

Making Strides | Women of MGC: Dorothy Huskey

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Meet Dorothy Huskey. Dorothy joined MGC in 2006 as a litigation paralegal in the firm's Greenville office.

Growing up, Dorothy's home was constantly in a state of chaos – her family was poor, and her mother was battling a drug addiction and mental illness. "My father was in total denial and insisted we maintain an outward appearance of normalcy," she says. They rarely invited over company, and as a result, Dorothy had a difficult time maintaining relationships. "I was extremely shy, almost backwardly so, and found it difficult to speak with anyone," she adds. At the age of 17, she began dating a boy with a similar dysfunctional home life, and became pregnant just before her senior year of high school. "Because my father still maintained the 'outward appearances' I had to get married and was unable to complete high school," Dorothy says.

To support her first child, Dorothy worked as a grocery store cashier, then as a sewing machine operator. Her second child was born just prior to her 21st birthday. "My turning point came when I turned 25 – we were living in a two-bedroom apartment, and my minimum wage income was only enough to pay for childcare and groceries," she says. Dorothy asked her husband to work one extra day per week in hopes that she could quit her job, stay home with their two children and find better employment for herself. He agreed. "I bought a typewriter at a yard sale for \$10, and got a typing book from the library – I worked it from cover-to-cover and taught myself to type," she says. "Before the year was up, I was pregnant with my third child. We reworked our budget so I could stay home a bit longer." Dorothy continued her "home study program," reading books on business and office management, and growing her clerical and writing skills. She began drafting resumes for friends entering, or re-entering, the job market, and believed she was ready to do the same for herself. "My only road-block was that I did not have a high school diploma," Dorothy adds. Overlooking that one detail, she landed her first office job as an administrative/accounting clerk for a large finance company. After a year, Dorothy decided to move on, and made the decision to get her high school diploma. "At the age of 28, 12 years after I should have graduated, I quietly reserved a spot at a GED testing site and completed my high school education," she adds.

"The diploma arrived in the mail in a plain brown envelope – there was no pomp and circumstance, no graduation party, no celebration. I could not celebrate it because everyone thought I had it," Dorothy says. At this point, she was working for a large environmental engineering consulting firm – surrounded by colleagues with PhD's and Master's degrees. At almost 30 years old, working full-time with three children, Dorothy decided to go to college. "My goal was to graduate with my first degree before my oldest daughter graduated high school," she adds. Today, Dorothy serves on the South Carolina Bar's committee for paralegal continuing education. "I have presented several continuing education presentations over the years as well, which is pretty good for someone so painfully shy as a child who could barely speak to anyone!" she adds. Dorothy joined MGC in 2006 as a litigation paralegal. In 2019, she took NALA's certification exam and earned her CP, becoming one of the first 25 paralegals to be certified under the South Carolina Bar. "I love my job and am proud of the work I do for the attorneys I work with," Dorothy adds.

Dorothy's job at the consulting firm quickly progressed – she began as a copier, then was a marketing assistant until they moved her into their legal department as a contracts assistant. At that point, a friend introduced her to the head of the paralegal department at Greenville Technical College, who convinced her to transfer into their program. Soon after, Dorothy began working at a large software corporation in their legal department as paralegal/contracts assistant. "I graduated in 2000 with an Associate's in Public Service/Paralegal with Honors. I was promoted to contracts administrator that same year," she adds.

"While still a college student, I got involved with the Greenville Council for Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy," Dorothy says. "I spoke several times about the importance of education for prevention, and more importantly educated teen parents to get back on track." After graduation, she joined NALA (a paralegal association), and the South Carolina Upstate Paralegal Association (SCUPA). Dorothy took on the task of chairing the annual paralegal education seminar, and reinstated SCUPA's Pro-Bono Committee. "My service through that committee remains one of my proudest accomplishments," she adds. "Through the committee, which I chaired for about 10 years, we provided volunteers and fundraising to A Child's Haven, Hands on Greenville, March of Dimes, Harvest Hope Food Bank and many other local charities." Dorothy also served as SCUPA's president for two terms, vice president of membership and was a NALA liaison. She was also awarded "Paralegal of the Year" twice. In 2014, Dorothy received the NALA Affiliates Award (pictured left), which is given for outstanding contribution and dedication to the advancement of the paralegal profession through volunteer service to NALA affiliated associations.

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Pictured left is Dorothy volunteering at a March of Dimes walk, where SCUPA sponsored and hosted a comfort station, and handed out water and candy to walkers. Picture right is Dorothy working on a project SCUPA did for Harvest Hope Food Bank, where they packaged about 2000 lbs. of black-eye peas for distribution in food boxes.