

## Make it Happen

by Johanna Quattrucci

Congratulations to the most recent graduates from the Center for Professional Education at Boston University. Two hundred forty-four students received certificates of achievement at a Recognition Ceremony on Thursday, September 27, 2012 in the various fields of study, including: Financial Planning, Professional Fundraising, Real Estate Studies, Genealogy, and Paralegal Studies. Out of the 244 graduates, 121 went home that night with an accomplished paralegal certificate. Statistics prove our field is growing by “leaps and bounds!”

From my perspective, having the Director of the Paralegal Program at BU, Joseph Spada, J.D., request my presence at this event was a worthwhile honor. Joe summoned me to deliver an inspirational speech by telling “My Story.” I shared with the audience that night some of the “roadblocks” I encountered while securing work in this downturn economy, and the path that I followed.

Staying connected with colleagues and joining associations in your field of study where support is offered is, in my opinion, the key to success. For me that association was the MPA. As a student, I attended every educational seminar the MPA offered. During that time, I met new friends and seasoned paralegals that offered valuable advice — all free with an MPA membership!! I live in Rhode Island and never heard of the MPA before attending BU. When our professor, Joe Spada, advised our graduating class to join our association, I heeded his advice. I remember his exact words when he expressed the benefits of membership and jokingly said, “Look, these people don’t pay me for sending you there.” The truth is that joining the MPA didn’t directly help me enter the legal field but learning how to do it right did.

When I interned in the Rhode Island Family Court, I assisted our nine attorneys and opposing counsel when



*Director of the Boston University Paralegal Program, Joe Spada, introduces Johanna Quattrucci at a ceremony for graduates in September.*



**As a student, I attended every educational seminar the MPA offered. During that time, I met new friends and seasoned paralegals that offered valuable advice — all free with an MPA membership!!**

allowed. They observed my performance and willingly wrote recommendation letters on my behalf. A former MPA member and friend Shawna Hansen said to me; “Get a recommendation letter from a judge and you’ll find a job.” I did just that and it was the best advice ever!!

Another special friend coming out of the MPA is DeBorah Sonnenschein, who coached me on interviewing skills. I first met DeBorah in 2008 while attending one of her educational seminars. I have the greatest admiration for DeBorah’s spirit, generosity, and accomplishments. What you may not know is that DeBorah has been attending law school and has recently passed the California bar. Way to go, DeBorah!!

A job offer eventually emerged out of this internship and in two short years of giving 100% performance, I went from a grade 12 step to a 25! I bypassed child support agents with years of seniority by having the proper qualifications, experience, and paralegal certifications, both in-state and national, and struggled with strong union opposition within the agency all the way.

So a special thank you goes out to Shawna, Joe, and DeBorah, for being my guiding light through my transition as each of them helped me in their own special way to secure the position of Child Support Administrative Officer. Mentors and new friends are all around you. All you need to do is look for them.

— Johanna Quattrucci is editor of VIEWPOINT.

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Gillard Associates

**PARALEGAL, LEGAL SECRETARY & ATTORNEY REGISTRY**  
*Boston and New England's Oldest Full Service Search Firm*

For lists of Job Searches: Cheryl Gillard • Andrea Karis  
Send resumes in confidence to: [gillard@gillardlegal.com](mailto:gillard@gillardlegal.com)  
The Gillard Building • 202 Bussey Street • Dedham, MA 02026

**[www.gillardlegal.com](http://www.gillardlegal.com) • (781) 329-4731 • Fax: (781) 329-1357**  
Member, National and Massachusetts Association of Personnel Consultants