

# Rockford woman named top paralegal

Lawyer who nominated her says she is 'dedicated to justice'

BY LINDSAY VANHULLE  
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

ROCKFORD — It was only fitting Natalie Andrus was at work when learning she had won a national honor as a paralegal.

Andrus, who has worked with attorney Elliot Gysen of Spring Lake's Gysen and Associates about nine years, describes herself as passionate about all things law. She is a paralegal who lives and breathes every case.

The Rockford woman was named the 2007 Paralegal of the Year by the American Association for Justice, and will receive the award Monday at the association's convention in Chicago.

She had no idea she was nominated — or that such an honor existed.

"I was in an airport in Phoenix,

picking up an expert witness for our trial, and an attorney told me," said Andrus, a 1983 Sparta High School graduate. "I started crying in the airport."

She was selected based on her professional work, her capacity as an adjunct professor at Davenport University and her commitment to outside service work, said Nathalie Etori, membership coordinator for the Washington-based, 50,000-member association.

"She is very great with clients," Etori said. "She keeps in touch with them even after the case is over. She's just very dedicated to the profession."

Andrus earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in legal studies from Eastern Michigan University. She has worked for several firms during a career spanning more than two decades.

She has formed Paralegal Specialists LLC, allowing her to independently offer her services to firms, including Gysen's.

She has been an adjunct professor in Davenport's paralegal studies department since 1994, mentoring stu-



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**Loves the law:** Natalie Andrus was named 2007 Paralegal of the Year by the American Association for Justice.

dents.

Gysen, whose practice specializes in medical malpractice suits involving catastrophic injuries, never nominated a paralegal before Andrus.

She assists him in the courtroom by organizing materials for trials and coordinating witnesses.

"Natalie is just dedicated to justice for the client and to the legal system," he said. "She does everything in her strength to fight for her clients and to present our case in the best possible way."

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