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## President's Message

Stacey Platt, JD - AFCC President

In June, 2023, we gathered together in Los Angeles, the birthplace of AFCC, for our 60th anniversary as a multi-disciplinary, multi-national organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and families. Our focus continues to be improving evaluation and family dispute resolution through high-quality research, training, and policy initiatives. Our membership continues to be awe inspiring: experts and new professionals looking deeply at the hardest questions we face – from the impact of conflict on co-parenting, to the pros and cons of child participation, to the ethical questions facing mental health professionals, to the challenges of complex cases. [Continue Reading.](#)



## AFCC-AAML Joint Conference

**Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation, and Settlement**

Capital Hilton  
Washington, DC  
September 28-30, 2023

## AFCC-AAML Joint Conference

Washington, DC  
September 28-30, 2023



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**AFCC Fall Virtual Conference**  
November 1-3 & 6-7, 2023

The **Association of Family and Conciliation Courts** and **American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers** are excited to be hosting their first completely in-person joint conference in four years! We have gathered several of the most renowned experts to lead a block of comprehensive institutes and a series of interactive sessions that delve into the advanced issues in child custody.

### Read the Conference Brochure

Plan ahead by checking out the conference brochure and tailor your conference schedule to your professional interests. In the brochure you will find the conference itinerary, session descriptions, conference presenters, and CE information. **Check it out now!**

### Pre-Conference Institutes

Looking for a more in-depth course? Check out one of our pre-conference institutes taking place the morning of September 28, 2023:

1. From Intake to Court
2. Profiles in Custody: Social Media and Family Law
3. Thinking about Stress, Trauma and Resilience in Children of Divorce: What Can You Do?
4. Advanced Ethical, Evidentiary, and Methodological Issues

### Plenary Session: Technology and Evidentiary Issues in Child Custody Cases

Family law professionals regularly confront issues regarding the validity and authenticity of information that is provided to them. But as technology continues to rapidly evolve, how can anyone be sure that the evidence provided is authentic and reliable? Join us at the plenary session as Nicholas Himonidis, Esq., Chris Mulchay, PhD, and Hon. Cheryl Joseph delve into the ever-evolving landscape of technology and its impact on evidentiary issues in child custody cases.

### Reserve your room today!

The Capital Hilton is offering a reduced special rate to conference attendees of \$259 per night for single or double occupancy through the AFCC-AAML room block. Make your reservations **online** or call 202-393-1000 and ask for the AFCC-AAML Conference room block. Reserve your room early!

### Become an Exhibitor

Sign up now to showcase your organization and connect with family law professionals! With an expected turnout of 350-400 attendees, this conference presents an excellent opportunity to promote your products and services to those who would benefit most from them. Read the **exhibitor prospectus** for more information and contact **Abby Rebholz** to sign up!

[Read the Brochure](#)

Virtual

## AFCC 61st Annual Conference Call for Proposals



## AFCC Chapter Conferences

**AFCC Minnesota Annual Conference**  
July 27, 2023  
Minneapolis, MN

**AFCC Florida 19th Annual Advanced Education Program**  
October 4-6, 2023  
Orlando, FL

**AFCC New Jersey Coercive Control**  
October 10, 2023  
Lincroft, NJ

**AFCC Illinois Annual Conference**  
October, 19, 2023  
Chicago, IL

**AFCC Ontario Annual Conference**  
October 19-20, 2023  
Toronto, ON

**AFCC Colorado Fall Conference**  
October 20-21, 2023  
Denver, CO

**AFCC Indiana Annual Conference**  
October 27, 2023  
McCordsville, IN

**AFCC Arizona 41st Annual Conference**  
January 19 - 21, 2024  
Sedona, AZ

**AFCC California Annual Conference**  
February 2-4, 2024  
San Francisco, CA

## Webinar Corner

### Parent Child Contact Problems Family Violence and Parental Alienation – Either/or, Neither/nor, Both/and, One in the Same?

*Matthew Sullivan, PhD*

**Tuesday, July 25, 2023**

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

**Registration will close on July 24th, 2023 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada .**

This webinar will provide mental health professionals and attorneys with practice tips before they ever meet a client. This webinar is designed for professionals that act as mediators, parent coordinators, GAL's, court-appointed therapists, consultants, and evaluators. The purpose of this webinar is to present and discuss information and documents that should be completed prior to ever meeting a client. This includes screening forms, intake forms, statements of understanding, and assent/consent forms. A review of AFCC Guidelines and how they impact the type of forms developed will be discussed.



**Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD**, is a highly experienced forensic and clinical practitioner in Family Courts with over 30 years of private practice in Palo Alto, California. He is an accomplished author, pioneer of the international Parenting Coordination role, and provides training to family justice professionals on addressing Parent-Child Contact problems in high conflict shared parenting arrangements. As the former President of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC), he has made significant contributions to the field. Dr. Sullivan is also a co-founder of Overcoming Barriers, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to innovative programs for high conflict shared custody cases.



#### **Registration**

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

#### **Certificate of Attendance**

Members: \$15

Non-members: \$20

[Register Now!](#)

## AFCC DE&I Webinar Series

### The Intersection of Family Court, Religion, and Tradition

*Leah R. Younger, PsyD, Darrin W. Gerson, PsyD*

**Wednesday, October 11, 2023**

4:00pm-6:00pm Eastern Time (US & Canada)

**Registration closes October 10, 2023, at 9am Eastern Time US**

**Registration is free, but you must register in order to receive the link to join the webinar.**

Family law professionals bring a unique set of biases and opinions to their work. Personal backgrounds and experiences inform how clients, their families, and their traditions are viewed - as well with the actual work professionals provide. In this webinar, the presenters will discuss the various religious and cultural issues that often present for family law professionals. They will also share the numerous experiences they have had when working with clients of various religious backgrounds, and with the intersection of religion and cultural traditions. Attendees will have the opportunity to increase their awareness of variations and nuances that have implications for parenting plans, agreements between parents, and court orders. The presenters will review how their interventions have been informed to meet the needs of their clients.

**Leah R. Younger, PsyD**, is a licensed psychologist in New York State. After working in elementary schools and child inpatient settings, Dr. Younger obtained postdoctoral training and has been practicing in the fields of child and forensic psychology since. In her current role as Clinical Director of Younger Psychology, Dr. Younger provides a wide range of child and divorce-related services. These include performing assessments and therapeutic interventions with diverse populations of children, adults, and families. Dr. Younger also provides trial consultation services, including testifying as an expert witness and conducting peer review. Dr. Younger performs these functions for families involved in Family and Supreme Courts of Nassau County, Richmond County, Kings County, Queens County, and New York County.

**Darrin W. Gerson, PsyD**, a clinician at Younger Psychology, Dr. Gerson is a New York State licensed psychologist with extensive experience working with children, adolescents, and adults in a host of settings including inpatient, residential, and outpatient facilities. He is currently the Chief of Service at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center. Dr. Gerson conducts psychological evaluations across Long Island and New York City for parties including DSS/ACS, OCFS, Family Court and Supreme Court, and has provided a range of other assessments, including focused diagnostic evaluations and in-depth evaluations of competency and risk assessment.

[Register Now!](#)

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## More Upcoming Webinars!

### **Culture and Bias in the Child Welfare System**

*Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM; Nolanda Y. Robert, MS, CFCC*  
September 14, 2023

### **What Works (and What Doesn't) for Kids and Adults in "Blended Families"**

*Patricia Papernow, EdD*  
October 18, 2023

[See All Upcoming Webinars!](#)

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## AFCC Fall 2023 Virtual Conference

**Addiction, Family Violence and Mental Illness:  
Assessing and Managing Challenges to Contemporary Co-parenting**  
November 1-3 and 6-7, 2023

In response to popular demand, AFCC is presenting the Fall 2023 Conference virtually! This conference features two pre-conference institutes, 20 workshops, an opening session, and a plenary session. All workshops and general sessions will be recorded and made available to all registrants live and following the conference! This means that if you are unable to attend a workshop due to a scheduling conflict, you can watch it later to gain the information you missed.

AFCC has finalized the Fall 2023 Virtual Conference itinerary and we expect to have the brochure published by the end of the month. For now, here are some of the conference highlights:

### **Pre-Conference Institutes:**

1. Parent-Child Contact Disruption in Multi-Problem families: What Do We know? What Can We Do?
2. Everything Lawyers Ever Wanted to Know About High Conflict Divorce but Are Afraid to Ask

### **Opening Session: Children, Mental Health, and Family Law**

Exposure to parental conflict can cause significant stress and even trauma for children. This can increase their risk for mental and physical health problems, and have a negative impact on all aspects of their development. Many parents do not fully understand or intend to cause harm to their children and others act with a genuine belief that they are protecting their children from the actions of the other parent. Regardless of parental mindset, traditional approaches to these problems aren't always effective or based on current scientific knowledge and may end up exacerbating the trauma-impact for children rather than using the court's authority to ensure that children and families receive appropriate services. The presenters will examine an age-old dilemma with a new lens, including the importance of interdisciplinary communication, more effective judicial processes, early interventions for families in transition, effective approaches to treatment, ideas for clear court orders, and structured problem-solving techniques.

### **Plenary Session: Trauma-Informed Lawyering**

This session will introduce participants to the principles of trauma-informed legal practice, with emphasis on specific skills that attorneys and others working with court-involved families can utilize in preparing for court and in court. The session will offer a judicial perspective on trauma-informed judicial practice and a psychologist's perspective on lawyers understanding the impact of trauma on children, assisting their parent clients in being trauma informed so that parenting meets children's needs, as well as how attorneys can help the court incorporate information about trauma in their decisions about children. The presenters will highlight opportunities for trauma-informed systemic reform which attorneys, judges and other professionals can implement.

### **Members Outside of North America Register for Free!**

In recognition of time zone limitations, all AFCC members who reside outside of North American may register for the conference at no charge and may attend the live session and also have access all conference recordings.

Conference brochure coming soon to AFCC's [website!](#)

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## **Online Training Programs**

AFCC online training programs will be returning this December. This Advanced Issues training lineup will feature a new two-part program on court involved therapy presented by Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD and Lyn R. Greenberg, PhD, ABPP. Stay tuned for more information.

### **The Fundamentals of Parenting Coordination**

December 4-7, 2023

Registration opens in August!

### **Advanced Issues for Family Law and Dispute Resolution Professionals**

January 16-18, 2024

### **The Fundamentals of Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations**

March 11-14, 2024 and March 18-20, 2024

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## **AFCC 61st Annual Conference - Call for Proposals**

AFCC is now accepting 90-minute workshop proposals for our upcoming 61st Annual Conference in Boston.

### **AFCC 61st Annual Conference**

June 5th-8th, 2024

Boston, Massachusetts

**Proposals may draw on one the topics below or propose a completely different topic.**

#### **Conference Topics:**

- Trans Youth in Separating Families
- Individualized Parenting Plans for Multiple Siblings
- Transgender Parenthood
- Transnational Families
- Assisted Reproduction Technologies
- LGBTQ+ Families
- New Ideas for Parent Education Programs
- Innovations in Family Court Services
- Parent-child Contact Problems
- Digital Family Law
- Relocation

- Intimate Partner Violence
- International Family Law
- Stepfamily Transitions
- Parenting Coordination
- Family Law and Mental Health
- Empirical Methods in Family Law Research
- Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse
- Family Dispute Resolution Innovations

All proposals are due by 11:00pm Eastern Daylight Time (USA), October 2, 2023. Please see the [Call for Proposals](#) for more information and use the [online form](#) to submit your application.

**ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS**  
**AFCC**  
**AFCC 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Coping with Transition:**  
**Individual, Family, and Beyond**  
**BOSTON**  
**Massachusetts**  
**Sheraton Boston Hotel • JUNE 5-8, 2024**

The work of family law, mental health, and dispute resolution professionals is endlessly impacted by transition on an individual, family, and community level. These include the transition from an intact family to one that lives in two homes; children's transition between developmental stages, transitioning gender, transitioning to new statuses, processes and professional roles; transitioning in or out of a career; moving, which requires a transition between communities and parenting time plans; and transitioning to new relationships, marriages, and new family forms. Join AFCC to explore the role of transition in and out of our work.

All proposals are due by 11:00pm Eastern Daylight Time (USA), October 2, 2023. Please use the online form on the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference page on the AFCC website.

Proposals may draw on one of the themes above, a topic below, or propose a completely different topic. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Trans Youth in Separating Families
- Individualized Parenting Plans for Multiple Siblings
- Transgender Parenthood
- Transnational Families
- Assisted Reproduction Technologies
- LGBTQ+ Families
- New Ideas for Parent Education Programs
- Innovations in Family Court Services
- Parent-Child Contact Problems
- Digital Family Law
- Relocation
- Intimate Partner Violence
- International Family Law
- Stepfamily Transitions
- Parenting Coordination
- Family Law and Mental Health
- Empirical Methods in Family Law Research
- Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse
- Family Dispute Resolution Innovations

AFCC is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and encourages members to propose discussion of diversity and/or culture as it relates to the proposed program. Diverse family structures are encouraged to provide their insights on experiences. AFCC encourages and/or provides a safe space for all members.

## AFCC Member News

**Darlene Taylor**, AFCC member from California has published a new book **"It's Not About Us."** This book is part memoir and part survival guide as she shares her unexpected journey of moving across the country at her ex-husband's request after a rocky divorce. With humor and honesty, she navigates the challenges of co-parenting, offering valuable nuggets of wisdom along the way.



## In Memoriam

**Kevin Scudder**, AFCC member from Seattle passed away recently due to unexpected surgical complications. Kevin was involved in AFCC, as well as involved in the **International Academy of Collaborative Professionals (IACP)** conducting workshops, providing leadership, and serving on the IACP's Board of Directors. Beyond his professional achievements, Kevin's infectious humor and genuine care for others brightened every room he entered. He embraced the mantra of "Peacemaking. Let It Begin With Me," inspiring us to not only promote peace and unity, but in order to do so we must be the change we would like to see.



## Online Access to the Family Court Review

Did you know as an AFCC member, you have access to the **Family Court Review** online archives? Visit the member center of our [website](#) to read any volumes you may have missed. These archives date all the way back to the inaugural issue in 1963.

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## 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](#).

*AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.*

### EDITOR:

[Ann Ordway, JD, PhD](#)

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

[Patrick Sommer](#)

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Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) | 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719

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July 2023  
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## President's Message: *AFCC at Sixty*

*Stacey Platt, JD*



In June 2023, we gathered together in Los Angeles, the birthplace of AFCC, for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a multi-disciplinary, multi-national organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and families. Our focus continues to be improving evaluation and family dispute resolution through high-quality research, training, and policy initiatives. Our membership continues to be awe inspiring: experts and new professionals looking deeply at the hardest questions we face – from the impact of conflict on co-parenting, to the pros and cons of child participation, to the ethical questions facing mental health professionals, to the challenges of complex cases.

As a clinical law professor, I got involved in AFCC almost twenty years ago, when AFCC took the lead in re-examining how family law should be taught. AFCC's plenaries and workshops transformed my approach to representing children in high-conflict cases, infusing my work as a child advocate with a more conscious approach to procedure and a deeper understanding of substance. I passed these lessons on to my students and together we applied them in our cases. I see my former students frequently in zoom court rooms. Many of them are now leaders in family law, in AFCC Illinois and bar association service, child advocacy training, and clinical teaching. I am proud of them and I am grateful to AFCC for giving me knowledge to share and demonstrating the training tools I use in class.

AFCC's greatest strength and contribution in our field is its ability to identify the most difficult issues and bring together experts of differing perspectives to dive into them, working together to understand one another's views and develop solutions. In this way, AFCC has examined infants and overnights, the use of research in family dispute resolution, family evaluation in cases involving domestic violence, and more. And we will not stop. At our keynote address in Los Angeles, we learned about the work of Braver Angels, a nonprofit dedicated to depolarization – also known as peace building --

in a time of intense political polarization. Building on their work and adding it to AFCC's direct approach to polarizing issues, this coming year we will begin an intensive exploration of parent-child contact problems, calling on experts with differing views to engage in an open examination of the issues, with the goal of building understanding and developing safe strategies for improving parent-child contact. We expect to share the ongoing work of this initiative next year at our 61st Annual Conference in Boston, June 5-8, 2024. The theme of the conference will be Coping with Transition: Individual, Family, and Beyond.

This year, we also search for a new executive director, as Peter Salem plans to retire next June. We hope you will be in Boston to celebrate Peter, welcome our new executive director, and enjoy the impressive quality of work we have counted on for decades from the AFCC staff, leadership, and presenters. In the meantime, join us for the AFCC-AAML Conference on Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation, and Settlement, September 28-30, 2023, in Washington, D.C., and the AFCC Fall Virtual Conference on Addiction, Family Violence, and Mental Illness: Assessing and Managing Challenges to Contemporary Co-Parenting, November 1-3 and 6-7, 2023.

Finally (and speaking of transitions), I want to express my gratitude to Judge Linda Fidnick, who served as AFCC President for the last twelve months. Linda has graced AFCC with her thoughtful leadership and generous spirit. I will strive this year to follow her example in finding the positive in every situation. We wish Linda well in her retirement from the bench and we are delighted to have her continue this year on the board.