Where did the year go? I can’t believe the year is almost over, but it’s been an incredible year for BPOA. We started the year with our very successful 48th Anniversary Training Conference on February 18-19, which was attended by nearly 300 people, including our Interim Chief Probation Officer Calvin Remington, Deputy Chief Felicia Cotton and Reaver Bingham, Congresswoman Karen Bass, former Congresswoman and newly elected L.A. County Board of Supervisor Janice Hahn, newly elected L.A. County Board of Supervisor Kathryn Barger, California Treasurer John Chiang, L.A. County Board of Supervisor Don Knabe, L.A. County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, NAACP President Darrell Goode (Santa Monica/Venice Branch), and numerous other high-ranking probation officials, community and political leaders.

The great Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” This year we awarded six thousand dollars to college and college-bound high school students at our 5th Annual Student Scholarship Program. We will continue supporting and promoting our kids and their effort to utilize higher learning to make a difference in the world.

On December 9, 2016, we are having our Christmas Party to provide gifts and toys to the kids and celebrate the holiday season. This event will be held at the Alpha House located at 3712 West 54th street, Los Angeles, CA 90043 from 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. We hope you can attend.

I am glad to announce that we have increased our membership by nearly 30%. While many of these members are new deputies, we have seen a renewed commitment by our retired deputies. Last month, I met with a few of them to discuss areas of common interest, as their extensive experience would be of great benefit to our organization. Stay tuned.

More good news! I am pleased to announce that we are actively planning our Black History Month Celebration for 2017. Louise Dodson is leading the committee, which includes Clinton Rossi, Perry Amos, Shirley Alexander, Nila Neat, and myself. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please send an email to lacbpoa@gmail.com. Also, we are in the preliminary stages of our 50th Anniversary Training Conference, which will be exceptional. If you would like to serve on the planning committee, please let me know at ychery2013@gmail.com or lacbpoa@gmail.com.

Finally, in honor of President Barack Obama, our first African American President and his extraordinary service to this great nation, I leave you with one of his many inspiring quotes, “If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress.” God bless and have a wonderful holiday season!

Best Regards,

Yves Chery, J.D., President
The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) recognized Ms. Ivory Freeman with the Homer Garrott Award at its 16th Annual Achievers’ Award Banquet. According to Ms. Freeman, “this experience was phenomenal” as she was able to meet and network with other law enforcement professionals from other departments, including DEA, NCIS, FBI, US Marshal, U.S. Probation Officers.

DPO Freeman has over 26 years of experience in law enforcement with the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department and the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Ms. Freeman was recognized for her creation of the Bessie Morris Foundation in 2005, which was founded to honor her grandmother, Bessie Bernice Morris. It is dedicated to mentoring, educating, and building self-esteem in at-risk girls. The programs support low-income girls who exhibit academic excellence, community service, and career ambitions. The organization is dedicated to inspiring young women to realize their dreams by emphasizing the importance of academic performance, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-sufficiency. Through its Prom Dreams Program, the Bessie Morris Foundation provides financial assistance to low-income high school girl for attending their high school proms. This assistance is in the form of purchasing prom dresses, shoes, accessories, make-up, hairstyling, manicures, pedicures, prom tickets, and prom pictures. The Bessie Morris After-School Leadership Academy focuses on building self-esteem, college preparation, financial literacy, and wellness. This program runs for eight to ten weeks with one session per week.

Her hope is to empower young ladies to value themselves and teach them that they are truly destined for greatness in spite of their circumstances and surroundings. For the last four years, the program has been held at Johnnie Cochran Middle School in Los Angeles, California.

ABOUT US
Retirement Choices of California was founded in 1987 with commitment to community as our guiding principle. Our goal is to assist our clients in every aspect of their financial lives. We provide the most personal service available, and have thus earned a reputation for excellence in our industry. For each of our clients we strive to help create financial stability and security to provide financial independence.

OUR MISSION
Retirement Choices of California has an uncompromising commitment to the best interests of our clients. Through advising and managing clients’ financial issues, we strive to provide our clients every opportunity to fulfill their goals.

WHAT WE DO
We believe our teamwork approach adds a broader perspective to all we do and provides increased benefits to our clients.

Our team of financial professionals can address your concerns and answer your questions:
- Can I retire early?
- Are my investments working hard enough?
- How to save for college?
- Do I have enough life insurance?

OUR COMMITMENT
Our staff consists of experienced professionals with a "hands on" approach to financial guidance. Not only will you find our team members knowledgeable, but you will also discover that our staff truly cares about making your financial dreams a reality. Our firm is based on the principle that education and understanding of your current financial situation is vital to successfully make prudent decisions concerning your future financial condition.

If you have any questions about your current financial situation or wish to schedule an appointment, send us an email or give us a call at (213) 765-0899.
BPOA welcomes Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald

On November 21, 2016, Ms. Terri McDonald was sworn-in as Los Angeles County Chief Probation Officer, becoming the first woman to lead one of the largest probation departments in the nation. Chief McDonald has 28 years of public safety experience at both the State and local levels of government. She worked at the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department as the Assistant Sheriff over the Custody Division with responsibility for overseeing all Custody operations including leading the implementation of the recommendations from the Citizens Commission on Jail Violence. Chief McDonald spent 25 years with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, rising to the level of Undersecretary of Operations. Chief McDonald is a member of the American Correctional Association and the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents. Chief McDonald graduated with honors from the University of San Francisco with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Leadership in Law Enforcement.

Additionally, on November 9, 2016 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appointed Ms. Sheila Mitchell as second-in-command. Chief Deputy Probation Officer Sheila Mitchell will be in charge of running and reforming the juvenile side of the department. She has over 34 years of management experience with the last 17 years being in State and local government. Finally, Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald is scheduled to start on January 1, 2017 and Chief Deputy Probation Officer Mitchell will follow on January 14, 2017.

BPOA Welcomes Newly Elected L.A. County Board Of Supervisors
Kathryn Barger and Janice Hahn

For the first time in the history of Los Angeles County, the majority of the five-members Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors—who governs the County—are women. This remarkable milestone was because of the successful election of Kathryn Barger and Janice Hahn in the November 8, 2016 general election.

UPCOMING GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Meeting Location: Culver City Library
4975 Overland Ave, Culver City, CA 90230 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 p.m.
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, March 15, 2017
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, April 19, 2017
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Meeting Location: Sizzler Restaurant
10315 Lakewood Blvd., Downey, CA 90241 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 p.m.
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, January 18, 2017
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, February 15, 2017
- General Membership Meeting – Wednesday, May 17, 2017

*Location, date, and time maybe subject to change.
News From LACERA

By JJ Popowich, LACERA Assistant CEO

I hope everyone is doing well.

Can you believe it? Another year has flown by and will soon come to an end. If it hasn’t happened already, my guess is that you’ll soon be swept into the whirlwind of holiday activities. I know I will be. Around this time of year, I always like to take a moment to reflect on what’s happened over the last year in order to both appreciate our successes and take stock of our lessons learned.

This year has been a very productive year at LACERA. We rolled out the newly revamped website, My LACERA. It now has a responsive design, which means it can be accessed via your smartphone and tablet as well as from your personal computer. My LACERA continues to be a popular web feature, connecting members with their personal retirement account 24/7.

We also transitioned to an appointment based counseling system for our members visiting the Member Services Center. By encouraging members to sign up for an appointment we can efficiently serve our members in person. Scheduling an appointment helps LACERA staff and members plan their visits and reduce their wait time to meet with a Specialist. But don’t worry; we still support members who decide to walk in without an appointment. Member’s visiting without an appointment will be served on a first come first serve basis, but will may have to wait for a longer period of time.

Among the activities that took place in 2016, there’s one topic we continue to address that really stands out to me: Security. Throughout the United States, an increasing amount of attention has been focused on protecting people’s personal information and protecting them from fraud and financial abuse – especially for the elders of our population. At LACERA, we believe our members’ personal information and financial security peace of mind are of utmost importance. After all, our members worked hard to ensure that they were financially prepared for retirement. The last thing we want is to see a member become a victim of identity theft or fraud.

Unfortunately, elder financial abuse is a significant problem in the U.S. In fact, studies suggest financial abuse is the most common type of elder abuse. The good news is people are not alone in their efforts to keep their finances and personal information safe. Banks and credit unions are working with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to protect consumers from scams and exploitation. This includes staff training, fraud detection technologies, and age-friendly services.

LACERA is also dedicated to protecting people. It is very important to us and its part of our mission statement: “To Produce, Protect, and Provide the Promised Benefit”. Did you know the population considered most at risk of financial elder abuse are people 65 years of age or older? When you think about it, 65 isn’t elder anymore, it’s the new 40. But still I wondered how many members fall into this category so I inquired. As of August 2016, LACERA has:

- 41,506 retirees, age 65 or older, with an average of $3,037 monthly benefit
- 7,354 survivors, age 65 or older, with an average of $1,509 monthly benefit

That’s a lot of members and a lot of money, and we’re committed to ensuring the security of both. How? Well, we take many precautions, including member identify verification procedures when you call or visit LACERA, secured keycard access to restricted areas, privacy training for all staff, internal and external audits, state-of-the-art web security, and bio-login to computers. Believe it or not, that’s just the tip of the iceberg.  

{Continue on page 5}
One the latest examples of our dedication to your security is the formation of the new Benefit Protection Unit (BPU), a team of LACERA staff responsible for investigating and resolving instances in which a member’s identity and/or status has come into question. The BPU analyzes each case in collaboration with multiple LACERA divisions and determines how best to resolve them. Immediate response to signs of suspicious activity on our members’ accounts has always been a priority at LACERA; however, the BPU offers a great improvement to our internal processes. Now that we’ve adopted a centralized approach, we’re able to respond quickly and efficiently to flagged accounts.

In our December Spotlight newsletter, we share more information about how we protect members. The article published as part of our “Your Security, Our Concern” series discusses the steps we take here at LACERA to prevent email users from becoming prey to phishing schemes. Another important topic in this newsletter is your retiree healthcare benefit. We address what you should consider with regard to healthcare if you’re planning to move out of state. Be sure to take a look.

Well, that's it for this month. Until we chat again, I hope you enjoy every day of your retirement. You earned it! Wishing you a safe and happy retirement.
By Shirley Alexander, Chairperson Community Liaison

Recently, Peggy May was honored by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Los Angeles chapter, Who’s Who Community Awards and Scholarship Breakfast at the Doubletree by Hilton Torrance South Bay Hotel.

Engaging community service to improve the quality of life in her community is in Peggy’s DNA. Peggy graduated from California State University Los Angeles with a Bachelor’s of Arts Degree in English. She had a distinguished career of over 35 years with the Los Angeles County Probation Department. As a Probation Director, she oversaw various Juvenile and Adult Operations. While she retired in excellent standing several years ago, she continued her commitment and dedication to serving others. Over the past five years, Miss May has served as the elected President of the Madera’s Association, a nonprofit organization of 118 senior women that provide support to the Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Community Center. They coordinate social and educational activities for individual organizations and groups. Peggy also volunteers weekly at Kaiser West Los Angeles medical center as a Precinct worker, works as a proctor for the state bar of California, and is an active member of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ. She enjoys traveling with her family and beloved husband of 40 years, Al May, also worked for the Probation Department and retired as a Director. She is the proud mother of three children and seven grandchildren.

A non-profit organization, the group is dedicated to providing volunteer service in our community. Their focus is to develop leadership skills and advocate for equal rights and opportunities for women of color and their siblings in the areas of health, education, economic empowerment, and public policy. Special emphasis is placed upon activities that promote political empowerment and seek to combat obesity.

CONGRATULATIONS Peggy for being selected by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Los Angeles chapter, as who’s who in the community. Your recognition is well deserved for your outstanding leadership, dedication and commitment to serving others! We are so very proud of you!

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Advertise in BPOA’s Newsletter!

Please send email to lacbpoa@gmail.com for Rates and Information
By Marlene S. Cooper, Attorney

The State of California has laws that determine what happens to your worldly goods if you pass away without having made plans for their distribution. The important factor in determining who inherits the property is the legal relationship between the deceased person and his or her survivors. If the deceased person was married and leaves behind a surviving spouse, the surviving spouse will inherit all of the community property. If the deceased person had non-community property (“separate” property), that property will be divided between the surviving spouse and the deceased person’s children or other legal heirs.

In general, where there is no estate plan the following persons are entitled to an equal share in the estate of an unmarried, divorced, or widowed person in the following order: first, the children will divide the estate equally. If there are no children, the grandchildren will share the entire estate; if no grandchildren, then, great-grandchildren (if one is blessed to live that long!). If there are no children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren (“lineal descendants”), then the deceased person’s parents receive the entire estate. If the parents have already passed away, then the deceased person’s brothers and sisters (“siblings”) share the entire estate. If there are no surviving siblings, the children of the siblings (nieces and nephews) and their lineal descendants share the entire estate. For those deceased persons without children, parents, siblings, nieces or nephews, the law further defines the line of inheritance to the next of kin, which may be grandparents, great aunts and uncles, second cousins, etc.

A child of a deceased person gets the portion that would otherwise go to his or her deceased parent. Let’s say, for example, that a divorced woman has three children but one child, Jenny, dies before she does (“predeceases” her). If Jenny did not have any children, Jenny’s share would be split in half between her siblings. However, if Jenny left three children of her own, Jenny’s siblings will each receive their one-third share of the mother’s estate and Jenny’s three children will split Jenny’s one-third share.

Another factor which goes into a determination of who may inherit involves an inquiry into the parent-child relationship. Generally, a parent-child relationship exists between a person and his or her biological parents regardless of the marital status of the parents. Thus, once paternity is established for a child born out of wedlock, that child is entitled to inherit from his or her deceased parent and is given the same status as his or her half-siblings. This means, for example, that if your father had children “on the side”, they could be considered part of his family for inheritance purposes!

Each case will depend upon its own facts and the general rules stated above may not apply to a given situation. This is an area where an opinion from an attorney (or the court) may be necessary to make a final determination as to whether a person has inheritance rights. Why leave it to chance? Through proper estate planning, you will ensure that only those you want to receive your property will get it.

Marlene S. Cooper, a graduate of UCLA, has been an attorney for over 35 years. Her practice is focused entirely on estate planning, estate administration and probate. She can be reached by phone at (626) 791-7530 or toll free at (866) 702-7600. The information in this article is of a general nature and not intended as legal advice. Seek the advice of an attorney before acting or relying upon any information in this article.

What does it cost to join BPOA?
For less than a cup, you can be a member of this historic organization. Yes! For only $2.50 per pay period, through a monthly deduction from L.A. County to BPOA. Additionally, you can pay through PayPal annually ($60.00) on our website at www.lacbpoa.com, or, by mailing a check ($60.00) to BPOA at P.O. Box 8805, Los Angeles, CA 90008.
Important BPOA Notice

To ensure that correspondence from BPOA is delivered to you without delay, please update your contact information by sending an email to lacbpoa@gmail.com whenever there is a change in the method you wish to be contacted or go to www.lacbpoa.com and click on “PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS UPDATED” at the home page.

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BPOA Webmaster, Mitch Smith, MoonFlyte Studios

Black Probation Officers Association
P.O. Box 8805 * Los Angeles, CA 90008
www.lacbpoa.com * lacbpoa@gmail.com

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