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Executive Director's Message

I Don't Know

Peter Salem

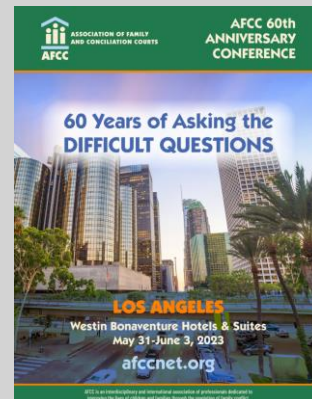
"The older I get, the less I know. It's wonderful – it makes the world so spacious."



The quote above is attributed to Swami Chetanananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. It seems particularly apropos because over the last three years, navigating the ins and outs of COVID, I learned there is an entire universe about which I know nothing. Indeed, my world is spacious. [Read more.](#)

60th Anniversary Conference

May 31-June 3, 2023
Los Angeles, California



Conference Sponsors



[AFCC 60th Anniversary Conference](#)

[60 Years of Asking the Difficult Questions](#)

May 31-June 3, 2023
Westin Bonaventure
Los Angeles, California

For AFCC's 60th Anniversary Conference, we are going back to the birthplace of AFCC, Los Angeles, California. Join as we celebrate 60 years of AFCC.

[Exhibitor, Sponsor, and Advertise](#)

If your business caters to the needs of family law professionals, please consider exhibiting with us in Los Angeles! AFCC already has several sponsors and exhibitors lined up for the conference, but we would like to welcome more! Confirming early lets you take advantage of lower prices, secure a better table location, and more.

Read the [exhibitor prospectus](#) for more details and contact [Abby Rebholz](#) to sign up.

[Reserve Your Room Today!](#)

Planning on joining us in Los Angeles? Book your room early at the Westin Bonaventure Los Angeles today. You can make your reservations [online](#) or over the phone by calling 800-937-8461 or 888-627-8520. Do not delay as AFCC room blocks frequently sell out.

[Scholarships](#)

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the AFCC Scholarship Fund, AFCC will offer several scholarships for the 60th Anniversary Conference. Each scholarship includes conference registration, one pre-conference institute, a certificate of attendance, and meal functions, including the Welcome Reception, Luncheon, and Annual Banquet. A limited number of scholarships will include travel stipends. The application deadline is March 8, 2023. [Apply now!](#)

[Hot Off the Press - Conference Brochure!](#)

The 60th Anniversary Conference [brochure](#) is now available! Read the brochure to see a more detailed breakdown of the conference including pre-conference institutes, workshops, presenters, schedule, CE information, and registration information. Read the [brochure!](#)



SOBERLINK



[AFCC Chapter Conferences](#)

[AFCC Arizona Annual Conference](#)
January 20-22, 2023
Sedona, AZ

[AFCC California Annual Conference](#)
February 10-12, 2023
Costa Mesa, CA

[AFCC Online Training Programs](#)

[Advanced Issues for Family Law and Dispute Resolution Professionals](#)
January 17-19, 2023

[The Fundamentals of Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations](#)
March 13-16, and
March 20-22, 2023

[Register Now!](#)

Making the Case for Needed Statutory Changes in the Federal Responsible Fatherhood Grant Program

Debra Pontisso, MPA

In general, responsible fatherhood programs are focused on making services available to nonresidential parents struggling with issues related, but not limited, to: (1) child support; (2) employment; and/or (3) child access, parenting time, and co-parenting. Resolution of these issues can lead to increased father involvement and improved child well-being outcomes. [Continue Reading](#).

AFCC Online Training Programs

Advanced Issues for Family Law and Dispute Resolution Professionals

January 17-19, 2023

This program addresses the challenges often associated with the most intractable family disputes, including intimate partner violence, parent-child contact problems (including parental alienation) and forgiveness interventions, child interviews, child abuse/neglect, and substance use/misuse. The program includes new content, and updates to familiar topics.

Presenters will examine how to address difficult challenges, including: the dynamics of intimate partner violence in parenting time disputes; the continuum for parent-child contact problems; effectively integrating child interviews and the voice of the child; and providing virtual services in a variety of contexts.

Training Team:

- Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP
- Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA
- John A. Moran, PhD
- Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD
- Nancy Ver Steegh, JD

[View the Program Brochure](#)

[Register Now](#)

The Fundamentals of Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations

March 13-16, and March 20-22, 2023

This program will incorporate a complete overview of the parenting plan evaluation process, including the definition and roles of the parenting plan evaluator, as well as, the specifics of the evaluation process, including interviewing, recordkeeping, use of technology, and best practices for report writing and testifying.

Participants will learn the difference between a forensic role and a clinical role, how to review court orders and determine what information should be obtained, strategies for interviewing adults and children, how to assess co-parenting issues, how to develop and test multiple hypotheses, and how to craft recommendations.

Training Team:

- Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP
- Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP
- April Harris-Britt, PhD
- Kathleen McNamara, PhD
- Sol R. Rappaport, PhD, ABPP

[View the program brochure!](#)

[Register Now](#)

Research Update

Early Findings Highlight Potential of Online Dispute Resolution for Family Cases

Jennifer Shack & Donna Shestowsky

Text-based online dispute resolution is an increasingly popular, but largely untested, option for family and other disputes. We recently had the pleasure of conducting [the first neutral evaluation](#) of any family law court online dispute resolution (ODR) program in the United States. The program was launched by the [20th Circuit Court Friend of the Court](#) (FOC) in August 2020. Caseworkers at the FOC help their clients try to resolve post-judgment matters related to child custody, parenting time and child support in lieu of having their matters resolved via court hearings. If resolution is not possible or the parties are not interested in resolving their matter outside of court, the caseworkers instruct parties on how to file motions, as needed. [Continue Reading.](#)

Award Nominations

AFCC will be acknowledging the accomplishments of leaders in family law by presenting awards at the AFCC 60th Anniversary Conference. We encourage you to recognize your colleagues by submitting a nomination. Nominations for the awards listed below will be accepted online through March 21, 2023.

[John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award](#) recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members. [Nominate a colleague!](#)

[Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award](#) recognizes outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce. [Submit your nomination now!](#)

[Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award](#) recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members. [Nominate a program!](#)

Webinar Corner

Access to Justice/Family Dispute Resolution Services

Jeannie Sato, JD & Loren P. Hildebrandt, JD

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

1:00pm – 2:00pm Eastern Time (US/Canada)

Registration will close on January 10, 2023 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.



The Alaska Court System started the Early Resolution Program (ERP) in 2009. Custody and divorce cases with self-represented litigants (SRL) are screened to determine if they have a disqualifying factor; if not, they are heard in ERP. In 2021, almost 80% of ERP cases settled. There are benefits even for cases that do not settle. In addition, the Alaska Court System offers other resources to parents who either do not attend or do not settle their case at ERP. This webinar will discuss the ERP screening process, factors that could lead to ruling out a case, how to identify positive outcomes from participating in dispute resolution even if the case does not completely settle, and the Alaska Court System's other resources for parents to either resolve their case or improve parenting skills.

Jeannie Sato, JD joined the Alaska Court system in 2018 as the Justice for All Grant Project Implementation Manager after 12 years in private practice as a family law litigator, collaborative law attorney, mediator, and parenting coordinator. Beginning January 1, 2020, Jeannie replaced Stacey Marz as the Alaska Court System's Director Access to Justice Services, which includes the Family Law Self-Help Center's Phone Line; Adult Guardianship Self-Help Phone Line; web-based self-help content for self-represented litigants; dispute resolution; the Early Resolution Program, which triages all new family law cases; language access; the Legal Navigator internet portal program; the state jury office; an eviction diversion program; and court forms.



Loren P. Hildebrandt, JD is a Staff Attorney and the Early Resolution Program Coordinator for the Alaska Court System. He manages the Early Resolution Program (ERP) statewide. He also teaches hearing and trial preparation classes to self-represented litigants and serves as part of the legal team for the Court System's Department of Access to Justice Services. Loren clerked for the Anchorage Superior Court from 2009-2010 after graduating from the University of Washington School of Law and earning an MA in English from the University of Kentucky. He worked as an associate in firms focusing on family law, criminal law, and civil litigation before joining the Alaska Court System in 2014.



Registration

Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15
Non-Members: \$50

Members: \$15
Non-members: \$20

[Register Now!](#)

AFCC DE&I Series

Child Abuse and Culture

Nolanda Robert, MS & Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM

Thursday, January 5, 2023

4:00pm-6:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

This DE&I webinar will focus on the cultural concerns, impact, and disparities in the child welfare system. The system has many flaws and one of the largest is the lack of attention to cultural issues impacting the families at the center of these cases. The lack of cultural awareness, biases and personal beliefs lead to separated families, which can cause further ACE's for children and trauma for the adults. Families struggling with addiction and poverty are thrown into further crisis, instead of being helped by a system that is meant to decrease crisis. We will examine some cases and incorporate some of the research on evidence-based practices.

Nolanda Robert, MS, CCFC is the Family Support Services Coordinator at the Cecil County Circuit Court and has served in this position since 2005. In her position as Coordinator, she provides services to families who are currently separating or divorcing and/or having child custody and visitation disputes. She also works with families who are dealing with domestic violence, and child protection services matters. Nolanda is a current Mediator and Parent Coordinator. Nolanda is also a Clinically Certified Forensic Counselor. Nolanda has trained teachers, educational support staff, case managers of community programs; and parents in working with children with mental health disorders, behavior problems, special needs children, and other various topics surrounding children and families. Nolanda is the current President of the Maryland Chapter of the AFCC, and on the AFCC Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity.



Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM is the Director of Clinical Programs and an Associate Professor at the UALR William H. Bowen School of Law. She oversees the mediation, litigation, tax and consumer protection clinics, and state-wide Special Education and Dependency/Neglect mediation projects at Bowen. She also teaches family law, mediation seminars, ADR, and domestic violence courses. She helped create the U.A.L.R. Graduate Certificate Program in Conflict Mediation. Professor Olson serves on the executive board of the AALS ADR Section and the Arkansas Conflict Resolution Association. She won the Bowen



School of Law Faculty Excellence Award for Public Service in 2004 and 2013. She received her JD from the University of Michigan and an LL.M. in Child Law at Loyola.

More Upcoming Webinars!

Screening for Intimate Partner Violence

Beth McCormack, JD

February 8, 2023

Coping Abilities Children Need (And How to Ensure They Get Them)

Lyn Greenberg, PhD, ABPP

March 7, 2023

Gender and Sex in Family Law: How to Work with a Gender Diverse Population (DE&I Series)

Rebecca Stahl, JD LLM

April 12, 2023

Group to Individual Inference in Scientific Testimony

Chancellor & Dean David Faigman; Professor Michael Saini

April 18, 2023

The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Young Children

Kate Wurmfeld, JD; Kiran Malpe, LCSW, BS

May 10, 2023

The Work Before the Work

Sol Rappaport, PhD, ABPP

June 22, 2023

Board of Directors Nominations

The AFCC Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors, in the event of a vacancy. Recommended individuals must be AFCC members and have an interest in and knowledge of AFCC and its work. Nominations must be received by January 31, 2023, to be considered by the committee prior to the election at the AFCC 60th Annual Conference. The term is three years, beginning July 1, 2023, and concluding June 30, 2026. If you or a member you know is interested, please send the first and last name, contact information, resume, and a letter of interest to the AFCC Nominating Committee via email to afcc@afccnet.org.

Donate to the AFCC Scholarship Fund

The AFCC Scholarship Committee provides financial support to help family law professionals from all corners of the world convene at AFCC conferences. These scholarships enable access to some of the best continuing education along with an amazing network of collegial professionals. With your help, the Scholarship Committee can extend opportunities to more professionals.

Wouldn't you want your next opposing counsel, custody evaluator, and/or judicial officer to have the knowledge and appreciation of the research, practice, and approach of the system that you do?

[Donate Today](#)

AFCC eNEWS

The *AFCC eNEWS* is the monthly e-newsletter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The *eNEWS* provides up-to-date information for professionals including practice tips, international news, and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The *AFCC eNEWS* is provided at no charge to you; anyone can subscribe. [Subscribe here](#).

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EDITOR:

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

[Patrick Sommer](#)