

Paralegal in County Attorney's Office Achieves Board Certification

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On March 10, 2016, **Crystal Self**, a paralegal in the Montgomery County Attorney's Office, was formally inducted into the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) at a ceremony in Austin, Texas. This special recognition event signifies that Crystal passed the rigorous Paralegal Certification examination which was administered last November.

In expressing his appreciation for Crystal's achievement, County Attorney J D Lambright stated that "out of thousands of paralegals and legal assistants throughout the State of Texas, only 365 have distinguished themselves with Board Certification. In Montgomery County, only 5 paralegals have achieved this milestone." Lambright went on to say that "my entire staff knows that I place a great emphasis on continuing education, and that I urge everyone to strive to be the best they can be in their chosen profession. Crystal eagerly took on the challenge to prepare for this rigorous exam, and she is now the second paralegal on my staff to become Board Certified since I took office."

J D Lambright complimented Ms. Self as "a true asset to my Litigation Division as well as to my entire office. She provides support to 3 litigation attorneys on a broad variety of cases in both federal and state courts. Crystal exhibits exceptional knowledge of Texas civil procedure and local rules of our court system. Since she joined my team in July 2014, Crystal has greatly expanded her knowledge and expertise, and she is a delight to work with".

The Texas Board of Legal Specialization was established in 1974 by the Supreme Court of Texas at the request of the State Bar of Texas. It is the only governing board authorized to certify attorneys and paralegals in legal specialty areas. The TBLS certifies paralegals in 7 areas of the law. Lambright said the board certification process is rigorous and thorough with ongoing requirements that continue even after a person becomes certified. "Paralegal certification recognizes and promotes the availability, quality, and utilization of the services of paralegals who, working under the supervision of duly licensed attorneys, have achieved a level of special knowledge in particular areas of law," Lambright said.

The paralegal certification process closely parallels the attorney certification process. It includes a thorough assessment of the paralegal's experience under the supervision of a licensed Texas attorney as well as their record of Continuing Legal Education and specialty area duties. It requires the completion of a Baccalaureate or higher degree, or completion of an accredited paralegal program or four additional years of relevant experience. References from attorneys,

judges and other professionals associated with the specialty area are evaluated, and a passing score on a half day examination is required.