



Dedicated to Steve Elias

If not for human beings like Stephen Elias, Esq., his beloved wife, Catherine Elias-Jermany, along with Richard Lubetzky Esq., Virginia Simons, Marilyn Marvin, Bobby Powers, Glynda Mathewson, Mari Loftus, Jim Snyder, Diana Wade, Jake Warner, and Ed Sherman (of Nolo Press), just to name a few, the Independent Paralegal profession, (now LDA) would not exist.

After practicing law for 10 years, primarily in legal aid and as a public defender, Steve Elias started working at Nolo Press in Berkeley in 1980 where the modern paralegal movement to create divorce centers throughout California had already begun. In 1986, Steve was appointed to the Public Protection Committee formed by the California State Bar, to determine whether or not independent paralegals were a danger. Not in agreement with the committee's outcome, the State Bar formed a second committee and the recommendations from these committees later paved the way for the act creating legal document assistants.

In the late 1980s, three Kern County independent paralegals were accused of the unlawful practice of law and Steve participated in this battle, both in the courtroom and by pen, writing articles for the Nolo News of those who fought ferociously for their right to help the consumer with their bankruptcy papers.

In 1986, Steve's wife, Catherine Elias-Jermany, teamed up with original divorce center owner, Glynda Mathewson, to help form the California Association of Independent Paralegals (CAIP), now known as CALDA. Virginia Simons became CAIP president and lead CAIP into the CALDA the late 1990s. With the help of attorney, Richard Lubetsky, Virginia focused CAIP's attention on legislation that threatened to take away a lot of what CAIP had been fighting for. Organized marches on the State Capitol (in which Steve and Catherine participated) helped these efforts, resulting in Business and Professions code section 6400, which defines the Legal Document Assistant and Unlawful Detainer Assistant profession, conduct and prohibited acts.



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Steve passed away suddenly, in December, 2011. He assisted CALDA as an advisor, a teacher, a friend to many and an inspiration to keep our organization going. He carried the "fight" to the finish by offering to provide legal advice in bankruptcy matters, to CALDA members and their clients. For a small fee, Steve would dispense advice over the phone, provide information to aid the client, and fill the "gap" where LDA services do not reach. This service also provided guidance to the LDA about how to proceed with the matter at hand, staying within the confines of BP 6400.

In his honor, CALDA formed the "Elias Referral Network" and created a manual to explain this referral network. The manual also provides a list of attorneys who have thus far agreed to continue Steve's efforts, providing legal advice to those who are assisted by CALDA members. <http://blog.nolo.com/bankruptcy/2012/01/05/nolo-mourns-the-loss-of-steve-elias/>