



# Oakland County Legal News

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**THE OAKLAND COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S (OCBA) Legal Assistants Committee invited Linda S. Jevahirian (center) to discuss "The Principles of Negotiating Compensation" on Wednesday, January 12, at the Bloomfield Hills**

**office of Butzel Long. Welcoming Jevahirian to the meeting are (left to right) Denise Gau, committee chair; and Kristen Bennett, committee liaison.**

*Photo by John Meiv*

## The principles of negotiating compensation

BY LINDA S. JEVAHIRIAN

The Legal Assistants Committee of the Oakland County Bar Association opened the year with a session about the Principles of Negotiation on Wednesday, January 12. Paralegals filled the seminar room at the Butzel Long office in Bloomfield Hills to learn how to approach one of the most intimidating but probably one of the most important career challenges.

Negotiating a new position is an exciting but complex matter. As founder and president of Legal Search & Management, Inc., I talked about how compensation is applied to entry level and lateral positions, as well as how to approach questions concerning a yearly raise.

Coming to agreement on terms of compensation can be a tricky deal if you don't know how to execute the process. My experience as a legal assistant taught me this lesson the hard way.

What I learned from my first job as a paralegal was that lawyers and hiring man-

agers are seasoned negotiators and they know how the game is played. When they asked me what I wanted to earn I realized that I was in over my head and my unprepared response cost me money.

Compensation is one of those topics that can throw your career off course or improve it. It is tied to so many factors, yet employers make it seem like it such an easy decision. Unfortunately, paralegals don't get a lot of practice doing this so they can be derailed when it comes to bargaining about money and benefits.

I emphasized how important it is to be objective when analyzing the facts. Keeping the issues in perspective and approaching the situation with diplomacy eliminates the emotional factor, which can be hazardous.

Compensation is a pivotal life decision. Paralegals should feel comfortable asking for what they want. I advised paralegals to be creative in combining privileges and intangible benefits with salary. Added time off, flexible hours, education reimbursement, a good

work environment, and a few extra favors can add up to a satisfying package.

For those who missed the Oakland County session, "The Principles of Negotiating Compensation" will be presented to the Legal Assistants Committee of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association at their luncheon meeting on May 24. Further information can be obtained by calling (248) 471-3443 or e-mailing [Linda@legalsearchonline.net](mailto:Linda@legalsearchonline.net).

*Linda S. Jevahirian is the founder and president of Legal Search & Management, Inc., a specialty firm that provides temporary and permanent recruiting to firms and corporations interested in improving their practice through the use of legal assistants. She is a noted speaker, trainer, and author. Her articles have appeared in numerous legal publications, including The Detroit Legal News, The Michigan Bar Journal, Michigan Lawyers Weekly, The National Law Journal, The Michigan Paralegal, and Legal Assistant Today Magazine.*