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November 25, 2015

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

Long Beach Bar Association
Annual Awards Committee
c/o Erin Peterson
erin@longbeachbar.org

Re: LBBA Staff Member of the Year Nomination

Dear Committee Members:

I am pleased to nominate for your consideration as Staff Member of the Year my Senior Paralegal for Estate Planning/HR Manager/Office Manager/Accounting Manager/My Right and Left Arm: Nicole Napalan.

Nicole has been with me for more than 10 years. In that time, she has proven to be the most productive, efficient and skilled paralegal that any attorney could ever hope for and more—much more.

Nicole has always been a very bright, self-motivated and hard-working employee, but over the years she has also honed and refined her legal skills. Although she is not an attorney, she has the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of an experienced lawyer and her writing skills are beyond reproach. She is the most detail oriented person I have ever met and for that reason, she is our Senior Paralegal for estate planning and, in that capacity, she drafts, reviews and revises more than 2,000 legal documents per year, *every year*, including simple and complex trusts, wills, powers of attorney, advance health care directives, property agreements and other estate planning documents. On two separate occasions, I attempted to transfer Nicole's workload and estate planning responsibilities to associate *attorneys* (who are no longer employed with the firm), but neither of them were capable of handling the job with anywhere near the same level of skill and proficiency as Nicole. We have an extremely busy estate planning practice, so if this was the only role that Nicole played in the firm, it would be enough to fill up her days and entire work week. But her job does not end there.

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During Nicole's ten-year tenure with Velasco Law Group, she has played an integral part in our growth from a small two-attorney law firm to one with a legal and administrative staff of eighteen, including eight attorneys. This would not have been possible without Nicole's help and support. Not only was she instrumental in the rapid growth of the firm, her skills and proficiency in managing many of the day to day tasks, processes and operations of the firm are critical to sustaining that growth and maintaining the infrastructure. Nicole is our HR Manager— responsible for payroll, as well as procuring, managing and implementing employee benefits, including health insurance and retirement plans; she is our Accounting Manager— responsible for monthly client billing, accounts payable and receivable, record keeping and a myriad of other daily administrative tasks and responsibilities required to maintain and operate a busy and thriving law practice. While it is said that in any given business or company no one is "indispensable," I cannot imagine how our law firm would function the way that it does without Nicole—and I sincerely hope that I never have to find out.

In addition to everything she does for us, Nicole is an amazing mother to two wonderful young children, Maddie and Aiden, and the perfect wife, as I'm sure he would tell you, to her faithful and adoring husband, Joel.

For these reasons and many more, I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for LBBA's Staff Member of the Year Award. I hope you will agree and I thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Velasco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul D. Velasco, Esq.

P.S. If there are any errors or typos in this letter, it is only because I couldn't let Nicole proofread it!