

## The History of the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA)

**2009:** In April, ALA launches the French version of its Web site (<http://frcn.alanet.org>). In May, ALA rolls out its new brand strategy and introduces a new logo, color palette, design system and tagline. At the Annual Conference in New Orleans, ALA presents a ceremonial check for \$104,000 to The Smile Train which represents donations made by ALA chapters, members, firms, vendors and others as part of fundraising campaign in honor of CCW's 10th anniversary. In October, after 15 years as Executive Director, John Michalik announces his retirement effective January 2010. Larry C. Smith named successor.

**2008:** ALA Launches the Extraordinary Law Firm Initiative and the first annual Extraordinary Law Firm Conference is held in Carefree, Arizona. ALA Celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Community Challenge Weekend (CCW).

**2007:** ALA Launches its completely redesigned Web site incorporating more user-friendly navigation. Spearheaded by ALA, and with content provided by all participating cosponsors, the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of *PLMW Magazine* makes its debut.

**2006:** ALA celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This milestone was honored at the 2006 Annual Conference in Montréal. At the Conference, Brad Hildebrandt, one of ALA's original founders, gave his insights regarding the Association and the legal management profession at the ALA Association Luncheon. In addition, an anniversary celebration featuring performances by Le Cirque à la Montreal, was hosted at the Grand Finale Gala event.

**2005:** ALA spearheads the creation of Professional Legal Management Week<sup>SM</sup> (PLMW). PLMW provides a forum for recognizing those in legal management for what they do and the role they play in the success of the organization, and in its service to its clients and those who work in the organization. More information can be found at [www.plmw.org](http://www.plmw.org).

**2005:** ALA reaches a milestone in membership by achieving 10,000 members.

**2004:** Lawyer/Author Scott Turrow gives an inspiring keynote address at the 33rd Annual Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia.

**2003:** ALA debuts the Legal Management Resource Center (LMRC), a powerful, Internet-based tool for searching answers to legal management questions. This new product further emphasizes ALA's commitment to being "The Source of Legal Management Information and Knowledge."

**2003:** ALA Releases the online *ALA Management Encyclopedia*<sup>SM</sup>.

**2002:** Erin Brockovich gives an extraordinary general session presentation at the 31st Annual Conference in San Antonio.

**2002:** ALA releases Volumes II and III of the Management Encyclopedia.

**2002:** ALA, in conjunction with AndersonBoyer Group, introduces a new member service, the Client Satisfaction System to accurately assess a client's level of satisfaction, loyalty and buying tendencies.

**2001:** ALA introduces "A Business Skills Curriculum for Law Firm Associates," a resource guide and planning tool to conduct a successful associate training program. This product was developed by the Center for Law Practice Strategy and Management at the George Washington University Law Center under a 2-year grant from ALA's Foundation.

**2000:** ALA's first Career Center was unveiled in the exhibit hall at the 29th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition. Career Center visitors could meet with career counselors and Certified Legal Managers, review job postings and peruse career-related resource materials.

**2000:** ALA debuts its Learning on Demand program allowing members to take educational courses 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the World Wide Web. More than 250 management-related courses were made available in this first year of operation.

**1999:** More than 900 ALA members from almost 90 chapters participated in ALA's first Community Challenge Weekend (CCW), held October 1-3. The spirit and intent of this initiative was to underscore the importance of volunteerism and the difference that ALA members can make in the lives of people in their own communities. By all accounts, the CCW was an enormous success and truly did "make a difference."

**1999:** ALA used its "institutional voice" to address the critical issue of the shortage of qualified, competent legal secretaries through the creation of a White Paper titled "Staffing Issues and the Delivery of Legal Services in the Future." Other White Papers are planned for the future on topics of particular interest to the legal management profession.

**1998:** Retired Gen. Colin L. Powell gives an inspiring keynote address at the 27th Annual ALA Educational Conference and Exposition. ALA membership tops the 9,000 mark.

**1997:** Keynote speaker and technology guru Bill Gates, founder and chairman of Microsoft Corporation, attracts the largest crowd ever to his session at the 26th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition. Approximately 3,000 legal administrators, managing partners, vendors and members of the press attended the keynote address to hear Gates' view of how technology is altering or even eliminating many standards in law offices, while also making them more competitive and efficient.

**1997:** The Certified Legal Manager (CLM)<sup>sm</sup> Program is unveiled. After three years of studies, analysis and planning, the program is developed to allow a qualified legal administrator to demonstrate, through an examination process, a mastery of core areas of knowledge identified as essential to the effective performance of a principal administrator. The first examination sessions were held in November 1997, in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

**1996:** ALA completes its *Knowledge, Skills and Abilities of Legal Administrators (KSA) Study*. This study investigated the job tasks of legal administrators to determine if the job of legal administrator is based on a definable knowledge base. Important information was discovered in defining the role, responsibilities and needs of legal administrators.

**1996:** ALA celebrates its 25th Anniversary. The milestone was recognized through many special events such as the Mardi Gras Extravaganza during the 1996 Educational Conference and Exposition, and a special anniversary issue of *ALA News* that featured a history of ALA, a tribute to past presidents, and special memories from members. By the end of its 25th year, ALA had more than 7,900 members.

**1996:** ALA unveiled an information-based site on the Internet's World Wide Web that provides law office managers and the legal community with news and information about ALA's educational programs and member services, print and online management resources, online educational opportunities and jobs available in legal management. The site also provides links to more than 350 law-related management resources, organizations and vendors to the legal industry.

**1994:** ALA goes online by introducing its electronic bulletin board system on CompuServe. More than 1,300 administrators attend ALA's 23rd Annual Conference.

**1993:** The Association launches ALA Management Connections<sup>sm</sup>, a nationwide job bank program, for ALA members seeking employment within the legal management profession.

**1992:** A major restructuring of ALA is complete. Among many changes, the Association's 11 Regions are consolidated into six, each with a Regional Director on the ALA Board of Directors. The ALA Board of Directors adopts a new Mission Statement and Goals. Part of ALA's mission is to "promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team."

**1991:** ALA's 20th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, held in Nashville, Tennessee, draws almost 1,500 registrants and 165 exhibitors from the United States, Canada, and nine other countries.

**1989:** ALA moves into its own headquarters in Vernon Hills, Illinois, the final step to becoming self-managed.

**1987:** ALA grants charters to five new chapters, bringing its total number of chapters to 100.

**1986:** ALA membership reaches 5,000 and continues to grow at an average rate of 80 new members per month.

**1985:** ALA hires its first Executive Director as an initial step toward self-management.

**1982:** ALA publishes the first issue of its journal, *Legal Administrator*, which later will become *Legal Management*.

**1981:** More than 750 ALA members attend the Association's 10th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition in Dallas.

**1980:** ALA adopts a voluntary Code of Professional Ethics for legal administrators.

**1979:** ALA's 50th chapter is formed, and membership in the Association surpasses the 2,000 mark.

**1976:** The Breeden Company, an independent association-management firm in Illinois, takes over the administrative responsibilities of ALA.

**1975:** Membership tops the 1,000-member mark.

**1973:** Among the highlights of ALA's second Annual Conference in Houston, is a power-typing seminar, a special exhibit of the latest power-typing equipment, and the introduction of the brand-new IBM Magcard II Typewriter.

**1972:** ALA's first Annual Educational Conference and Exposition is held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, drawing 151 administrators and 10 exhibitors. In March, ALA's first chapter is formed in Richmond, Virginia, and is followed in June and July by the South Florida, New Jersey and Los Angeles chapters. ALA conducts its first compensation survey, which indicates that the median total compensation of administrative managers in private law firms (those that provided data) is \$17,450 per year.

**1971:** The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) is formed to provide support to professionals involved in the management of law firms, corporate legal departments and government legal agencies. ALA incorporates in Pennsylvania and is founded by Bradford W. Hildebrandt, Robert I. Weil, and Mary Ann Altman. By June 1971, 100 legal administrators have joined the Association.