Lillie; and, 2 great-grandchildren, Teagan and Jocelyn. Mickie has many cherished memories and great friends at the Commission, but she looks forward to retirement. Mickie stated "While I will miss my Commission "family," I will now have more time to spend with my gardening and, I hope to travel some." And, most important, she will have a lot of time to spend with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren!

Congratulations to Mickie on her outstanding service to the Commission.

## *Pro Bono Service with The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project*

### By: Tiffany M. Graves

As our nation faces economic uncertainty and underfunded legal services programs threaten access to justice, it is more important than ever for us to do what is right as lawyers. *Pro bono* work reminds us of why we became lawyers in the first place. Every day, *pro bono* attorneys provide access to justice for thousands of Mississippians. Many of those lawyers choose to provide *pro bono* service by volunteering with the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP). Formed in 1982, MVLP represents the nation's first formal association of a state bar association and the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).

Potential MVLP clients are screened to ensure they financially qualify for free legal services and that they have presented cases that have merit and that fall within MVLP's case priorities. If a potential client qualifies for services, the client is matched with a volunteer attorney who will represent him or her on behalf of MVLP. MVLP clients have legal matters in the following areas: uncontested divorces, emancipations, simple wills, adoptions, guardianships, name changes, birth certificate corrections, child support contempt matters, child support modifications, conservatorships and visitation matters.

MVLP provides clients with free legal services through direct representation, legal clinics, community outreach workshops and other programs. MVLP carries professional liability insurance on all volunteers who provide any of these services to MVLP clients. It is important to MVLP that attorneys not be precluded from volunteering because of liability concerns. The organization makes every effort to make it easy for attorneys to volunteer their services to those in need while acknowledging that a number of its volunteers do not regularly practice in the area of domestic relations. To support volunteers with handling cases outside of their general practice areas, MVLP developed a *Pro Bono* Attorney Manual which serves as a comprehensive desk resource for attorneys who handle MVLP cases. The chapters of the manual were prepared by attorneys at thirteen firms in the Jackson Metro area and contain substantive outlines, client ques-



**Tiffany Graves**

tionnaires, sample pleadings and other case-related documents. Each chapter is available electronically on MVLP's website as well. MVLP also hosts a number of CLE workshops and attorney training sessions across the state throughout the year. These sessions are provided for free or at very low cost to attorneys who volunteer with MVLP.

MVLP has greatly benefited from the support of the Workers' Compensation Section of the Mississippi Bar both through representation of clients by Section attorneys and from the financial support the organization has received from the Section. Last year, the Section donated \$1,000 to MVLP. The Section is making the same donation this year. These types of donations allow MVLP to provide much-needed services to individuals who would not otherwise have access to attorneys or our courts. Without the contributions and support of volunteers and partners, MVLP could not have reached out to so many Mississippians in the broader effort to ensure equal access to justice for all. To volunteer with MVLP, view a list of upcoming events, or review MVLP's open cases, please visit MVLP's website at <http://www.mvlp.net>.

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*Tiffany M. Graves is the Executive Director/General Counsel of the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. To volunteer with MVLP, email Tiffany at [tgraves@mvlp.net](mailto:tgraves@mvlp.net) or call her at 601-960-9577.*



POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

*June 14, 2013*

Mississippi Bar Center

643 North State Street, Jackson 39202

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Door Prizes & Power Award

*All proceeds to benefit the Mississippi Kids' Chance  
Scholarship Fund*

**SPIT & POLISH!**

Prepping for Success

- Polish Up Your Legal Knowledge
  - Annual Opinion Update
  - Annual AJ Update on Procedural Issues
- Polish Up Your Writing Skills
- Polish Up Your People Skills
  - Polish Up Your Professional Behavior
  - Polish Up Your Networking Skills
  - Networking with Commissioner Webb

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Send registration and check for the amount of \$250.00 to  
Lydia Quarles, 1016 Louisville Street, Suite F, Starkville MS 39759*

*For more information please contact Amanda Green Alexander at  
aga@alexanderandwatson.com or 601968-8571.*

**The Mississippi Bar Workers  
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**Workers Compensation Section Officers**

**Chair**

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**Vice-Chair**

Carlos E. Moore  
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**Secretary**

Chad Shook  
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## Calendar of Events

**MS Bar Annual Meeting**  
July 10-13, 2013  
Destin, Florida

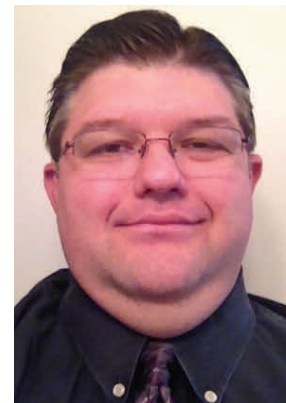
**Workers Compensation & Labor/Employment Law  
Section Meeting**  
July 12, 2013  
10:15 a.m.-12:15 a.m.  
Destin, Florida

**The Power Behind the Throne Seminar**  
June 14, 2013  
Mississippi Bar Center  
Jackson, MS

If you are interested in submitting an article or would like to announce upcoming worker's compensation events, please forward this information to Chad Shook, Shook Law Firm Dispute Resolution Services PLLC at [chad@shooklaw-adr.com](mailto:chad@shooklaw-adr.com)

## From the Editor - Chad Shook

After some delay, this addition of the newsletter is now archived; I hope you find the content informative and of interest to you. The lack of timeliness in producing this edition falls solely to me for which I apologize; however, I am pleased with our final content. Many thanks to the contributing writers: Judge Tammy Harthcock, Amanda Green Alexander, and Tiffany Graves. Phyllis Clark, Matt Torres, and Amanda Green Alexander are due photography credit for this edition. Additional thanks, too, to our Section Chair, Amanda Green Alexander, for assisting me with the production of this edition and to Rene' Garner of The Mississippi Bar for her getting this edition in a publishable format and distributing it to our members. If you are interested in contributing to the next edi-



**Chad Shook**

tion, or if you have ideas of features or content you believe to be of interest to our members, please communicate with me, and I will contact you when we begin the process of building the next edition. Thank you.