

Member Spotlight



Candyce L. Steward
Office Administrator
Luvaas Cobb
Eugene, Oregon

My name is Candyce L. Steward, and I am a Law Office Administrator. That almost sounds like I introduced myself at a support meeting, doesn't it? I do belong to a support group called the Association of Legal Administrators, and from that group membership I am becoming a better person, both professionally and personally.

I have over 22 years experience in the legal industry that began in California and continued in Oregon when we relocated in 1997. I joined Luvaas Cobb in 2006 as a paralegal and began the first steps of my transition into law office administration in 2007. What an exciting change! I have learned so much and really enjoy being involved with the inner-workings of my law firm.

My goal each day is to help create and maintain a law firm that runs smoothly while keeping three main objectives in mind: 1) to allow our attorneys to focus on practicing law efficiently and successfully; 2) to allow clients to have complete comfort

and confidence in the work we do for them; and 3) to allow staff to feel like they are part of a family and play an important role in the work we do. You have all heard the saying about wearing many hats that truly describes what I do as an administrator.

The best thing I like about being an Office Administrator is the diversity of tasks and the people I get to work with. I never have the same day twice. Among my co-workers, vendors, peers, and our firm's clients, I have the opportunity to interact with some great people with different backgrounds and goals. I never know what task is coming my way or what I may learn. These variables make coming to work each day exciting and fulfilling.

The most challenging aspect of being an Office Administrator is juggling! My job is fluid, and I move quickly and frequently between tasks and appear to have an invisible revolving door to my office. It can be a challenge balancing deadlines, numerous tasks, and people who need my time.

The hardest on-the-job situation I have had to deal with was handling complex human resources and staff-related matters. I care deeply for the people I work with. When one of them is going through a difficult time personally, I am concerned for them. Our firm has a strong group of long-time employees, and we only really have to deal with occasional performance issues. Balancing my personal values with my professional requirements as the firm administrator is something I am always working on.

As an Office Administrator, I never thought I'd have to choose my battles so carefully and to bite my tongue so frequently! There is a great deal of strategy involved in what I do. Some agendas I push and push hard, others I sit back on and wait for the right opportunity. I love to joke that I often feel like I am trying to nail Jell-O to a wall! I am relentless, energetic, and not easily discouraged. A good strategy is the key to getting things accomplished. Of course, a solid sense of humor and optimistic outlook certainly help.

The attorneys in my firm would consider me a professional who is trustworthy, valuable, reliable, good-natured, and efficient. The irony is that while I know they find my role here important, and they support me each day, I should really be flying under their radar. If I am doing a good job, then they are focusing on their practice, meeting their clients' needs, and enjoying efficient support by our staff within a dependable and reliable business structure.

The staff at my firm would describe me as supportive, good-humored, sincere, and dependable. I make sure they know my door is always open, as is my mind. While this is a law firm and decorum is expected, I try to keep things light and fun. I am willing to roll up my sleeves and do whatever needs to be done. I've worked my way up in the industry so I understand the value of our staff and the pressures which they encounter.

The best professional advice I have received is don't fill the silence—listen! As a chatty person who comes from a very social family, this can be difficult for me! While I am not “old” by any stretch—I am old enough to appreciate the fact that with age comes wisdom.

If I weren't an Office Administrator, I would be here, exactly where I was meant to be. There have been moments over the years when I considered going to law school, but if I were to ever change careers going forward, I would become a nurse. I am constantly amazed at the marvels of the human body. I have studied medical issues through many years as a paralegal doing personal injury work, and experienced them first hand through personal experiences with injury and illness in my family.

In my spare time I like to...in all of my time, first and foremost, I am a mom. My days start and end with my two children, ages 11 and 13. To the extent that I enjoy any success personally or professionally, I give them much credit in that success. They have helped me become a better person. They make me laugh every day and fulfill me to a depth I never knew existed until I became a parent.

I also tend to use some of my parenting skills at work—would a time-out chair be inappropriate at a law office? Hmmmm....

My plans for the next 10 years include avoiding stagnation in my personal life or my professional endeavors. A friend recently shared a quote with me, “If you don't like change, you will like irrelevance even less.” I embrace change and feel like there is always room for improvement and more balance. This world has so much to offer and only so much time to explore it all. In the next 10 years I will continue to relish my role as a parent and try my best to guide my children into being happy and vibrant people who are valuable members of society. Professionally, I plan to begin working toward obtaining my certification as a legal manager. After all, Candyce L. Steward, CLM, has a nice ring to it, don't you think? **LIVN**

Looking to get back to doing what you do best?

See what OfficeMax® can do for your firm.

At OfficeMax, we've been working with law firms for more than 40 years, with a singular focus: to help you gain efficiencies so you can maximize client service.

Count on us for powerful Integrated Solutions—including a selection of more than 25,000 office products, technology solutions, furniture and space planning, digital print services for forms and presentations, and so much more.

Call us at 877.969.OMAX (6629) or visit officemaxsolutions.com.

