

# Certification Matters

## Q&A with Norma Bazan

Board Certification: From Paralegal to Attorney

By TBLs Staff



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We recently sat down with Norma Bazan, who was sworn in at this year's Induction Ceremony for her Board Certification in Family Law. She has a unique story as she not only made the transition from paralegal to attorney, but she attained Board Certification in Family Law in both areas of her career. The following is her story and how Board Certification played a significant role.

### Q. Why were you interested in getting into law?

A. My career started in the 1980's when I was offered a job with the Tarrant County Family Court Services as a temporary receptionist. Fortunately, after the temporary position ended, I was offered a full time job as a typist. That was my first experience in the legal field and I truly enjoyed my time with Family Court Services. The agency dealt with child support and possession enforcements cases and it was so interesting that I decided to go to college at night to obtain my paralegal degree. I worked for Randy Catterton at Loe, Warren, et al for ten years during which time I continued to go to college at night to obtain my bachelor's degree in applied science, with a paralegal certificate.



I became very passionate about law and I enjoyed assisting clients with their cases in my capacity as a paralegal; however, I wanted to represent them in the courtroom as well. While I could assist the attorney in the courtroom, I found myself wanting to jump up and make objections! That was not possible without going to law school. At first I was not convinced that I could actually get into law school and succeed, but with the support of my family and friends, I took the plunge.

### Q. As a paralegal, why did you choose to become Board Certified?

A. I chose to become board certified because it shows that I have the expertise in a specific area of law which will assist them in their case. I believe it is important for clients to know that the person they have hired has in depth knowledge of the subject matter of their case. It is the difference between alleviating a client's concern rather than adding to the client's concern whether they have hired the right attorney!

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From left to right: Rachel Cagle, Luis Angel Bazan, Norma Bazan, Jorge Luis Bazan Sr., Jorge Luis Bazan Jr.

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## Q. Why did you then decide to become Board Certified an attorney?

A. As an attorney, you are assisting clients with legal matters that have an everlasting effect on their lives and just knowing a little does a disservice to the client. An attorney must be knowledgeable, competent, and passionate about each and every case they accept and becoming Board Certified in the specific area in which an attorney primarily practices is vital to providing competent representation. It also demonstrates that I have taken the time to educate myself in a specific area of law in order to be prepared in court.

## Q. Who were your mentors throughout the process?

A. I have had several mentors and each have provided great insight into the legal field. Randy Catterton was a mentor and always encouraged me to continue my education. Mark Rosenfield was a mentor and taught me that there is nothing wrong in zealously fighting for a client's rights and that you can fight with your opposing counsel in court and still be friendly outside the courtroom. Jeff Kaitcer was a mentor and taught me to think outside the box and to use my brain when it came to drafting pleadings rather than using the "form" book. Gary Nickelson was a mentor and taught me that patience is a virtue and that I should always take the high road when responding to combative or argumentative attorneys. He continues to mentor me and believes in my abilities by allowing me to make decisions on his cases when he is absent.

## Q. What advice would you give paralegals considering Board Certification?

A. It does not matter if you have been working in the legal field for a year or 10 years or if you are young or older — everyone needs to continue to educate themselves on a regular basis to keep up with the laws and find better ways to assist his or her attorney. A great paralegal is priceless to an attorney. Attaining Board Certification will only enhance a paralegal's skills and will give the paralegal a sense of accomplishment, not to mention marketability.

## Q. Do you have a favorite inspirational quote?

A. A quote from Joseph Addison: Justice Discards Party Kindred and is therefore always represented as Blind! Justice should always be blind because it does not matter what status, race, or gender a party is, when it comes to justice all are equal in the eyes of the court.

## Q. What are some hobbies you like to do with your own family?

A. I have a wonderful relationship with my husband, children, grandchildren, siblings, in-laws, and friends. There is not a weekend that goes by that we are not having dinner, attending parties, or planning vacations. It is important for an attorney to get away from the practice of law and spend time with family or friends and by doing so, can better serve and represent their clients.