

DIXIE DIGEST

www.alabama-als.org

June 2026

A Message from our President

Judy Whigham, PP, PLS

Welcome to summer, everyone! It's only June 1st and the heat index is close to 100 degrees today – at least in L.A. (Lower Alabama). I hope you are all staying cool and at least hydrated if you can't stay cool.

Wow! We made it through the 2026 Annual Meeting and the First Board of Governors Meeting! I didn't know if I could, but I did, and I am grateful for all the past presidents in attendance and everyone's patience and help in making sure the meetings went off without a hitch. A special thank-you to BLSA for the great venue and hosting an excellent meeting. I didn't hear one complaint over the entire event. I couldn't have asked for a better start to my term as president.

The only way it could have been better was to have Julie Nims there in her place for General Assembly and Annual Meeting, but Julie was where she needed to be, with Chris and family. I know I speak for all of AALS when I say we share our deepest condolences to Chris on the passing of his father, and we will continue to keep the family in our thoughts and prayers for comfort and healing during this difficult time of mourning.

I thank each and every member who supported me to be your next AALS President and I will strive to serve AALS, which is its members, to the best of my ability, and putting the best interest of the association as a whole first in all that I do while serving as president. I am available and reachable almost any time and will always respond to your requests and communications. I don't believe there are many things that need to be changed or done differently during my term and a lot of my concerns will be focused on membership, including renewals and retention, in support of our capable Vice President, Janice Riviere, CLP. I hope that chapters will have the same focus and that each chapter and member will try to recruit at least one new member and reach out to any members who have not renewed and find out what we can do to encourage them to come back to AALS. Like Uncle Sam, **AALS NEEDS YOU!**

I am very grateful to every person who stepped up to serve on the Executive Committee this year, along with each Governor and Committee Chair and Committee Member. I am humbled by your willingness to stand alongside me to do all that we can to grow and nurture AALS to continue to be the amazing association that it has been for 63 years. I thank each of you and look forward to working with you in this endeavor in the coming months.

I hope that each member will embrace my theme to be Good Vessels for AALS and let your unique abilities, talents and personalities help you to do great work for AALS and get on board with committees and getting to know members and making AALS as special for each of you as it has been for me for over 40 years. When you think you're not good enough or doing enough, just think about the Cracked Pot. Sometimes you're growing and sowing and don't even know it, because you're being a good vessel.

Being A Good Vessel for AALS



I also wanted to share the contact information for the charities that I selected for this year. Each one is special to me, and you may connect on a personal level with one of them as well. As you think of how you can help others this year, please consider donating to one or more of the following charities:

The Salgi Esophageal Cancer Research Foundation:

The Salgi Foundation
Attn: Linda Molfesi
PO Box 1912
East Greenwich, RI 02818

***You may also donate online by visiting:

<https://salgi.app.neoncrm.com/forms/donate>. They also have virtual fundraising events that chapters and/or individuals can participate in to raise money and awareness.

ECAN.ORG

Esophageal Cancer Action Network – www.ECAN.ORG

NEW ADDRESS:

PO Box 59
Newnan, GA 30264

[410-358-3226](tel:410-358-3226) | info@ecan.org

Laura Crandall Brown Foundation (supporting patients, survivors, research, etc., for gynecological cancers – Susan Turner’s daughter Betsy Fetner works with this charity and will be a speaker at an upcoming meeting)

Mailing Address:

Laura Crandall Brown Foundation
P.O. Box 36445
Birmingham, AL 35236
205. 783. 1285

Physical Address:

410 Lorna Square
Hoover, AL 35216

I look forward to all that the coming year has in store for AALS and for each of our members. Let’s all commit to becoming good vessels for AALS and others. Take care and I look forward to seeing everyone in the Fall.



NALS Mission

engage | inspire | enhance | promote

Engage legal professionals on their terms.

Inspire legal professionals to want more.

Enhance the careers of legal professionals.

Promote legal professionals and the legal support industry.

VICE PRESIDENT

Janice Riviere, CLP

I am excited to be AALS Vice President this year. I enjoyed our first Board Meeting in Birmingham and appreciate everyone who helped me navigate. Thank you to BLSA for hosting our meeting. The speakers were great and the food was delicious.

As Vice President/Membership Chair, I am concerned that membership is not increasing and that several members did not renew their membership this year. If anyone has any suggestions to increase membership, please reach out to me (Janice.riviere52@gmail.com; 205-565-9687). I would love to plan a membership luncheon at your firm to introduce NALS/AALS and local chapters to the firm's legal support team and encourage membership. Please let me know if your firm may be open to it.

I received an email today about the upcoming NALS Annual Meeting in Jacksonville, Florida October 5-7. I hope to learn about new school partnerships to expand opportunities for students to pursue legal support education. Legal education is one of the main reasons I joined the Association and it is close to my heart. I hope to be able to participate in that program to encourage young people to gain knowledge of the legal profession so they will have a head start in securing legal support jobs. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Board Meeting. Have a safe, happy summer!!



Webpage: www.alabama-als.org

book: www.facebook.com/aalsalabama

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

SECRETARY

Julie Nims

First off, I want to let everyone know I missed you all at annual meeting, but I was exactly where I needed to be. Thank you all so much for the thoughts and prayers, it was definitely felt and appreciated. Thank you all for your help, support and dedication to our great association this past year. It takes a village and everyone's help and we have the best village.

Thank you for allowing me to stay on the board serving as AALS Secretary this year. This is the first time for me to be AALS Secretary, so please bear with me. Thank you so much Sonia Smith, CLP, for sitting as Secretary Pro Tem and taking care of the minutes for me.

I have not received any correspondence since the First Board of Governors Meeting in April. I have AALS Logo stationery available to send electronically to anyone who makes a request. My email is jnims@raineslawfirm.com.

Lastly, and very important, if you have not already done so, please remember to send any updates to the AALS chapter officer rosters to NALS, with a copy to me, as well as President Judy Whigham, PP, PLS, and Vice-President Janice Riviere, as soon as possible so that updated rosters can be distributed to the governors.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in September for the Fall Board Meeting. Have a great and safe Summer.

TREASURER

Danielle Baker, ACP



Please submit your expense reimbursement for to me at danielle@longandlong.com or USPS mail to my attention at:

Danielle Baker
P.O. Box 161196
Mobile, AL 36616

CHAPLAIN

Sonia Smith, CLP



I trust and pray everyone is enjoying their Summer so far. I look forward to seeing you all this Fall! I am going to jump right in and ask, have you ever thought of God as any other name other than Heavenly Father? I have recently been privileged to be part of a bible study that revealed the biblical names of God and their meanings which are far more than simple titles. In Scripture, each name shows us something true about God's character, His power, His faithfulness, and the way He relates to His people.

Every name tells a story. Here are just a few of my favorites I'd like to reflect on:

One of my favorite names of God is El Elohim – God the Might One, the Creator. I often reflect and call Him by this name while I am outdoors enjoying all His splendor. The skies, the trees, the river, the landscapes, then when I hear the birds chirping, the squirrels calling, or a hummingbird's wings. Just being still and with El Elohim is a peace like no other.

When God revealed Himself as Yahweh Jireh—*The Lord Will Provide*—He was not only providing a sacrifice for Abraham. He was revealing Himself as the God who sees the need and provides at the right time.

When Hagar called Him El Roi—*The God Who Sees Me*—we are reminded that God is not distant from human pain. He sees, He knows, and He cares.

When Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord is My Banner -the Hebrew name is Yahweh Nissi [Exodus 17:15]. A 'banner' was a flag raised high on a pole, and it served as a rallying point and a sign of victory. I often reflect on how Yahweh Nissi goes before us and guides and protects our paths.

It is my desire that you too would begin your own study and learn the names of God in the Bible, you will see that:

God is personal, not distant

God is faithful in every season

God's character never changes

God's names can deepen your trust, worship, and prayers.

I hope your personal relationship with God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, grows daily.

Stay encouraged knowing you matter to God. **John 16:33**

I have said these things to you, that you may have peace in me. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

Love in Christ

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Magan Bedwell, CLS

Hey friends!! Not much to report just yet. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the fall meeting as well as NALS; I hope you're coming! Reminder that we tabled a few things to discuss at the next board meeting so keep it in the back of your brain.

Wishing you all a perfect summer!!



2026 NATIONAL LEGAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

October 5 - 7
Jacksonville, FL

Exhibitor & Sponsor Registration Open Now
Attendee Registration Opens in May

2026 National Legal Education Conference

[Register](#) [View Registrations](#) [Map this Event](#) [Tell a Friend](#)



Get ready—The NALS National Legal Education Conference is coming to Jacksonville, FL in 2026!



10/5/2026 to 10/7/2026

When:

10/05 - 10/07/2026
All Day (Central Time)

Where:

[Map this event »](#)
Hilton Jacksonville at Mayo Clinic
4745 Transformation Way
Jacksonville, Florida 32224
United States

Contact:

NALS Staff
info@nals.org
918.582.5188

[REGISTER](#)

Online registration is available until: 9/22/2026



DIXIE DIGEST PATRONS 2026-2027

Marva Dean Little, PP, PLS	BCALP
Gina Harbison, PP, PLS	BCALP
Joan Latour	BCALP
Deborah Rutherford	BCALP
Judy Whigham, PP, PLS	BCALP
Teresa Kelly	DCLSA
Harriet Piper	DCLSA
Barb Hanley, PLS	MALS
Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS	MLPA
Alison Schemmer	MLPA
Susan Turner, PLS	MLPA

In Memory of Talley Brathovd, PP, PLS
By Alison Schemmer

In Memory of Talley Brathovd, PP, PLS
By Harriet Piper

In Memory of Vicky Brown
By Harriet Piper

In Memory of Barbara P. Malone, PP, PLS
By Judy Whigham, PP, PLS



Being Good Vessels for AALS

2026-2027 AALS DIXIE DIGEST PATRON AD

\$10 per ad

Name: _____

Name on Ad: _____
(if different)

Chapter: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Work: _____

Home/Cell: _____

Email: _____

Alt. Email _____

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

Joan Latour
250 Lakefront Circle
Summerdale, AL 36580

CHAPTER REPORTS

BCALP - Baldwin County

Deborah Rutherford



BCALP Members met on March 17 at Pier House in Spanish Fort for some very interesting stories on personal injury presented by Randall Caldwell, Esq. of Caldwell Wenzel & Asthana.

April 9, we met at Ivey's Restaurant in Robertsdale for the installation of officers and presentation of member of the year. The officers for 2026-2027 are President - Julie Nims, Vice President – Tracey Creel, Secretary – Melissa Wood, Treasurer – Sandra Doerr, ALP, Governor – Debbie Rutherford, Chaplain – Joan Latour and Gina Harbison, PP, PLS – Parliamentarian. Julie Nims was named Member of the Year for 2025-2026. CONGRATUATIONS JULIE!!!

Several of our members headed to Chelsea, AL for AALS 63rd Annual Meeting on April 17 and 18, hosted by BLSA. What a great time we had with awesome speakers, great food and wonderful fellowship. BCALP Member, Judy Whigham, PP, PLS was installed as AALS President and Judy was also named AALS Member of the Year. Also, BCALP member, Tracey Creel was named AALS New Member of the Year. CONGRATULATIONS JUDY and TRACEY.

May 21, we met at Ivey's Restaurant in Robertsdale. Our speaker for the evening was Lt. Robert Fennell of the Foley Police Department who spoke to us on Criminal Investigations. We could have listened to him for hours.

It is going to be another hot summer and I hope it goes by fast, as BCALP members are planning a wonderful Fall Board Meeting that you will not want to miss. Details will be sent out as soon as possible. Until then, have a great summer.

BLSA – Birmingham

Kayla Bassett, PLS



Thank you to everyone who attended the AALS Annual Meeting in Chelsea, Alabama, on April 17–18, 2026. I hope you enjoyed the weekend and found the CLE presentations informative.

The following officers were installed to serve BLSA for the 2026–2028 term beginning May 2026.

President – Teresa Moore, PP, PLS

Vice President – Ed Clark, PP-SC

Secretary – Melissa Cooper, CAP, BW, HR, MEP, OM, PM, RM, TA, PLS

Treasurer – Debby Holmes, PP, PLS

Governor – Kayla Bassett, PLS

Congratulations are in order for the following BLSA members, Ed Clark, PP-SC elected to the NALS Board of Directors; Janice Riviere elected as Vice President of AALS; and Melissa Cooper for earning her Technology Applications Expert certification.

On another note, one of our speakers at Annual Meeting, Caroline Sease of Kulture City has received the following honor, Kulture City has named TIME's 100 Most Influential Companies of 2026. Congratulations to Caroline and Kulture City.

Enjoy your summer and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Board Meeting.

DCLSA - DALLAS COUNTY

Harriett Piper, Governor Pro Tem

Annual meeting was such a treat – held in Chelsea, a lovely little Southern town at a brand-new hotel with a super staff and good food with good friends. It was the ultimate good time. Except for one little hiccup and that was toward the end of the business meeting when I felt a hand shove me! Then I was standing and some kind of fog came over me when I said “Can the next Annual Meeting be in Dallas County?”. I felt another hand grab my arm and jerk me down and Teresa Kelly hissed in my ear “What have you done!” I replied: “You pushed me!” Teresa hissed back “You just better be glad Mobile will cohost!” Well, I shut her up like any sweet little old Southern lady would – I crossed my eyes and stuck out my tongue!

The What We Know Report: We know you’ll want to hear what happened next. We finally started speaking again (two minutes later), jumped on the phone and called a friend we know who works for someone we know who owns a place we know that has possibilities we know. And as soon as we got home Monday we met with the General Manager, who we know, at the place we know with possibilities, and facetimed Allison Schemmer for her input -- which was, “Is this the best you can do?” Until she was facetiming with the young good looking manager and then it was all “Ooh – how lovely – it’s perfect – will you be there?” She two-facetimed us!

And so, Teresa and I spoke with the GM, who we know, reserving the possibilities place we know, gave a sigh of relief saying “Well, we know that’s done! Easy Peasy Annual Meeting! Now we know there’s only one or two more MILLION things to do.” And that’s all we know and now you know.

A tribute to Vicky Brown:

Planning and working, attending meetings and events with this association has given me some of the greatest rewards and best times of my life. When Dallas County chartered in 1980 a whole new world opened up to me. Another charter member and I clicked or melded or something and together we made life fun. Like when playing our charity softball games, at practice she would sing, “Put me in Coach, I can play centerfield.” And he did! Got to where we knew what each other was thinking and would start or finish each other’s sentences. Neither of us had hardly been out of the State of Alabama, we were such babies, but we started going to all the association meetings and the fun kept growing – life was great! At a meeting in Gatlinburg, our car almost didn’t make it up the mountain where the hotel sat. But we prayed and laughed that old clunker to the top. Once, we went to St. Simons and on the way found out – while stopped in the highway to look at our flat tire because we heard a flapping noise – a young man stopped to help and told us the highway department put those noise makers in the road to let you know you were running off the road. Well, I told him she had been drinking and that’s why we kept running off the road - I knew we didn’t have a flat tire! But no matter where we went, we got lost. This was before GPS which was probably designed because of us -too late! But you can get lost and not really be lost if you’re with a good friend laughing and having a good time – ever heard of Slick Lizzard? Those were the days, my friend. I’ll always treasure them and this is written in memory of you, Vicky Brown. I love you,



Time is a precious gift of God; so precious that he only gives it to us moment by moment. – *Amelia Edith Barr*

MLPA – Mobile

Magan Bedwell, CLS



MLPA's May board meeting was held on May 7, 2026. This was the first meeting of the new board and it went very well. Good conversation, good food and good company! Our next regular meeting is July 9th at T.P. Crockmeir's. We are so excited to welcome Mike Maxey, Postal Inspector and Rob Carothers, Esq. to speak on Bank and Postal Fraud. We would LOVE for others to join us for this!! We've decided to dedicate our birthday month as well as November/December holidays to the charities of President Judy Whigham.



Many of our MLPA members attended AALS Annual Meeting April 17th-18th. It was thoroughly enjoyable and educational! The speakers did a fantastic job!! MLPA and Dallas County have the honor to host the next annual meeting together! I hope every member has an opportunity to attend local meetings as well as attending a board meeting this year. Don't forget that there are many opportunities to be a part of and membership grants you can take advantage of!!

MALS – Montgomery

Barb Hanley, PLS



While I ponder the meaning of vessel and the story about the broken vessel (jar) and how it brought water to the path and flowers grew along the path because of the broken vessel, I have to think of how each of us are vessels of all shapes, sizes, some maybe cracked, some of gold, some of wood, some of clay and how each of us play different roles and have different functions in AALS. Although we are different from each other, each is important and special. We each serve a specific purpose in this association. Some have visible positions; others have less visible positions. Yet everyone's role is vital and of great consequence if those working behind the scenes, or those showing up for conferences only, didn't do their part, those with more visible roles wouldn't be able to do their part. Did you know the word vessel generally refers to a hollow container or a craft used for transport. It is used in maritime lingo, used by doctors and biologists, used in manufacturing, and the Bible (King James) uses the word vessel 46 times and the plural form vessels appears 154 times.

Well, this vessel is ready to give you some MALS GALS news. We, along with NOCA will be hosting the Winter Board meeting. We already have one speaker lined up and are working on being able to give lots of information at the fallboard meeting. We are looking into the Prattville area for a location. We are planning to have a quick meeting in June, and our July pool party meeting will be great – especially with the ice cream maker Quinn has. You scream, I scream, we all scream for ice-cream! We will have a meeting at the Montgomery Biscuit Stadium during game in the play too. So the summer may be heating up, but so are the activities for the MALS GALS.

The MALS GALS are also getting ready to work gathering items for the Laura Crandall Brown Foundation Chemo Comfort bags and we hope to host a Chemo Comfort Bag Assembly Day.

NALS OF CENTRAL ALABAMA

Susan Turner, PLS & Margaret Dawson, PLS

Thank you BLSA for a great Annual Meeting in Chelsea, Alabama.

We don't have much to report but we would like to share some thoughts of moral clarity, written by a successful business friend who will be celebrating his 102 Birthday next month. In his view, strong societies depend on clear standards of honesty, responsibility, and accountability.

“Trust is a treasure.”

Trust allows people to build businesses, raise families, and cooperate with one another. Without trust, every relationship becomes more difficult.

“Truth early saves trouble later.”

Honesty may feel uncomfortable in the moment, but it prevents far greater problems in the future.

“Character is what you do when no one is watching.”

Integrity is revealed not when it is convenient, but when doing the right thing requires effort.

“Responsibility creates freedom.”

Freedom does not survive in a society where people refuse to accept accountability for their actions.

“The line between right and wrong is still there.”

The world changes, but the principles that guide ethical behavior remain remarkably consistent.

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**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CERTIFICATION

Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS

I am looking forward to serving as Legal Education Chairman this year. My goal is to have excellent seminars like we have had in the past. If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers, please be sure to pass that information along.

We have been fortunate for the last few years not to have charged a registration fee to attend our board meetings. I expect that we need to charge this year. Once the meeting is set and we know what the costs will be, we will know more.

Look forward to seeing everyone at our board meetings this year!

NEW MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Tracy Creel

I am honored to be chosen for the AALS New Member of the Year for 2026. This recognition means so much to me, I am so grateful for the support, encouragement, and friendships I have gained through this outstanding organization. It has been a privilege to serve alongside such dedicated professionals, and I look forward to contributing more to the organization in the future. Thank you for this special honor. God Bless You All.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Kayla Bassett, PLS

At the AALS Annual Meeting on April 18, 2026, the AALS Scholarship and the Hollis-Schultz Scholarship were each awarded in the amount of \$1,000.

Blayklee Swann, granddaughter of member Debbie Whitman and sponsored by MALS, received the AALS Scholarship. She attends Jacksonville State University and is studying music education.

Olivia Creel, daughter of member Tracey Creel and sponsored by BCAP, received the Hollis-Schultz Scholarship. She attends Coastal Alabama Community College and is studying allied healthcare and nurse practitioner education.

Congratulations Ladies.

Thank You!

FROM: OLIVIA NICOLE CREEL

Dear AALS,

Thank you so much for selecting me as the recipient for the 2026 Hollis-Schultz scholarship. I am truly honored and grateful for your generosity and support.

As I begin my second year of nursing school, this scholarship will help ease the financial burden of purchasing textbooks, supplies and other essential items for my classes. Your investment in my future allows me to focus more fully on my goal of becoming a nurse.

I sincerely appreciate the support of AALS and your commitment to helping students achieve their educational goals. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,
Olivia Creel

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS 2026-2027

COMMITTEE	CHAIR/CO-CHAIR	EMAIL
Audit Committee (2026 Books) meets Fall 2026	To be added at a later date	
Audit Committee (2026-2027 Books) Meets 2027 at Annual Meeting	To be added at a later date	
Bylaws, Standing Rules & Procedures Manual	Magan Bedwell – Chairman Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS Myra Beckham, PP, PLS	magan@bucherlawfirm.com mwbshout@gmail.com babs.dekeyser@att.net myrabeckham@bellsouth.net
Certification	Alison Schemmer, PP, PLS	aks6451@aol.com
Corporate Sponsors	Ed Clark, PP-SC Joan Latour	ebc@phm-law.com jilatour@att.net joanibaloni@yahoo.com
Dixie Digest Patron Ads	Joan Latour	jilatour@att.net joanibaloni@yahoo.com
Dixie Digest	Margaret Dawson, PLS	aalsdixiedigest@gmail.com
Finance (Treasurer)	Danielle Baker	danielle@longandlong.com
Funding	Barb Hanley, PLS Myra Beckham, PP, PLS	hthgma@gmail.com myrabeckham@bellsouth.net
History Book	No History Book this Year	
Installation – Written By	Judy Whigham, PP, PLS	jwhigham@joneswalker.com
Installation – Presented By	Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS Alison Schemmer, PP, PLS	babs.dekeyser@att.net aks6451@aol.com
Legal Education	Babs DeKeyser, PP, PLS With host chapters covering speakers	babs.dekeyser@att.net
Marketing/Membership	Janice Riviere, CLP	janice.riviere52@gmail.com
Member of the Year	Margaret Dawson, PLS	thistldome@gmail.com
New Member of the Year	Tracy Creel	tracycreel@gmail.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
Technology – Projector, Speakers	Danielle Baker	danielle@longandlong.com
Teller	Barb Hanley, PLS	hthgma@gmail.com
Time Keepers	Debbie Whitman Quinn Tucker	whitmansupersecretary@yahoo.com diandra_ruff@fd.org
Web Page/Social Media	Margaret Dawson, PLS	thistldome@gmail.com