

We all have people in our lives whom we have come to take for granted. While we should probably take stock of our blessings on a more regular basis, it is often those people we notice the least who are the most profoundly influential.

Our legal professional is quiet as a mouse. She never stirs the pot. She arrives at the office every morning like clockwork. She doesn't lollygag. She doesn't waste time chatting with her coworkers about last night's dinner choice or the upcoming election. She does not pass GO. She does not collect two hundred dollars. She simply dives in and quietly goes about her work. By the end of the day she has accomplished more than one would have thought possible, and she follows this routine day after day after day.

Our legal professional graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School in the early nineties and headed for Nebraska Wesleyan University where she earned not one, but two degrees, the latter of which was in the field of paralegal studies. She has now worked as a legal assistant in our firm for more than 15 years. She is a dedicated wife and mother and a master at balancing her work life with her family.

Shortly after she began work with our firm she developed the format for a concise, chronological summary of a plaintiff's medical records in a personal injury case. The format she developed is employed to this day by all the litigation paralegals in our office. In each case she follows a path we litigators know we can count on regardless of the case's complexity. She organizes documents in such a way that they can be easily accessed for maximum benefit. She analyzes plaintiffs' initial written discovery responses without being asked to do so, and goes to her litigators with suggestions on what subpoenas should be issued and what additional documentation should be sought. She offers keen insight into what depositions should be taken, and she makes all the arrangements to assure that those depositions may be taken in a timely manner. She has an iron grip on court schedules and reminds us gently but firmly about each deadline we face, always careful to save us from ourselves! All the while she knows precisely which reports are required by which clients. When she reminds us that we have a particular report due, she always presents us with a draft of the document so we don't have to start from scratch. Typically her analysis of the case is as complete as the litigator's would be and very little change is necessary.

Once the discovery process is complete, our legal professional begins the trial preparation process, always without being asked. She knows precisely what to do and how to do it. She takes it upon herself to prepare the pretrial conference memorandum or order, depending on the court in which the action is pending. She organizes a trial notebook which is the envy of most of our opponents in the courtroom. She secures juror questionnaires and condenses them into a courtroom friendly format. And virtually never do we have to ask her to do any of these things. She understands the litigation process so well that she completes all of her tasks before we litigators realize they need to be done, and she continually refines the process to make it more efficient. Throughout this process she is never without her gentle smile and unflappable demeanor, yet we seldom stop to marvel at how smoothly this ship sails.

She isn't flashy or flamboyant. She simply does her work more efficiently and effectively than nearly anyone. We have come to take her efforts for granted because she makes our lives as lawyers run like a Swiss watch, and we seldom notice. Sometimes one doesn't recognize what he or she has until it is lost. When we reflect on the impact our legal professional has on our daily lives and the benefit our clients derive from her efforts, we recognize that we never want to experience life without her!