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## See You in Dallas!

Every legal assistant is not an Erin Brockovich; but then, not every lawyer is William Blackstone, or Clarence Darrow, or Tom Girardi.

What is the appropriate term for those in our profession: counselor, attorney, or lawyer? And what is the proper title for that vital person in today's law office: paralegal, assistant, or legal assistant? The application of a "professional title" is important — not merely an attempt to justify the payment of a higher salary as some complain. Most of us admit that one of the greatest advances in the legal profession in the last century was the formal recognition of those playing that essential professional role.

We know that paralegals, by any name, can do some things as well as we can, and they perform many tasks more quickly and with better results.

To fear encroachment upon our profession, or dilution of our specialty is to miss the opportunities for case development and client liaison that enriches the practice of law and the lawyers' practice. Focusing on the potential for losing the high status of our profession and of our specialties is an exercise of vanity in the highest order. A quick recollection of the "lost civilizations" will dispel the wishful

thinking that good things inherently last forever. (Ponder the Incas, Aztecs, Sumerians, Greeks, Romans, and even the British Empire.) If we adapt to the changes required by the passage of time, our professional currency is strengthened.

Just as the copier, the computer-processor, and the cell phone have increased our proficiency and productivity, legal assistants have had a tremendous and positive impact on the professional delivery of legal services to our clients and the public.

One of the special features of this year's Annual Meeting of the State Bar of Texas will be the presence and participation of Erin Brockovich — the legal assistant who got our attention! Without experience or formal training she confirmed to all of us that intelligence, hard work, initiative, and determination are superb additions to the

lawyers' success in the representation of their clients and causes. Ms. Brockovich will make a special appearance for the Legal Assistants' Division, and will be a star attraction in the Symposium along with Mark Curriden, Wag-



goner Carr, and Tom Girardi of Los Angeles on Thursday, June 13.

Then, on Friday morning, at the General Session, Racehorse Haynes will deliver the formal address on the topic of "Proper Prosecution of the Terrorists." See you in Dallas.

