



**ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY  
AND CONCILIATION COURTS**

Improving the lives of children and families  
through the resolution of family conflict



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## President's Message

*Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman*

It's good to be the Queen. I mean AFCC President. And it's not just because of the crown. I am about halfway through my term and I have had such a wonderful time getting to meet and know AFCC members from all over,

## AFCC 56th Annual Conference



*The Future of Family Justice:  
International Innovations*  
May 29-June 1, 2019  
Westin Harbour Castle Hotel  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

finding out the issues that impact them in their communities, and serving as conduit to connect people with others who have resources to help them solve problems.

[Read More](#)

## ***Ask the Experts*** **Ten Tips for Obtaining Children's Input on Parenting Plans Through Mediation**

*Arnie Swartz, LCSW*

It is important to hear a child's voice when crafting a parenting plan, whatever the dispute resolution method being employed. Mediation did not traditionally involve getting the child's input, but has evolved so that many mediators want to hear from the children. There are some pitfalls and here Arnie Swartz, LCSW, discusses tips for how to obtain children's input without stepping in them.

[Read More](#)

## **AFCC 56th Annual Conference**

*The Future of Family Justice: International Innovations*  
May 29-June 1, 2019, Westin Harbour Castle  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The AFCC 56th Annual Conference [program brochure](#) is available online and [registration is open!](#) To take advantage of the early bird savings, **register by March 4, 2019.**

### **Apply for a scholarship**

AFCC is offering 40 conference scholarships, in addition to a limited number of \$500 and \$1,000 travel stipends for some applicants with high travel costs, international applicants, and those who demonstrate a financial need. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is **March 1, 2019.** Recipients will be notified mid-to-late March. The scholarship application is available now on the [AFCC website](#).

### **Hotel Reservations**

Make your reservations today! The Westin Harbour Castle Hotel is offering a special rate to AFCC attendees

## **AFCC Chapter Conferences**

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### [Arizona Chapter Annual Conference](#)

January 25-27, 2019  
Sedona, Arizona

### [California Chapter Annual Conference](#)

February 22-24, 2019  
Westin South Coast Plaza  
Costa Mesa, California

### [Alberta Chapter Annual Conference](#)

March 14, 2019  
Hilton Garden Inn - Calgary  
Downtown  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

### [Washington Chapter Annual Conference](#)

March 23, 2019  
Washington Athletic Club  
Seattle, Washington

### [Missouri Chapter Annual Conference](#)

March 28-29, 2019  
St. Louis Zoo  
St. Louis, Missouri

### [Texas Chapter Annual Conference](#)

March 29-30, 2019  
Hyatt Place  
The Woodlands, Texas

### [Colorado Chapter Annual Conference](#)

April 26, 2019  
Denver, Colorado

### [Australia Chapter Annual Conference](#)

August 15-17, 2019  
International Convention  
Centre ICC Sydney  
Sydney, Australia

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## **AFCC Resource of the Month**

of \$239/\$259 CAD single/double (approximately \$179/194 USD). **Rooms frequently sell out before the room block is released, we encourage you to make your reservation early!** Make your reservation by calling 1-888-627-8559 and request the AFCC special rate or [reserve online](#).

### Exhibit and Advertising Opportunities Available

Exhibiting and advertising at the Annual Conference are great ways to share your products and services with an interdisciplinary community of dedicated family law professionals. Exhibit space is limited and beginning to fill up—ensure your space by committing today. For more information, [click here](#) or contact [Corinne Bennett](#).

### Donate to the Silent Auction

The annual AFCC Silent Auction is a longstanding AFCC tradition. All proceeds support AFCC special projects and initiatives. Donate an item and attend the auction to bid! You do not need to attend the conference to donate. Past auction items include tropical getaways, one-of-a-kind jewelry, sports memorabilia, the latest gadgets and electronics, books, and more. [Donate an item](#).

Thank you to our **Diamond and Platinum Sponsors**. To see a complete list of sponsors, [click here](#).

Modern families, modern family justice: supporting family relationships in fast changing socio-political economic climates



See more AFCC resources on the [Resources page](#) of the AFCC website



## March Training Programs

Register now for AFCC's March training programs, in collaboration with Loyola University Chicago School of Law Civitas ChildLaw Center. Each program is eligible for up to 12 hours of continuing education.

### Advanced Training in Personality Disorders in Legal Disputes: Understanding, Managing, Treating, and Setting Limits

William A. Eddy, LCSW, Esq.

March 4-5, 2019

### **Parenting Coordination: Fundamentals, Concepts, and Interventions in Parenting Coordination**

Debra K. Carter, PhD

March 6-7, 2019

[More Information and Registration](#)

## **AFCC Annual Appeal and Scholarship Fund**

Please consider helping your colleagues attend AFCC conferences by making a donation to the AFCC Scholarship Fund. AFCC is offering 40 scholarships for the 56th Annual Conference, May 29-June 1, 2019, in Toronto. AFCC scholarship recipients increase our diversity by bringing professionals from different backgrounds, representing the many disciplines encompassed by who we are as an organization. **Will you contribute to allow a hard-working professional attend an AFCC conference? Thank you to those who have already donated!**

[Donate Today](#)

## **Custody Evaluator Domestic Violence Institute**

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in partnership with AFCC and the Battered Women's Justice Project, has created a new training curriculum for custody evaluations working with cases involving domestic violence. An initial pilot training was held in December 2017 and a second pilot will take place in Reno, Nevada, February 26-27, 2019 at the Whitney Peak Hotel, in Reno, Nevada. Evaluators will learn from a team of judicial officers, custody evaluators, and civil-legal advocates experienced in handling these cases and developing creative solutions to the challenges they present for evaluators. There is no registration fee for this training.

[More Information and Registration](#)

## **Where in the World is AFCC?**

*#AFCCHats #whereintheworldisAFCC?*



AFCC Executive Director, Peter Salem at opening night, Camp Randall, Wisconsin vs Western Kentucky.



Carolyn Leach with the CN Tower in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

#AFCCHats are everywhere! Follow along on [Facebook](#) to see the submissions. Want to join in? Show your AFCC pride by taking a picture with your AFCC hat in your hometown, while you're out on vacation, or at work. Email the photo with the location to [Corinne Bennett](#) and we will feature it on the [AFCC Facebook page](#). To sweeten the deal, an award for the best picture will be presented at the annual conference in Toronto!

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## AFCC Webinar Corner

Parenting Coordination Guideline Revisions  
Debra K. Carter, PhD  
February 21, 2019, 1:00-2:00pm Eastern time  
USA

[Registration is now open](#)

AFCC members may access the recording for free, along with all other previous webinars through the [Member Center](#) of the AFCC website. Not a member? Click here to [join today!](#)

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## AFCC in the news

Thanks to Resolution Systems Institute (RSI) for featuring AFCC as their favorite resource. [See the article here](#). Have you been missing out on some of the free resources on the AFCC website? [Check some of them out here](#).

One of AFCC's favorite resources is RSI. [Check out this article](#) by Jennifer Shack on the child protection mediation program in Washington, DC. Don't miss hearing from Jennifer at the AFCC 56th Annual Conference in Toronto, May 29-June 1, 2019.

## Board of Directors Nominations

The AFCC Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors. 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, 2019, in order to be considered by the committee prior to the election at the AFCC 56th Annual Conference in Toronto. The term is three years, beginning July 1, 2019, and concluding June 30, 2022. If you or a member you know is interested, please send the first and last name, contact information, resume, and a letter of intent to the AFCC Nominating Committee via email to [afcc@afccnet.org](mailto:afcc@afccnet.org).

## Chapter News



[Meet Kelly Lonnberg](#), President of the Indiana Chapter

## Nominate a Colleague for an AFCC Award

AFCC awards acknowledge many important contributions made by individuals and organizations to enhance the lives of children and families involved in family courts. Your nominations help recognize these accomplishments.

Nominations for the following awards, to be presented at the AFCC Annual Conference in Toronto, will be accepted online through March 11, 2019:

- John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members;
- Stanley Cohen Research Award, sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute, recognizes outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce; and

- Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members.

[Submit a nomination online, see past recipients, learn more about the awards and criteria.](#)

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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, case law and research updates, international news and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The AFCC eNEWS is free and you do not need to be a member of AFCC to subscribe. [Subscribe here](#). AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.

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### **President's Message**

*Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman  
Los Angeles, California*

It's good to be the Queen. I mean AFCC President. And it's not just because of the crown.

I am about halfway through my term and I have had such a wonderful time getting to meet and know AFCC members from all over, finding out the issues that impact them in their communities, and serving as conduit to connect people with others who have resources to help them solve problems.

In October, I had the good fortune to attend an awards dinner and education program hosted by AFCC-Ontario in Toronto. The reception and dinner were wonderful, and the award recipients were a veritable Family Law Hall of Fame. The education program the next day was engaging and interactive. Justice Gerri Wong, past-president of the Ontario Chapter, knowing my love of all things Leonard Cohen, surprised me with a book of his poetry while I was there.

November was a whirlwind month. I had a little birthday (okay, a big birthday) at the end of October, so I made my husband schlep with me on all my travels, beginning with a weekend in New York (completely AFCC unrelated except perhaps reviewing the Board of Directors material on the flight over).

The next weekend was spent at the AFCC Child Custody Symposium in Denver. It was a sell-out, a first ever for an AFCC Fall conference. The weather was chilly and crisp, but the camaraderie was warm. There were great programs, lots of buzz and, as usual, child custody related conversations in the hospitality suite and down in the common areas long into the night. I had a chance to pinch hit for AFCC Immediate Past President Annette Burns, who was under the weather, on a plenary panel dealing with guidelines and rules. Professor Stacey Platt, AFCC Treasurer, moderated the lively discussion. A second plenary was conducted as a Town Hall with wonderful input from audience members from all over.

The next weekend was spent in Washington, D.C., first at the Rehnquist Award Dinner at the US Supreme Court sponsored by the National Center for State Courts (yes, we saw Justice Roberts, no, we did not meet RBG but it was raining, and those steps are very slippery so I completely understand the falling down thing). Judge Libby Hines of Michigan was honored for judicial excellence. I attended with my husband Richard, AFCC Executive Director Peter Salem, and Stacey Platt. We met many representatives of other organizations. It turns out Peter knows everybody.

The next day was an all-day affair at which Stacey Platt and I represented AFCC on the Joint Editorial Board for Family Law of the Uniform Law Commission. The JEB-UFL includes members of the Uniform Laws Commission, American Bar Association Section of Family Law, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, together with liaisons from a number of other entities. The Board is responsible for monitoring all Uniform and Model Acts that are family-law related.

In December I didn't fly anywhere. United Airlines called to make sure I was all right.

In late January I will have the chance to attend the AFCC-AZ annual conference in Sedona, themed, "Embracing a Changing Culture: Best Practices for Arizona Families." The Arizona Chapter executive committee recently got into the competitive spirit after hearing of the AFCC Illinois Chapter's \$2,000 donation to the AFCC Scholarship Fund and donated \$2,500 to this year's efforts. Now that's the spirit!

Members Liana Shelby, from Massachusetts, and Rebecca Stahl, from California, are making sure that early to mid-career family law professionals are getting what they need from AFCC via the E2M Committee. In addition to the Facebook group, where Frank Davis can be counted on to post interesting and relevant articles for E2M's, the committee has hosted both formal and informal gatherings at the Fall and Spring meetings. If you are an early to mid-career practitioner who finds herself or himself juggling career development, practice, family, and other responsibilities and has to figure out how best to prioritize while staying connected, these are your peeps.

Spring looks like it will be another wonderful series of adventures. I'll be visiting chapters in Missouri, Ohio, and working with some other like-minded organizations in the UK to develop our European membership through the International Committee.

I am a joiner. I liked being active in bar associations as an attorney and continue my involvement in judicial organizations as a judge. When people ask me about AFCC and why I have participated in it for 26 years, I tell them that AFCC is the one organization that pulls it all together for me: judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, working together on a micro-level, family by family, and a macro-level, guidelines for professional practice, systemic changes to the family law system, and administration of justice. But, honestly, at the end of the day, it's about the relationships. People who are fun and funny, insightful and compassionate. As my mother said when attending an AFCC function a few years ago, "Dianna, your friends are so smart!" They really are, Mom. And they're the best.



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## Ten Tips for Obtaining Children's Input on Parenting Plans Through Mediation

*Arnie L. Swartz, LCSW*

1. Make sure that you have both parents' buy-in to the process. Don't proceed if either parent is not fully committed.
2. Prior to interviewing the children, clarify the parent's thoughts about how much weight to give to the children's feedback. The answer can be anywhere between it being one of many factors to being the determining factor.
3. Be clear with the clients and, most importantly with yourself, that your role is that of a reporter and translator, not an evaluator.
4. Be sure the children are mature enough to provide meaningful information. It is unlikely that children under the age of ten have that maturity.
5. It is important that the children understand that they are not being asked to make the actual decision or to choose between parents. Rather, they are being given an opportunity to express their views and wishes, which will be taken into account by their parents, who are responsible to make the final parenting time decisions.
6. Clarify the rules for confidentiality at least three times. Once with the parents alone, once with the children alone and once with the parents and children together. Most importantly, the children need to be reassured that the only information that will be given to their parents is information they agreed can be shared with them. The only exception is if they relay information that they or someone else is in danger.
7. When meeting with the children alone, ease into the hard questions. Start by asking about them, school, activities, etc. Also ask about the impact of their parent's divorce on them. After they are "warmed up" they can be asked for their ideas about a parenting time schedule.

8. Allow the children to choose from three options for providing feedback to their parents. The first option is to give the parents their own summary. The second option is for the mediator to give the parents a summary approved by the children while they are present. The third option is to give the summary to the parents outside of the children's presence. Not surprisingly, most children choose the third option.
9. Wrap up with the children and parents together. During that time, obtain a commitment from the parents not to question the children about what they said. They can discuss these matters only if the children initiate the conversation.
10. Remember, the overall goal is to provide the children with a safe environment for expressing their views about a parenting plan, especially the parenting time schedule.

*Arnold L. Swartz, LCSW, is a well-known mediator, consultant and mediation instructor. He received a Master of Science in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University's School of Applied Social Sciences in 1969. Arnie has been providing mediation since 1983. He is an Advanced Practitioner Member of the Association for Conflict Resolution, where he served on the Board of Directors for four years. He is also a member and past president of the Colorado Council of Mediators and was the first recipient of its Mediator of the Year Award, which was given to him in May, 1993. Arnie has trained mediators in the United States and Canada and has given numerous presentations at local, state and national conferences.*



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### **Meet Kelly Lonnerberg, President of the Indiana Chapter**

A member at Stoll Keenon Ogden's (SKO) Evansville office, Kelly serves as co-chair of the firm's family law practice. She joined SKO in 2017 as part of the firm's merger with Bamberger, Foreman, Oswald & Hahn, and has extensive legal experience. She is a Certified Family Law Specialist, as certified by the Indiana Family Law Certification Board, and is a registered Family Law Mediator. She specializes in cases involving families in transition with business interests and other high-value assets. She also serves as a Parenting Coordinator, and is trained in Collaborative Law. Kelly also assists clients through four other practice groups at the firm, including Business Litigation, Arbitration & Mediation, Trusts & Estates, and Tort, Trial & Insurance.