



BROOKE MANSFIELD is a Life Member and Past President of LSI (2010-2012). She is also a member of Santa Clara County LPA. Brooke has worked in the legal field for over 20 years. She currently works as an Independent Contractor doing paralegal work for several probate and estate planning law firms. Brooke resides in Alturas (Modoc County) with her American Bulldog, Bocephus, a blue nose pit, Chloe, a Maltese, Dixie and two cats, Hemingway and Helenor. When she hits the lottery, she plans on spending weekends in Southern California with her two grandkids, Sloane (7) and Clark (3).

## Life After Serving LSI

BY BROOK MANSFIELD - SUBMITTED BY SANTA CLARA COUNTY LPA

There are plenty of articles in past issues of *The Legal Secretary* regarding running for office. There is plenty of advice available about serving your local association and serving as a chairman or officer, but not much is available about what happens AFTER you serve LSI, specifically, our LSI Past Presidents.

What is the role of an LSI Past President (“PP”)? There is nothing written in our Bylaws. We just kinda “wing it”! I followed the “normal” career path. I joined my local association, served on various committees and eventually served on my local board. After an unsuccessful attempt at running for LSI Treasurer, I was appointed a state chairmanship. I served as your LSI Legal Secretary Training/Seminar Chair. From there, I ran (again) for LSI Treasurer. If memory serves correctly, I ran three times before (finally) being elected! That process was a learning experience.

The typical progression of an LSI Officer is being elected Treasurer, then moving on to Executive Secretary, Vice President, and finally President. The most immediate PP serves as LSI’s Executive Advisor and is an appointed member of the Executive Committee (EC). The “old timers” will remember when we had a First and Second Vice President, making the commitment to LSI two additional years.

I served as your President from 2010-2012, and then had to take some time away from LSI. After dealing with a litany of personal issues, I decided recently to dip my toes into the conference pool once again. After my long absence, I attended the 2017 May Annual Conference in Modesto. It was great to see old faces and meet new legal professionals, but I felt lost. I had no meetings to attend, no Board of Governors’ (“BOG”) meeting to preside over. I actually got to sleep in and let my roommate get ready first in the morning!

This all leads me back to the big question, what is the role of an LSI Past President? We have been introduced down to a science! We have all perfected the “Princess



Wave.” I think the biggest role PPs have is that of cheerleader or ambassador. Dare I say role model and mentor? We have served in every capacity on the Executive Committee. We know how this corporation runs and our past triumphs and defeats. We are a treasure trove of knowledge and experience.

I will let you in on a secret - there was a time when I would attend conferences as a “civilian” and see all those PPs sitting in the back of the room together and think “Oh, good Lord, something is up.” Why would these ladies sit together during our Board of Governor’s meeting and not with their own association or friends? I’ll tell you! They are visiting, catching up on what’s going on with each other’s lives. Oh, and here is a shocker - they are paying attention to what is going on at the meetings. See, as PPs, we think of LSI as one of our children that we take care of during our tenure on the EC. Upon our “retirement” we are like empty-nesters. We may behave as “helicopter parents” at times. Please forgive us for this behavior. We are watching our baby grow-up and experience new things.

Past Presidents are in a unique position. We have served on each of the offices on the EC, we have held at least one state chairmanship, and we have served our local association. We don’t just see an EC Resume - we know that an all-day meeting is behind that. We know that our Executive Secretary finished that all-day EC meeting and hammered that EC Resume out before the Friday night reception. That Treasurer’s Report? We know what goes into getting that prepared. We see the LSI President running the BOG meeting so smoothly. We know the

stress and anxiety that goes along with being President. You may simply hear chairman after chairman give an oral report, but we beam with pride as we see our peers having stepped out of their comfort zone and accepted a position that they did not think they could do - or at least had some doubts.

I am sure I had a few audible eye rolls over the years as I saw a PP stand up at the microphone and ask a question on the EC Resume or make a motion or debate a motion that was on the floor. I didn't get it then, but I do now. If you see me walking up to the microphone, feel free to eye roll (I'll be listening). I will do it because I KNOW someone else in that room is thinking the same question and is too timid to say something. There have been some rather heated debates over the years and who wants to throw themselves into the fire by voicing what could be an unpopular opinion? Ask a PP to ask for you. I'll do it! I learned in my tenure on the EC not to be timid. It's okay to ask questions. It's okay to voice your opinion.

What ARE our duties as a PP? As I mentioned, we should be mentors to every member of LSI. This is not limited to officers and chairmen. This is to EVERY member of LSI.

You may find this hard to believe, but I was talking to a member at a conference years ago and she told me that she had been instructed "Do not talk to them unless they speak to you first." She asked me if this was true. I about died! NO! It's not true!! Is that how members look at us? Trouble makers who should not be spoken to unless we speak to you first? Yikes! Another memory is riding in the crowded elevator. An LSI member takes ahold of my name badge, reads it, and as she flicked it aside says "Oh - you're one of THOSE people." Conversation terminator. I don't recall how I replied. I'd like to think graciously.

PPs are available to talk any time over the phone and via emails. Time at conference is so hectic. We have our BOG meeting and LSS seminars to attend. We hardly have a minute to breathe. One solution would be to change our tradition at Sunday Brunch. Instead of having Past Presidents sitting at a reserved table, why not have Past Presidents sit at "regular" tables with the members? This would give members the opportunity to visit casually with a Past President.

Here is a little inside scoop on the reserved tables for our Past Presidents: We really don't hang out too much outside of conference. We are spread out up and down the state of California. When we attend conferences, it is one of the few times we have to catch up with each other. Somewhere along the way (well before I was a sparkle in my parents' eyes) someone decided that we should have a table to ourselves. This is dangerous if Christa and I attend the same conference. We've been known for some shenanigans and it's not likely to stop anytime soon. In Christa's absence, I've been recruiting Diana Estabrook in my capers. She doesn't need much encouragement! The table is up close so the current EC can keep tabs on us and to ensure we behave appropriately at banquet. (We like it when you buy us drinks, just sayin')

What about an additional luncheon moderated by PPs? Would you, the member, be receptive to this? This could create a budget fiasco since we've approved the current budget for our fiscal year. However, I believe costs would be minimal each quarter. It is something to look into if the interest is there.

My LSI career has been an interesting ride. There have been highs and lows. Good and Bad. At the end of the day, I'd do it again. I would have done a few things differently knowing then what I know now, but I enjoyed every minute of it.

Don't hesitate to take advantage of the vast knowledge of your Past Presidents. Conferences can be overwhelming if you have not attended one in the past, or you are still new to the routine. We have so many acronyms (LSI, LSS, EC, PRC, PP, and MAL). Not sure what the alphabet soup is all about? Ask a Past President. I think the resources of our PPs are being under-utilized. I realize that not all PPs can be at all conferences and some are retired from the legal field. I believe I can speak for the other PPs when I say that we deeply care about this corporation and would love the opportunity to help the members in some way. Need a sounding board? Need a mentor? Give me a call, or hit me up at a conference. And yes, you can speak to me before I speak to you first!

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