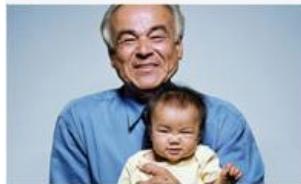


AFCC eNEWS



ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

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



February 2021
VOL. 16 No. 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- 58th Annual Conference
- Necessity as the Driver of Short-Term and Longer-Term Innovation: Views from Inside the Courthouse
- AFCC DE&I Task Force Launches Webinar Series and Discussion Groups
- March 2021 Training Program
- Award Nominations
- Fall Conference: Call for Proposals
- Webinar Corner

Register Early for the AFCC 58th Annual Conference for the Best Rate!

When a Child Rejects a Parent: Are We Part of the Problem or the Solution?

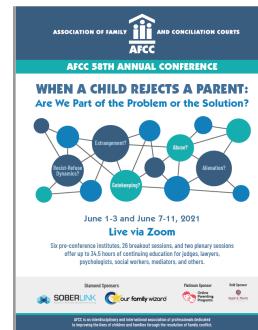
June 1-3 and June 7-11, 2021
Live via Zoom

The opening plenary session of AFCC's 58th Annual Conference will feature Grande Lum, who served as Director of the US Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS) under then-President Barack Obama. Last year, Mr. Lum published *America's Peacemakers: The Community Relations Service and Civil Rights*, which examines 50 years of civil rights conflicts from inside the agency and explains the momentous impact of the agency. This work with the CRS has been on center stage recently, with the Black Lives Matter movement and other issues reverberating throughout the United States and the world.

These types of disputes have much in common with the family disputes AFCC members encounter on a daily basis, which Mr. Lum will explore in his conversation with AFCC Immediate Past President, Matthew Sullivan. Join us for the opening plenary, "The Nexus of Family Justice Disputes and Seemingly Intractable Community Conflict."

AFCC 58th Annual Conference

June 1-3, 2021 and
June 7-11, 2021



Thank you to our
annual conference
sponsors!

Diamond Sponsors



Platinum Sponsor

Register now -- **early bird rates, available to AFCC members, end on March 15th.** For the best price on registration to the conference (June 7-11, 2021) and the pre-conference institutes (June 1-3, 2021), reserve your spot early.



[Register now!](#)

Bonus On-Demand Workshops!

Dozens of workshops will be recorded and made available to registrants of the 58th Annual Conference! [Read the complete list](#) and set aside time before or after the conference to watch these outstanding presentations.

Conference Scholarships Are Available!

Thanks to the [generosity of donors](#) to the AFCC Scholarship Fund, AFCC will offer numerous scholarships to the 58th Annual Conference. Each scholarship includes conference registration, up to three pre-conference institutes, and a certificate of attendance! Applications are due March 31, 2021. [Apply now!](#)

Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities Available!

AFCC offers organizations the opportunity to reach attendees of the 58th Annual Conference. Sign up to exhibit or sponsor the conference to promote your products and service! [Learn more](#) and contact AFCC Communications Coordinator [Gina Wentling](#) with any questions.

Necessity as the Driver of Short-Term and Longer-Term Innovation: Views from Inside the Courthouse

Tami Moscoe, LLB

It should come as no surprise to AFCC members that pre-COVID justice systems across the world were ripe for improvement, having seen years of gradual improvements but often without the necessary resources to bring the system into the 21st century.

When COVID struck, courts were forced to create processes that would allow the justice system to continue to operate almost immediately. [Read more.](#)

AFCC DE&I Task Force Launches Webinars and Discussion Groups

AFCC's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DE&I) Task Force is launching a series of free webinars and discussion groups to examine the intersection of culture and family law.

Save the dates below and plan to attend! Though the webinars are free, you must register to receive a certificate of attendance (also free). Registration for the first webinar, scheduled for March 11, 2021, is now open!

The Fundamentals of Conducting Child Custody Evaluations

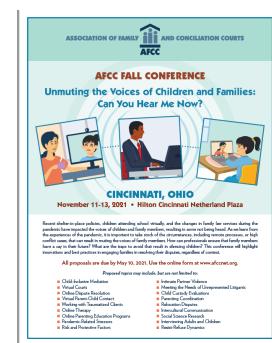
March 16-18, 2021 and March 22-24, 2021



AFCC Fall Conference

November 11-13, 2021
Cincinnati, Ohio

Submit your proposal by May 10, 2021.



AFCC Chapter Conferences & Webinar Series

Florida Chapter Winter 2021 Webinar Series

Runs through March 25, 2021

Does Diversity Matter?

Gitu Bhatia, PsyD; Hon. Gene Cheek; Hon. Kevin Duffan;

Carlton Stansbury, JD

March 11, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Registration closes on March 10, 2021 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada

[Register now!](#)

Discussion Group

March 31, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Risk Management and Culture - Why You Really Should Care about DE&I

April Harris-Britt, PhD and Nolanda Kirby, MS

May 5, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Discussion Group

May 19, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Culture Specific Family Conflict: Case Applications

Gitu Bhatia, PsyD; Linda Bortell, PsyD; and Frank Davis, PhD

July 7, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Discussion Group

July 21, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

The DE&I Task Force members include: Hon. Herman Walker, Chair; Hon. Gerri Wong, Reporter; Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD; Gitu Bhatia, PsyD; Frank Davis, PhD; Hon. Kevin Duffan; April Harris-Britt, PhD; Nolanda Kirby, MS; Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM; Ernie Sanchez, MSW; Carlton Stansbury, JD. Larry Fong, PhD, Ex Officio

AFCC's Online Training Course on Child Custody Evaluations Begins March 16th!

The Fundamentals of Conducting Child Custody Evaluations

March 16-18 and March 22-24, 2021

This 24-hour online training program for professionals interested in child custody evaluations (CCE) offers participants the opportunity to learn from a team of leading practitioners and trainers.

The program will take place in two segments per day, two hours each. Topics include the CCE process, psychological testing, parenting plans, research, and cultural and diversity considerations.

Visit the [training portal](#) for more information, where you can:

- [Read the brochure](#) for full details.
- [View the full schedule](#) to plan your attendance.
- [Meet the training team!](#)
- [See the learning objectives.](#)
- [Learn about the training program sponsors.](#)

We hope you can join us for this informative, useful program.

Alberta Chapter Annual Conference

March 19, 2021

Being held virtually

Ohio Chapter Annual Conference

April 7, 2021

Being held virtually

Missouri Chapter Annual Conference

April 9, 2021 and April 16, 2021

Being held virtually

Australia Chapter Annual Conference

July 2-4, 2021

South Brisbane, QLD

Wisconsin Chapter Annual Conference

September 30, 2021

Delafield, Wisconsin

Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

October 15, 2021

Toronto, Ontario

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

January 28-30, 2022

Sedona, Arizona

Resource of the Month

Family Court Review

January 2020

Read the January 2020 issue of *Family Court Review* for free! **AFCC members** receive print and digital subscriptions to the journal!

[Register now!](#)



AFCC Will Present Awards on June 4, 2021. Nominate a Colleague Today!

Though we are unable to meet in person this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, AFCC will continue its tradition of recognizing its members' accomplishments by presenting awards.

Consider nominating a deserving colleague for one of the following awards by **March 26, 2021**:

- **John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award** recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members.
- **Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award**, sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute, recognizes outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce.
- **Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award** recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members.

[AFCC Awards](#)

Submit Your Proposal for the AFCC Fall Conference!

AFCC members thrive when they have an opportunity to connect and collaborate. That's why we are hoping to resume in-person events soon. Mark your calendar to attend:

AFCC Fall Conference

Unmuting the Voices of Children and Families: Can You Hear Me Now?

November 11-13, 2021

Cincinnati Netherland Plaza

Cincinnati, OH

AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshops to be presented at the Fall Conference. Please read the [Call for Proposals](#) thoroughly and submit your proposal using the [online form](#). The deadline to submit is **May 10, 2021**.

Save the Date for the AFCC-AAML Conference!

AFCC is collaborating with its colleagues at the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) to bring you an exceptional, advanced-level training opportunity sponsored by two premier family law organizations. This year's program returns to Washington, DC and features a Trial Track and Parenting Coordination Track. Watch for the program this spring!

Save the date and stay tuned for more details!

September 23-25, 2021

Capital Hilton

Washington, DC

AFCC Webinar Corner

Does Diversity Matter in Family Law?

Gitu Bhatia, PsyD | Hon. Gene Cheek | Hon. Kevin Duffan | Carlton Stansbury, JD

March 11, 2021 | 4:00pm-5:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Registration closes on March 10, 2021 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada

The first webinar in the series will feature discussion among professionals that explores the challenges associated with cultural diversity in the family law field. What do we mean by cultural diversity? What are the advantages of a diverse professional community for those we serve? Are we responsible for looking beyond our interpersonal interactions and the walls of our agencies and institution to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion? And if so, how can this be accomplished?

Sessions in the DE&I Webinar Series are offered free of charge, but registration is required.

Continuing education credit may be available for lawyers, judges, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other professionals. [Learn more](#).

[Register now!](#)

A Primer in Child Development for the Family Law Professional

Robert Simon, PhD

March 25, 2021 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Registration closes on March 24, 2021 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.

Understanding child development is essential for those involved in deciding and influencing decisions about the best interests of children whose parents cannot agree on what is best. For parenting plans to be supportive of the child and to foster their well-being, considerations of the child's development is crucial. This webinar will look at child development along cognitive, emotional and social lines specifically focusing on applying this knowledge to developing parenting plans for children.

Robert A. Simon, PhD, a longtime member of AFCC, is an internationally recognized leader in forensic psychology consulting. Dr. Simon is a past member of the AFCC Board of Directors and serves on the editorial board of the *Family Court Review*. He is the co-author of *Forensic Psychology Consultation in Child Custody Litigation*.



Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$20

Continuing education credit may be available for lawyers, judges, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other professionals. [Learn more](#).

[Register today!](#)

Stay tuned for April's webinar

[Using Survey Data to Profile Extreme Views of Resist and Refusal Dynamics](#)

Michael Saini, PhD

April 15, 2021 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

[Register now!](#)

Chapter News

With Two Months to Go, the Chapter Challenge Race Is Tight!

To continue promoting chapter ingenuity, the Chapter Challenge rewards both the chapter with the greatest percentage increase in membership and the chapter with the greatest total number increase in membership for the period from June 1, 2020 until April 1, 2021. Each winning chapter receives a \$2,500 prize.

So far, the Texas, California, and Indiana chapters have been mixing it up with multiple lead changes over the past several months. Currently, the California chapter is ahead of the Texas chapter by only ONE new member in the overall count, and the Texas chapter is edging out the Indiana chapter by only 1.6%. With Illinois, Utah, and Massachusetts in hot pursuit, this will be a fantastic race to the finish! Congratulations to all chapters for their ongoing efforts promoting AFCC in our local communities!

Member News

Lisa Abrams, AFCC member from Tucson, Arizona, has been elevated to the position of a retained Judge of the Pima County Superior Court by Arizona Governor Doug Ducey. Lisa was appointed to the position of Commissioner/Judge Pro Tempore, Pima County Superior Court in May 2010. She has served on the family, juvenile, and probate benches. Lisa has been a member of the Pima County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board since 2012 and served two terms on the board of the Arizona chapter of AFCC. Prior to joining the bench, she was a partner at Karp & Weiss, where she practiced in the areas of family, juvenile, and school law. Congratulations, Lisa!



Janet Walker (left) and **Gabriela Misca** (right), AFCC members from Hastings and Birmingham (respectively), UK, have received the 2021 [Special Award for FiMpacT](#) from the Forces in Mind Trust Research Centre in recognition of their research on Armed Forces families. They led a review aimed at addressing the needs of Service families. Janet is Emeritus Professor of Family Policy at Newcastle University. Gabriela is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Worcester. Congratulations, Janet and Gabriela!



Do you have a notable achievement to share? Email [Gina Wentling](#) with your story and a professional head shot (JPEG or PNG preferred), if you have one, to be featured in next month's Member News!

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.

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Tami Moscoe, LLB

It should come as no surprise to AFCC members that pre-COVID justice systems across the world were ripe for improvement, having seen years of gradual improvements but often without the necessary resources to bring the system into the 21st century.

When COVID struck, courts were forced to create processes that would allow the justice system to continue to operate almost immediately. In-person attendances were no longer allowed in many jurisdictions. Even where they were, safety precautions minimized our ability to rely on in-person transactions, including filings, the updating of paper files, routine appearances, etc.

Faced with this reality, those of us in the system worked frantically throughout the spring to ensure that family cases could continue to progress, at least those with urgent issues relating to the safety of a parent or the well-being of a child. And, like others, we struggled to make this happen in the face of a constantly-moving target in terms of both how bad things were and what we were able to do.

Leaving aside the technology that was needed for filing documents, case management, and virtual hearings, I want to highlight one of the innovative things that we accomplished in Ontario on very short notice and with limited resources, based largely on the convergence of both necessity and willingness of justice partners to get stuff done. I also wanted to take this opportunity to explain how we broke down our traditional work processes to put these innovations into place so quickly.

In Ontario as well as other jurisdictions, we continue to face significant levels of unrepresented litigants in family cases. In some but not all of our courts, many of these litigants can receive at least some help from state-funded counsel, provided they met financial eligibility thresholds. But many do not, and when COVID hit even those who do were all of the sudden unsure how to access these services when they couldn't just walk down the corridor and look for the sign-up sheet.

Being worried about litigants who would not even know how to start to move forward without in-person services, and also particularly worried about those who were facing urgent issues relating to their children, I helped to set up a COVID-related emergency telephone referral line.

This low-tech and low-cost service quickly connected litigants to family lawyers who agreed to provide 30 minutes of free legal advice in relation to (i) determining what did and did not qualify as urgent (our Court's initial threshold for court attendances) and (ii) figuring out what services were available to help the litigant get started, whether through publicly- or privately-provided legal services, public legal education, community organizations, or otherwise. After providing this free advice, participating lawyers were then permitted to take these clients on as private clients if the client wanted.

Our ability to get this referral line up and running within 30 days was no small feat and could not have happened without:

1. The support from our regulator of legal services in Ontario, who agreed to staff the call centre using existing resources and to make the referrals to our volunteer lawyers;
2. Huge support from the family law bar, many of whom were already struggling with their own challenges whether work-related or family-related; and, equally importantly,
3. A recognition that expediency and feasibility were more important than perfection and a will to do what was needed to put a solution in place as soon as possible.

While critical to our success, I think #1 and #2 above are, perhaps, not a surprise. After all, we are all dedicated justice system participants who saw a pressing need that had to be addressed. And in Ontario, the family law bar has risen to the challenge before on countless occasions, giving of their time and expertise to benefit family litigants even where it did not benefit them financially.

But it's the short turnaround that I'm most proud of; as someone who has worked in government for 13 years, I know that bringing a project to fruition so quickly is a major accomplishment. Without boring you with the minutia, we were able to get the necessary approvals, get enough lawyers on board, develop the resource materials, and launch the service within this period of time. We did so recognizing that (i) something had to be done urgently to help these litigants and (ii) offering something was better than providing no help at all.

Now to be honest, being a bit (okay, a *lot*) idealistic and also being a bit (maybe a *lot*) of a perfectionist, I am somewhat conflicted about #3, but in these circumstances, I am convinced that if we had tried to develop something more elaborate, we likely would still have been working on it six months later, or perhaps funding would not have been available and the project would not have gotten off the ground.

In the end, we were able to develop a service that helped hundreds, if not *thousands*, of litigants in a time of great need, and for that I think all participants should be incredibly proud.

Tami Moscoe, LLB, provides advice to Chief Justice Geoffrey Morawetz and Senior Family Justice Stevenson on all issues relating to family law, family court processes, and the Unified Family Court. This includes developing internal and external resources for the Superior Court of Justice to assist with the resolution of family cases, including a new guide to process for family litigants. It also includes assisting with the development and implementation of best practices for family law and child protection proceedings. Ms. Moscoe also advises on improvements to the Family Law Rules and family justice innovations, working closely with representatives of the Ministry, the family law bar, and other stakeholders. Over the past five years, Ms. Moscoe has contributed to several successful family law initiatives, including co-chairing the Walsh Family Law Negotiation Competition and contributing to the development of CLEO's new Steps to Justice website. She was also instrumental in the recent Unified Family Court expansion in Ontario as well as the recent launch of Ontario's Family Law Limited Scope Services project. Ms. Moscoe joined the public service in 2006 after 8 years of family law practice at Torkin Manes. She also became an Accredited Family Mediator (Ontario Association for Family Mediation) during her time in private practice.

