

DIXIE DIGEST

www.alabama-als.org

December 2025

A Message from our President

Julie Nims



Hey AALS members! I hope you are all doing well, staying healthy, and had a great Thanksgiving. I cannot believe that 2025 will be over soon!

I would like to thank all of the AALS members that contributed and helped in any way to make the NALS National Conference a huge success, we could not have pulled it off without EVERYONE'S help!! Y'all are true rock stars!! The CLE and networking were great as always. It was great to see so many AALS members in attendance. Hopefully, we can have the same turn out in Jacksonville, FL next year.

It will be time to vote on the 2026-2027 AALS officers very soon. Please take a couple of minutes to vote, every vote counts. I can't wait to see who all has been nominated and who are officers will be for next year.

MALS and DCLSA are working hard on the Winter Board Meeting that will be held January 23-24, 2026. The registration and hotel information is included in the Dixie Digest. As stated, there is no room block at any hotel, but many hotels have been provided, be sure to go ahead and get your rooms reserved. I can't wait to see everyone! I hope everyone has a wonder Christmas and Happy New Year!

If you have any questions, suggestions, comments, and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. And remember, everything begins with an idea!

VICE PRESIDENT

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



I want to start this report off with a number – 61. This is not the number I wanted to see when I looked at the current AALS member roster. I was hoping it would be higher; however, it is encouraging because after losing some members over the past few months, we actually added new members and went from 60 to 61, so, that is good news. And for whatever role any AALS members had in adding new members, retaining members, or having previous members come back to AALS, I thank you all and hope that you will send me the information on any new members you sponsored so that you can be recognized and rewarded. Speaking of rewards, this is where I reiterate the current Membership Plan, which follows at the end of my report. Please remember to send me the details of any member you sponsor at least 10 days before the Winter Board Meeting so that you will be included in a drawing to receive cash rewards.

I also want to take this time to remind everyone that the NALS Foundation Grant deadline is coming up on March 1, 2026. I am sure every chapter could use a grant to help with membership and/or education purposes, or other innovative new ideas, which also encourages and facilitates membership. In that regard, the NALS Foundation is hosting a free online workshop on Friday, January 23, 2026, at Noon (Central Standard Time). This also happens to be the first day of the AALS Winter Board Meeting and Education Conference in Selma; however, if the AALS agenda is open during this timeframe you can still participate if you want to join the Zoom from your phone, tablet or other device. Below is a brief description of the grant and the workshop.

If you cannot attend because of the AALS conference schedule, please encourage anyone in your chapters not attending the AALS conference to attend the workshop. To register, you can sign on to your NALS account and go to the **Events** tab and select the NALS Foundation Grant Workshop under the Calendar Menu, or find it at this link:

<https://www.nals.org/store/>

The NALS Foundation awards grants for programs that support education, leadership development, marketing, membership, certification, and/or an innovative new project. Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative new programs that go beyond the typical, classroom-style, learning environment—but it does not have to be a new program! Grant applications are accepted year-round and are reviewed on March 1 and September 1.

The Trustees of the NALS Foundation invite you to this interactive workshop to hear what others are doing, share what your chapter is doing, and generate new ideas for potential grant applications.

The Membership Plan follows below. Remember that I also have a Membership Brochure that I can send to you. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning the Membership Plan. You can reach me anytime as follows and I really want to hear from you:

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS
c/o Jones Walker LLP
11 N Water St., Suite 1200
Mobile, AL 36602
Ph: 251.439.7507 (office)

Work email: jwhigham@joneswalker.com

Home:
14 S. Lafayette St., Apt. 2
Mobile, AL 36604
Ph: 251.689.9303 (cell)
Personal email: judyjudyjudyw@hotmail.com

Please review the plan with your chapters and I challenge each chapter to set a goal to hold at least one membership event and/or recruit even one new or returning member whose membership has lapsed. Remember, too, that I have a very handy Marketing Brochure that prints out as a trifold and is great to hand out at chapter meetings to guests or anywhere you might have a seminar or other event. Contact me and I will be happy to send copies to you or send it digitally to print or forward yourselves. Baby Steps works great, so, start small and get some ideas flowing to Recruit, Retain, and Recognize! *Remember, Everything Begins with an Idea!*

Membership Goals:

Recruit; Retain; Recognize!!!

Focus: Reach out and interact.

We are only limited by our ability not to try and not to reach out.

Chapter Incentives:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Fall Board Meeting | Drawing for \$15.00 among Chapters with 5% increase. |
| Winter Board Meeting | Drawing for \$20.00 among Chapters with 10% increase |
| Annual Meeting | Drawing for \$25.00 among Chapters with 15% increase |

Member Incentives:

- First Timers:** Drawing for \$20.00 AALS Bucks to be used at the next board meeting on the AALS Funding Auction, drawing to be held at each board meeting.
- The member that sponsored the first timer will also receive \$20.00 AALS Bucks to be used at the next board meeting on the AALS Funding Auction. Member must be present to receive the incentive.
- Membership Sponsor** For every member that you sponsor, your name will go into a drawing for a \$100.00 check. You must email me the new member's membership application to jwhigham@joneswalker.com, in order to have your name put into the drawing. The cutoff for entries into the drawing will be 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting. The winner will be drawn at the 2026 annual meeting.
- Fall Board** For every member that you sponsor from May 1, 2025, to 10 days before the Fall Board Meeting, your name will go into a drawing for a \$25.00 check to be drawn at the 2025 Fall Board Meeting. You must email me the new member's membership application or a copy of their paid receipt for dues to join to jwhigham@joneswalker.com in order to have your name put into the drawing.
- Winter Board** For every member that you sponsor from the Fall Board Meeting to 10 days before the Winter Board Meeting, your name will go into a drawing for a \$25.00 check to be drawn at the 2026 Winter Board Meeting. You must email me the new member's membership application to jwhigham@joneswalker.com in order to have your name put into the drawing.
- Annual Meeting** For every member that you sponsor from the Winter Board Meeting to 10 days before Annual Meeting, your name will go into a drawing for a \$25.00 check to be drawn at the 2026 Annual Meeting. You must email me the new member's membership application to jwhigham@joneswalker.com in order to have your name put into the drawing.

Member Recognition:

- Attendance Award** Drawing to be held among members attending 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Board Meetings (seminars inclusive) for a \$50.00 check, to be given away at 2026 Annual Meeting.

Attendance Award:

- Chapter Attendance:** Drawing to be held among all chapters attending. Whichever chapter's name is drawn at each board meeting will receive \$50.00.

TREASURER

Ed Clark, PP-SC



We are getting ready to finish the current term; please submit your expense reimbursement form to be at ebc@phm-law.com or USPS mail to my attention at:

Ed Clark
PHMMI
22 Inverness Center Parkway, Ste. 600
Birmingham, AL 35242

If you have a question about your committee budget, please email me. I look forward to seeing you at the AALS Winter Board of Governors Meeting and Educational Conference.

CHAPLAIN

Marva Dean Little, PP, PLS



Please send me all of your prayer requests and/or praises. I hope you all have a wonderful, blessed and Merry Christmas.



PARLIAMENTARIAN

Gina Harbison

Tis the Season as the Holidays are upon us. I trust that all of you had a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving. If you need a copy of the current Bylaws, Standing Rules or Procedures Manual, please let me know. Wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope to see everyone at the AALS Winter Board Meeting in Selma.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: AALS MEMBERS

If your email and contact info changes, please make certain you go into your NALS account online and update your information. Your receipt of emails and information from NALS and AALS **requires your current contact info and email address**



Certified Legal Support Professional (LSP)

The LSP is designed for students and entry-level professionals looking to get their foot in the door of the legal profession. It is often used as an exit exam for legal studies programs and serves as a great way to complement what has been learned in the classroom. Attaining this goal demonstrates commitment and aptitude for succeeding in the ever-changing legal environment and provides an opportunity to begin your career a rung above the competition.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT NALS

https://www.nals.org/events/event_list.asp

Friday, January 23, 2026

NALS Foundation Grant Workshop

1/23/2026

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 PM Eastern Time





DIXIE DIGEST PATRONS 2025-2026

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Sandra L. Doerr, ALP | BCALP |
| Gina Harbison, PP, PLS | BCALP |
| Joan Latour | BCALP |
| Deborah Rutherford | BCALP |
| Judy Whigham, PP, PLS | BCALP |
| Ed Clark, PP-SC | BLSA |
| Teresa Kelly | DCLSA |
| Harriet Piper | DCLSA |
| Barb Hanley, PLS | MALS |
| Quinn Ruff | MALS |
| Kristi Skipper, PP | MALS |
| Debbie Whitman, PP, PLS | MALS |
| Magan W. Bedwell, CLS | MLPA |
| Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS | MLPA |
| Alison Schemmer | MLPA |
| Sonia Smith, CLP | MLPA |
| Susan Turner, PLS | NOCA |
| Susan J. Mano, ALP | NALS OF PENNSYLVANIA |

In Memory of Cheri Loyd
by Alison Schemmer

In Memory of Barbara M. Malone, PP, PLS
by Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



Everything Begins With An Idea

2025-2026 AALS DIXIE DIGEST PATRON AD

\$10 per ad

NAME: _____

NAME ON AD
(if different)

CHAPTER:

ADDRESS:

PHONE: WORK: _____ EXT: _____

HOME: _____ CELL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ALT. E-MAIL: _____

Please use a separate form for each ad; however, one check may be used for multiple ads if mailed together in same envelope. Make checks payable (\$10 per ad) to AALS and send them with this form to:

Debbie Rutherford
Caldwell Wenzel Asthana
Post Office Box 2158
Foley, AL 36536
drutherford@cwalawfirm.com

CHAPTER REPORTS

BCALP - Baldwin County

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



Since my last report in August, the members of BCALP met on August 21st at Ivey's Restaurant in Robertsdale, where we received an informative and hands-on presentation on using ***Artificial Intelligence ("AI") in the Law Office***. Our speaker was Michelle Kane, Esquire, the General Counsel for Hargrove Engineers. Ms. Kane showed us how AI can be used and gave us tips on how to ensure the data produced is accurate and helpful in our work.

Our September 18th meeting was held at Ralph & Kacoo's on Battleship Parkway in Spanish Fort. We were delighted to have Berry McKelvain, Magistrate for the City of Fairhope. Ms. McKelvain gave us an overview of ***Municipal Court Use in Alacourt*** and how such data is now being migrated into the Alacourt system and using Fairhope as its beta testing municipality. This will be a very handy tool once it is fully incorporated into the Alacourt system.

October was a busy month for BCALP. We started the month on the last day of the NALS CLE Conference, which was held in Mobile. BCALP had a very good turnout, along with other AALS chapters, which was fitting as AALS hosted the event, and many BCALP and other AALS members worked on the planning committee. The conference was a success and I think everyone enjoyed the activities and the great CLE offered during the conference.

This officer had the pleasure of joining the MLPA chapter for its October 9th meeting at T.P. Crockmier's in Mobile, where we received an interesting presentation on ***Check Fraud and Wire Fraud Issues*** from Rob Carothers, Esquire, from Jones Walker law firm (also, one of my bosses).

We held our monthly meeting at Pier House on Battleship Parkway in Spanish Fort on October 16th, which was a business-only meeting in order to discuss and finalize the details for our annual Bosses' Night Banquet.

To finish out the month of October, BCALP's annual ***Bosses' Night Banquet*** was held on October 27th at Oak Hollow Farm in Fairhope, which marked our 32nd year to hold the event. There was wonderful food prepared by the fabulous Oak Hollow staff, followed by a fun Chinese Auction and ending with the announcement of The Honorable Haymes Snedeker as BCALP's 2025 Boss of the Year. His Honor was taken by surprise and humbly and graciously accepted the award. In addition to the festivities, BCALP also collected donations for our charity, The Lighthouse, a shelter helping victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

The November meeting of BCALP was held on November 13th at the Original Oyster House on Battleship Parkway in Spanish Fort. We were excited to hear an informative and interesting presentation from Matt Holdren, Esquire, an attorney and client executive with ExhibitSuite™, an innovative tool for trial attorneys to streamline the use of exhibits in the courtroom. Matt's partner at ExhibitSuite™, Lori Warren, was a speaker at the NALS conference in Mobile, but Matt really expounded on the benefits of using their product. It was a great presentation.

BCALP will not have a December meeting but will hold its annual After Christmas party sometime in January, at a date and location yet to be determined. Until then, we look forward to seeing our AALS pals in Selma for the Winter Board Meeting.

BLSA – Birmingham

Kayla Bassett, PLS



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Congratulations to the NALS National Legal Education Conference Committees for a successful event. BLSA members appreciated reconnecting with colleagues and meeting new people.

BLSA members have been busy since September. As BLSA's Charity this year, we have chosen Jessie's Place. Jessie's Place is a residential program for women and children who need healing and restoration from trauma, instability, and dangerous circumstances, located in downtown Birmingham.

Since September, BLSA members have been actively involved in various initiatives. This year, the Chapter selected Jessie's Place as its designated charity. Jessie's Place is a residential program located in downtown Birmingham, dedicated to supporting women and children in need of healing and restoration from trauma, instability, and dangerous circumstances.

We look forward to hosting the AALS Annual Meeting in April 2026. We are searching for a location and expect to provide an update at the Winter Board Meeting in January.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing everyone in Selma at the Winter Board Meeting.



Webpage: www.alabama-als.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/aalsalabama

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/aalsinfo>

DCLSA - DALLAS COUNTY

Harriett Piper, Governor Pro Tem

Since our last report DCLSA members spent much of our time planning and packing for National Conference in Mobile and it was a great experience. The conference was packed with excellent speakers on timely topics and, best of all, NALS members from everywhere! We visited with friends from past conferences and made lots of new friends. Mobile and AALS, you hit this one out of the ballpark!! Congratulations to everyone who worked on this huge project... YOU MADE ALABAMA PROUD!

As I write this, December is just a few days away and I've begun decorating for the season. It's my favorite, special time of the year – Thanksgiving! YUM YUM – and I'm thankful for so much more than the food. Then Christmas – a loving, special time with family and friends and while wrapping gifts, and making cookies – make memories, they last forever.

And before we can turn around, it's January and time for AALS' Winter Board Meeting. So, ya'll load up and come on to Selma. "We'll leave a light on!"



MLPA – Mobile

Danielle Baker



Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! It's been a busy four months for all of us!

As is tradition for me this time of the year... *Clearing my throat* HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YA! HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YA! MLPA turned 65 in August! A g a i n , we are so grateful to our current members and those who have paved the way for us! We had a great time socializing and having a little birthday celebration cookie!

We then started the fall into FALL with meetings. We had several great speakers from August to November, and we learned a lot during those months. Thanks to all of our wonderful speakers for teaching us all about different topics in the legal field!

MLPA sponsored a Thanksgiving Project in November called Fostering Together, which provides support to foster and adoptive families in Mobile and Baldwin counties. They promote healthy foster and adoptive families by providing easy access to resources that help build strong, resilient children who thrive within healthy families and break the cycle of abuse, neglect, and trauma. They also provide an outlet for our local community to come alongside these children and families in support. We collected items to help support them.

MLPA was also the host of the NALS Education Conference which was awesome! Whoo-hoo!!! We were beyond excited to have a ton of people from all over the nation come to see what Mobile has to offer!! There were a ton of great speakers and an auction that brought a lot of items for people to bid on and there were even miniature Mardi Gras floats that people made for people to bid on. There was also a Mardi Party & Cruise one night! I am happy to report that it was a blast, and everything went great!

And last but not least...HO, HO, HO!! MLPA will be hosting its Christmas Party in December and our members are getting ready for a season of parties, networking, socializing, and just a bunch of Christmas cheer! I believe I did this last year but why mess with traditions, I send you off with... WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! We can't wait to see you all at the Winter Board Meeting next year!

MALS – Montgomery

Barb Hanley, PLS



MALS has been busy meeting every month at different locations in the Montgomery area. We had two of our five members attend the National meeting in Mobile, AL and both enjoyed it very much. We have also been collecting items for the Sunshine Center for use with the battered women and children's homes.

Our December meeting will be held December 9 at a "pop-up" location – known as "Miracle at Hilltop"....Hilltop Public House. It promises to be better than last year with more decorations, more cocktails, and more merriment! Each member has stuffed two stockings with items for the State charity and all will be delivered to the Sunshine Center. We will also hold our annual dirty Santa ornament swap. Oh, what fun. In November it was Bibb Street Pizza Company, and we went over items we were collecting for the January goodie bags. We also discussed speakers, the meeting location and where we will be staying. Barb brought funny Thanksgiving kitchen towels for door prizes.

October we were at Tower Tap room. Barb gave out the Christmas stockings to stuff for the December meeting. Kristi and Quinn gave an overview of the National meeting. We had 100% attendance at this meeting, and it was great to be with everyone and discuss the January 2026 meeting to be held in Selma, Alabama. Each member received a small pumpkin candy dish.

Well, the weather is cold, and we all need to be bundling up to stay warm. A highland cow's thick hair protects them from the harsh weather – but I think we should all wear ugly Christmas sweaters and cozy slippers for the next month or so.

See you in Selma.



NALS OF CENTRAL ALABAMA

Susan Turner, PLS

Greetings to our AALS Pals, from NOCA.

I have heard some really good things about the NALS conference in Mobile and can't wait to hear more from those of you who attended the meeting at the upcoming Winter Board Meeting. I sure wish I could have been there.

Now it's time to turn our attention to our Winter Board Meeting in Selma on January 23-24, 2026. I am really looking forward to seeing everyone there. Looking forward is always fun, and we look forward to the holidays. And personally, I am definitely looking forward to putting 2025 behind me.

2026 will be full of surprises, and I hope they are all happy ones. Merry Christmas from NOCA, and a Happy New Year to all!



National Certification Exams

NALS Certification Exams on Hiatus

All individual certification exams are on **hiatus**. NALS is only administering the Certified Legal Support Professional (LSP) (*former ALP*) exam to school groups.

This decision has the full support of both the Board of Directors and the Certifying Board. Please note that this is a temporary pause, **not a permanent elimination of our three** certifications. The Certifying Board will be using this time to revise and enhance the Certified Legal Professional (CLP) and Professional Paralegal (PP) exams to serve our members and the legal community better.

Maintain Your Certification

The hiatus will not affect current certification holders. If you already maintain a certification, you will still be able to recertify every 5 years. For more information on how to maintain your current certification - <https://www.nals.org/page/recertification>

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Tracey Creel

AALS 2026-2027 OFFICERS SAMPLE BALLOT

In accordance with the provisions of ARTICLE V, Section 4(c) of the Bylaws of AALS, an Association of NALS, Inc., the following SAMPLE BALLOT is submitted for consideration by AALS members:

PRESIDENT

Judy Whigham ()

_____ ()

JUDY WIGHAM

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS, is a member of BCALP and a past member of MLPA. Judy began working in the legal profession in 1980. She has worked for a number of sole practitioners, the corporate legal and HR departments of two global companies, as well as small- to medium-sized firms. She now works for two senior partners and an associate at the large, multi-state firm of Jones Walker LLP, where she has been employed since 1999.

- Judy first joined NALS, AALS and MLPA in 1981
- Transferred primary membership to BCALP more than 10 year ago
- Received PLS certification in September 1994
- Received PLS certification again in March 2007, after her certification expired in 1999
- Received her PP certification in 2007
- Active in all levels of the association, including:
 - BCALP and MLPA: President (twice each), every office except Treasurer and Parliamentarian at least once; numerous committees
 - AALS: Vice President (current office); Treasurer (1 term); Secretary (2 terms); Chaplin (2 terms); served on numerous committees, served as delegate
 - NALS: NALS Foundation (current trustee); 2025 NALS CLE Conference planning committee held in Mobile; attended 10+ NALS annual and regional conferences
- Judy has two grown children, Tim and Natasha, and four grandchildren: Easten (21), Katie (20), Chloe (17) and Timothy, Jr. ("Fella," 16). Judy loves spending time with family and friends, attending Mobile Symphony Orchestra concerts, reading, cooking, and travel
- Active in her church, Grace Baptist in Semmes, Alabama, where her son is the pastor and director of their Christian Academy, and her granddaughter, Katie, is the pianist and teaches music and art at the Academy and her granddaughter Chloe just began working in the church's day care
- Still enjoys serving as a devoted nursery worker for over 26 years and is lovingly known to all the children as "JuJu"

VICE PRESIDENT

Janice Riviere ()
____ ()

JANICE RIVIERE

Janice has worked as a Legal Practice Assistant at Burr & Forman, LLP in Birmingham, AL since 2011 and assists partners and associate attorneys with healthcare litigation, medical malpractice, ERISA and white collar crime matters. She has been in the legal field for over 25 years.

Janice received her Certified Legal Professional certification through NALS and is an active member of BLSA where she served as Secretary for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. She is also an active member of AALS. Janice received both the BLSA and AALS New Member of the Year Award in 2017.

Janice plans to retire in February 2025 but will remain active in BLSA, AALS and NALS. She hopes to spend time gardening and helping her son who has recently gone into the ministry.

SECRETARY

Julie Nims ()
____ ()

JULIE NIMS

Julie has worked in the legal profession for 28 years. She has been a member of NALS, AALS and BCALP since January 2003. She currently works for Raines Law Firm.

Julie has served on the BCALP board ever since becoming a member and has served on every committee numerous times over the years.

Her service with AALS includes: AALS Treasurer (twice), AALS Vice President (three times), AALS President-Elect, AALS President (twice), and currently is AALS President. She has served on numerous AALS Committees, numerous times, including but not limited to Membership Committee, Annual Meeting Committee, Fall Board Meeting Committee, Winter Board Committee, Finance Committee, Audit Committee, Dixie Digest Patron Ads Committee, Ways and Means Committee, Nominations and Elections, Credentials Committee, Scholarship Committee, and Student Member Liaison Committee.

TREASURER

Danielle Baker ()
Ed Clark, PP-SC ()
____ ()

DANIELLE BAKER

Danielle Baker has worked in the legal profession for 21 years. She has been a member of MLPA since September 2017. She currently works for Jack "Trip" Smalley III at Long & Long, P.C. and has been with him since August 2011. She has served on various state committees including funding and technology. She is currently serving on the state board as Secretary. She looks forward to becoming an even more active member in the group by serving at additional levels on the state board. Her service with MLPA includes: Treasure (3 years), President (2 years), Governor (2 years), and helping serve on several committees.

ED CLARK, PP-SC:

Ed has been an AALS member since 2001, a Certified Professional Paralegal in 2016, and renewed in 2021, with Specialty Certification in Civil Litigation in 2019. Ed has been an active member and participant in BLSA, AALS, and NALS during his membership.

BLSA: BLSA Governor (3 years); BLSA Vice President (10 years); BLSA President-Elect; BLSA President, numerous committees.

AALS: AALS President, AALS President-Elect, AALS Vice President AALS Treasurer (4-yrs), numerous committees.

NALS: NALS Board of Directors, NALS Treasurer (two terms), NALS Conference Committee, NALS Technology, Membership, Membership Experience, Education Committees, Grassroots-Level Think Tank; Governance Task Force, Chapter Reimaging Task Force.



CERTIFICATION

Alison K. Schemmer, PP, PLS

PLEASE make sure you read the recent NALS email notices that have come out this month about certification and specifically the notice that:

Effective January 1, 2026, the Accredited Legal Professional (ALP) will become the Certified Legal Support Professional (LSP).

Additionally:

- 1. The Certification Board is actively enhancing all three NALS certifications, including modernizing the CLP and PP formats, supporting the rapid growth of the ALP (future LSP) program, and developing new instructional materials.**
- 2. The NALS Certifying Board is offering an amnesty period where those with expired credentials can apply for reinstatement, regardless of the reason or length of the lapse. If your certification has been expired, you may recertify in the month of January without retesting by paying a \$150 fee.**

It's all on line now and you will need to go to the NALS website for more information – and there's a lot of it. But, if you are interested in any of the above, I believe it's well worth your while to go check it out. It's NEVER too late to get certified or to recertify if you have let your certification lapse! GO FOR IT!

FUNDING

Sonia Smith, CLP

Cassandra Joiner

Hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving, and are looking forward to having a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Funding Committee encourages our local chapters to bring an auction basket or item(s) to our 2026 Winter Education Conference and Board Meeting January 23-24, 2025. Keeping our President's them in mind...we are sure you will come up with a



The Funding Committee will be bringing back the mystery item/prizes drawing for \$5 a ticket, so ya'll bring your pocketbooks! See you in Selma in January!!



NALS CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Sonia Smith, CLP

I want to, again, thank all who served on the NALS Conference Committee. A magnificent job was done by all, especially those who were able to attend in person! I continue to receive compliments on how well AALS did with the conference.

This Association is all about teamwork and it was indeed a Team Effort! We all stepped in and stepped up to the calling that it took to put on a very successful NALS Conference.

Each of you are a tremendous asset to AALS and I want to encourage you to stay the course and continue to serve in your local chapters, in and for AALS and possibly even with NALS.

Keep up the great work AALS!



**STAY
THE
COURSE**

WINTER BOARD MEETING

DCLSA & MALS – Co-Hosts

Winter Board will be held in Selma January 23-24, 2026. And we're all working hard to hold a conference that will be beneficial for your career and a pleasure to attend.

Trustmark Bank is graciously and generously allowing us to meet in their conference room gratis consequently we don't have a room block with a hotel in Selma. I asked, but the Bank won't let us sleep in the lobby so there is a list, with this report, of hotels in Selma with phone numbers and distance from the Bank. Each hotel has a website you can review for more information.

Also with our report is the registration form and registration, too, is gratis and includes your Saturday's lunch. No reason to wait for a tax return to register for Winter Board just fill out the form and hit send; or, lick a stamp.

As part of our report we are submitting a draft agenda (our speakers haven't been confirmed) to give you an idea of how we will proceed. Look closely at the draft agenda and Friday at 6 p.m. you are invited to tour Sturdivant Hall Museum. Sturdivant Hall, built in 1853, is a neoclassical style two story, nine room home with antique furnishings. And the tour for you, AALS members, is gratis, too!

Winter Board Meeting in Selma will be the gratis – I mean greatest – meeting ever. AALS does a lot for members holding a free conference with a free lunch and a free tour. But we are asking for one little favor. Will each chapter please bring five or more door prizes – they are always such a fun part of lunch.

Lodging in Selma, Alabama

Holiday Inn Express

2000 Lincoln Way
Selma, AL 36701
(334) 390-3851
3.2 mi from Trustmark Bank

Hampton Inn

2200 W Highland Av
Selma, AL 36701
(334) 407-2687
3.4 mi from Trustmark Bank

Comfort Inn/Quality Inn

1812 Hwy 14 East
Selma, AL 36701
(833) 372-7349
2.3 mi from Trustmark Bank

Woolworth Lofts

201 Broad St
Selma, AL 36701
(334) 375-3838
0.2 mi from Trustmark Bank

Baymont by Wyndham

2420 North Broad Street
Selma, AL 36701
(334) 875-4906
1.7 mi from Trustmark Bank

Sturdivant Hall Museum



Sturdivant Hall is a historic house museum located in the Old Town Historic District in [Selma, Dallas County](#). The house, considered one of the state's and region's best known examples of Greek Revival architecture, was completed in 1856 and is owned by the city of Selma and maintained by the city and the Sturdivant Museum Association. It was formerly known as the Watts-Parkman-Gillman House when it was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and is a prominent stop on the Historic Selma Pilgrimage tour.

Construction of what is now known as Sturdivant Hall began in 1852, but was not completely finished until 1856. Following completion, Edward Watts and his family lived in the house until 1864, when the house was sold and the family moved to Texas. The house was purchased from Watts by John McGee Parkman, a local banker, for the sum of \$65,000 on February 12, 1864. Following the end of the American Civil War, Parkman was made president of the First National Bank of Selma. The bank engaged in cotton speculation and accumulated huge losses. The military governor of Alabama, Wager Swayne, had his Reconstruction authorities take possession of the bank and arrest Parkman. He was imprisoned at the county jail at Cahaba. Assisted by his friends, Parkman attempted to escape from the prison on May 23, 1867, but was killed.

The house has at least one ghost story associated with it. Sturdivant Hall is featured in a short story by Kathryn Tucker Windham, in her *13 Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey*. The story, "The Return of the Ruined Banker", involves John Parkman and the purported return of his ghost to the house after his death.



AALS Winter Board Meeting and Education Conference
January 23-24, 2026
Trustmark Bank
310 Broad Street
Selma, Alabama

Registration (circle option):

A B C D E F G H I J

MEMBER REGISTRATION:

Includes:

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| A. | Full (both days) | \$ 0 | Breaks, Friday Tour & Lunch Saturday |
| B. | Friday only | \$ 0 | Break & Friday Tour |
| C. | Saturday only | \$ 0 | Break & Lunch |
| D. | Saturday Lunch/Board Meeting | \$ 0 | Lunch |
| E. | Board Meeting Only | \$ 0 | |

NON-MEMBER REGISTRATION:

Includes:

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| F. | Full (both days) | \$ 35 | Breaks, Friday Tour & Lunch Saturday |
| G. | Friday only | \$ 35 | Break & Friday Tour |
| H. | Saturday only | \$ 35 | Break & Lunch |
| I. | Saturday Lunch/Board Meeting | \$ 35 | Lunch |
| J. | Board Meeting Only | \$ 0 | |

Note: Zoom registration is not available for this meeting due to internet limitations.

This is a no-cost meeting for members, but registration is required for planning purposes. There is no room block for this meeting. A list of lodging options is provided. We look forward to seeing you in Selma!

Meeting Registration Deadline Thursday, January 15, 2026

Name for badge _____

Certification(s) _____ Chapter _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Email or mail registration to:

Harriet Piper, harrietpiper@yahoo.com

AALS Legal Education Co-Chair

102 Thomas Drive, Valley Grande, AL 36701

(334) 267-9728



AALS Educational Conference and Winter Board Meeting

January 23-24, 2026

Selma, Alabama

CLE AWARDED 6.0 hours

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2026

Lunch On Your Own

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. | Registration |
| 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. | BREAK/DOOR PRIZES |
| 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 6 p.m. | Sturdivant Hall Museum Tour (<i>hors d'oeuvres will be served</i>) 713 Mabry Street, Selma, AL |

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 8:45 – 9:00 a.m. | Registration |
| 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. | Break |
| 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. | CLE Speaker: |
| 11:30 a.m. | Lunch and Auction |
- Immediately Following Lunch AALS Winter Board Meeting

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE

(Final Agenda will be emailed prior to meeting)

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS 2025-2026

| COMMITTEE | CHAIR/CO-CHAIR | EMAIL |
|--|---|--|
| Audit Committee (2025-2026 Books) | Kristi Skipper, PP (Chair) Joan Latour Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS | kristiskipperpp@gmail.com jllatour@att.net babs.dekeyser@att.net |
| Bylaws, Standing Rules & Procedures Manual | Gina Harbison, PP, PLS | gharbison@pci-nsn.gov |
| Certification | Alison Schemmer, PP, PLS | aks6451@aol.com |
| Corporate Sponsors | Ed Clark, PP-SC | ebc@phm-law.com |
| Dixie Digest Patron Ads | Debbie Rutherford | drutherford@cwalawfirm.com |
| Dixie Digest | Margaret Dawson, PLS | aalsdixiedigest@gmail.com |
| Finance | Ed Clark, PP-SC | ebc@phm-law.com |
| Funding | Sonia Smith, CLP Cassie Joiner | ssmith@mcdowellknight.com cassandrajoiner@yahoo.com |
| Installation – Written By Installation – Conducted By | Judy Whigham, PP, PLS Brittany Nims | jwhigham@joneswalker.com brittbrakk@gmail.com |
| Marketing/Membership | Judy Whigham, PP, PLS | jwhigham@joneswalker.com |
| Member of the Year | Margaret Dawson, PLS | thistldome@gmail.com |
| New Member of the Year | Megan Bedwell | mwb@cunninghambounds.com |
| NALS Connection Committee | Sonia Smith, CLP | ssmith@mcdowellknight.com |
| Nominations & Elections, Credentials | Tracy Creel | traceycreel@gmail.com |
| Resolutions | Judy Whigham, PP, PLS | jwhigham@joneswalker.com |
| Scholarship | Kayla Bassett, PLS | kjbassett55@outlook.com |
| Student Chapter Liaison | none | |
| Technology – Projector, Speakers, Mic | Danielle Baker | danielle@longandlong.com |
| Teller | Barb Hanley, PLS | hthgma@gmail.com |
| Time Keepers | Debbie Whitman Diandra Ruff | whitmansupersecretary@yahoo.com diandra_ruff@fd.org |
| Web Page | Margaret Dawson, PLS | thistldome@gmail.com |