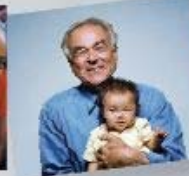




ASSOCIATION OF  
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eNEWS

January 2018

## IN THIS ISSUE

[President's Message](#)

[Chicago Training Programs](#)

[Q&A with Plenary Speaker Shawn Marsh on Trauma](#)

[AFCC 55th Annual Conference](#)

[Ask the Experts](#)

[Annual Appeal](#)

[Early-to-Mid-Career Initiative](#)

[AFCC Webinars](#)

[AFCC 13th Symposium on Child Custody Call for Proposals](#)

## President's Message

*Annette T. Burns, JD*

One thing regular AFCC conference-goers have in common is hotel rooms. And flights, and road-warrior status. There's something innately satisfying about getting to your destination and knowing: I just navigated two (or more) airports, long lines, cold coffee, questionable food, cancelled flights, missed connections,

MONTHLY  
E-NEWSLETTER

VOL. 13 NO. 1



Save the Date  
[AFCC Annual Conference](#)

Compassionate Family Court Systems: The Role of Trauma-Informed Jurisprudence

uncomfortable seats, smelly cabs, drafty hallways, and sore feet, and once again, I survived.

[Read more](#)

## Register Today for Chicago 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. [View the brochure](#)

### Building a Successful Unbundled Family Law Practice

Forrest "Woody" Mosten, JD  
March 5-6, 2018

### Parenting Coordination: Work in the Trenches with High Conflict Coparents

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD  
March 7-8, 2018

[More Information](#)

## Untangling the Trauma from the Drama: Q & A with Dr. Shawn Marsh

Dr. Shawn C. Marsh, Director of Judicial Studies and Associate Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, will present a keynote address, "Towards a Trauma-Responsive System of Justice: Untangling Trauma from Drama", at the AFCC 55th Annual Conference, *Compassionate Family Court Systems: The Role of Trauma-Informed Jurisprudence* in Washington, D.C. June 8, 2018. He is also the first author of "Preparing for a Trauma Consultation in Your Juvenile and Family Court", produced by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and was gracious enough to allow us to catch up with him to ask a few questions.

[Read more](#)

## AFCC 55th Annual Conference

June 6-9, 2018  
Washington Hilton  
Washington, DC

### AFCC Chapter Conferences

#### Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

January 26-28, 2018  
Hilton Sedona Resort  
Sedona, Arizona

#### Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference

January 26-27, 2018  
Paul Hebert Law Center  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

#### California Chapter Annual Conference

February 2-4, 2018  
Park Central Hotel  
San Francisco, California

#### Washington Chapter Annual Conference

February 3, 2018  
University of Washington  
Seattle Tower O  
Seattle, Washington

#### Alberta Chapter Annual Conference

March 15-16, 2018  
Matrix Hotel  
Edmonton, Alberta

#### Missouri Chapter Annual Conference

March 15-16, 2018  
Marriott St. Louis West  
St. Louis, Missouri

#### Oregon Chapter Annual Conference

April 13, 2018  
River's Edge Hotel  
Portland, Oregon

## Compassionate Family Court Systems: The Role of Trauma-Informed Jurisprudence

June 6-9, 2018, Washington Hilton Hotel

The AFCC 55th Annual Conference [program brochure](#) is now available online and **registration is open!** Start making your plans to attend.

[Book your hotel room, check out the conference brochure, view the scholarship application and more!](#)

[Register today](#)

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



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### 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](#).

### Apply for a Conference Scholarship

AFCC is offering more than 30 conference scholarships which include a pre-conference institute registration, a full conference registration, and a certificate of attendance. In addition, a limited number of \$500 and \$1,000 travel stipends are available to some applicants with high travel costs, international applicants, and those who demonstrate a financial need. The deadline to apply for

#### **Florida Chapter Annual Conference**

September 26-28, 2018  
The Florida Hotel and  
Conference Center  
Orlando, Florida

#### **Wisconsin Chapter Annual Conference**

September 28, 2018

#### **AFCC March Training Programs**

Building a Successful  
Unbundled Family Law  
Practice

March 5-6, 2018

Loyola University Chicago  
Philip H. Corboy Law  
Center  
Chicago, Illinois

Parenting Coordination:  
Work in the Trenches with  
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Center  
Chicago, Illinois

#### **EDITOR:**

[Leslye Hunter](#)

#### **ASSOCIATE EDITOR:**

[Corinne Bennett](#)



[afccnet.org](http://afccnet.org)

a scholarship is **March 9, 2018**. Recipients will be notified mid-to-late March.

[Apply now](#)

## Ask the Experts: Ten Tips to Reducing Stress

*Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW*

It is widely acknowledged that family law issues can be extremely stressful for the parties involved. The family law professionals who are engaged in these cases can experience significant stress, as well. Here are some suggestions for professionals to help them manage that stress.

[Read more](#)

## Donate to the AFCC Scholarship Fund

Help your colleagues attend AFCC conferences by giving to the AFCC Scholarship Fund. AFCC scholarship recipients increase our diversity by bringing professionals from different backgrounds, representing the many disciplines we represent as an organization. The annual appeal letter was recently mailed to all AFCC members. Will you contribute to allow a hard-working professional like yourself attend an AFCC conference?

[Donate Today](#)

## Early-to-Mid-Career Initiative

Have you heard about AFCC's Early-to-mid-career (E2M) initiative? Last year's fellows Kristin Doeberl and Liana Shelby formed the networking group prior to the 54th Annual Conference in Boston. Since the conference, current fellows Robin Timme and Daniel Nau (with the help of Liana and Kristin) have picked up the baton and have made progress on the E2M group. We currently have a [E2M Facebook group](#), a monthly newsletter, a [webinar series](#), and upcoming events at the 55th Annual Conference. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please email [Corinne Bennett](#), AFCC Program Coordinator.

[Read more about E2M](#)

## AFCC Webinar Corner



Register now for next month's webinar:  
**New Research on LGBTQ Parenting**  
Todd Brower, JD, LLM  
February 13, 2018 1:00pm Eastern

[Register now](#)

If you missed this month's webinar, *Potential Impact of Implicit and Cognitive Bias*, members may access the recording for free through the [Member Center](#) of the AFCC website.

### Introducing AFCC E2M Webinar Series!

Join AFCC E2M (early-to-mid career professionals) webinar:

#### Work/Life Balance

Annette T. Burns, JD

March 7, 2018 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time

[Registration is now open!](#)

This webinar is geared towards the E2M crowd and is free to AFCC members. Please register to participate!

## AFCC Award Nominations

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 and bring attention to these accomplishments.

**Nominations for the following awards, to be presented at the AFCC Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., will be accepted online through March 15, 2018:**

**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 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.](#)

## AFCC Chapter News



Meet Debra Weaver, President of the  
**Florida Chapter**

[Read more](#)



Meet Natalie Synder, President of the  
**Indiana Chapter**

[Read more](#)



Meet Beth Fawver McCormack, President of the **Illinois Chapter**

[Read more](#)

## **AFCC 13th Symposium on Child Custody Call for Proposals**

*Guidelines and Standards and Rules, Oh My!*

November 8-10, 2018

Denver, Colorado

The AFCC Conference Committee is seeking proposals for 90-minute workshop sessions. Share your work with the interdisciplinary community of family law professionals who attend AFCC conferences. Proposals must be received using the online form by May 7. The program brochure and online registration will be available July 2018.

[View the call for proposals.](#) [Submit online.](#)

## **Family Court Review Seeks Social Science Editor**

Family Court Review (FCR), the quarterly academic and research journal of AFCC, is seeking a Social Science Editor. AFCC is an interdisciplinary and international association of judges, lawyers, mediators, mental health professionals, social scientists, court administrators, educators and others concerned with promoting constructive methods of family conflict resolution. FCR is an interdisciplinary journal prepared for publication at Hofstra University Law School by a student editorial staff, working under the supervision of the FCR Faculty Administrative Editor. The Social Science Editor will be responsible to and work closely with the Faculty Administrative Editor and the Editor in Chief. He or she will work with the Editorial Board and student staff of FCR to promote the interdisciplinary mission of FCR and AFCC. The deadline for submitting an application is February 28, 2018. If you are interested in a copy of the Call for Applications, please email Peter Salem, AFCC Executive Director, at [psalem@afccnet.org](mailto:psalem@afccnet.org).

**Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC)**

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(608) 664-3750

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eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018



### **President's Message**

*Annette T. Burns, JD  
Phoenix, Arizona*

One thing regular AFCC conference-goers have in common is hotel rooms. And flights, and road-warrior status. There's something innately satisfying about getting to your destination and knowing: I just navigated two (or more) airports, long lines, cold coffee, questionable food, cancelled flights, missed connections, uncomfortable seats, smelly cabs, drafty hallways, and sore feet, and once again, I survived. No wonder the hotel lobby bars are usually full of happy travelers celebrating their most recent triumph over travel. The real reward is, of course, meeting up with colleagues and getting the exceptional information offered in AFCC workshops and plenaries, but sometimes just putting the key card in that hotel room door at the end of a travel day feels like a reward in itself.

We can only imagine how much more travel hassle is involved when it's travel abroad. AFCC has a vigorous contingent of European, Canadian, Australian, and other attendees from outside of the United States at every conference. On top of all the challenging things I've already listed about travel, you can add, for our friends from abroad, dealing with Customs and enhanced security lines, more layovers, language barriers, significant time changes, and jet lag. AFCC members gain an incredible amount of information from our international colleagues and presenters, and we are especially grateful for their efforts.

AFCC is going abroad soon, as Executive Director Peter Salem and I travel first to the nation of Malta, and then to London and Windsor, to meet with many, many friends of AFCC who are similarly concerned with how best to help families. The International Commission on Couple and Family Relations (ICCFR) is holding a three-day conference in Malta in February to discuss Couple Relationships in the 21st Century, and AFCC will be there to learn new ways to serve. In London, AFCC will partner with the Nuffield Foundation to bring together policy makers, the judiciary and practitioners from across Europe for a one-day conference to discuss key developments which can improve the resolution of family law disputes. And at Windsor Castle, AFCC is partnering with Relate, which is the United Kingdom's largest provider of relationship



support, in sponsoring a consultation (think tank) to examine Modern Families and Modern Family Justice in Europe. We are hoping that this event will result in a report and additional publications and conference presentations on the state of the art in European family justice systems.

At all three of these functions, AFCC will share perspectives on family justice with a broad variety of European policy-makers, practitioners, and others. And while Peter and I expect our share challenges with jet lag, security, customs, layovers, and red-eyes, it seems only fair given the sacrifices our friends from overseas make to get to AFCC conferences on a regular basis.

In a short span of ten days in February, AFCC will further broaden its future internationally by sharing and cooperating with our European counterparts. We look forward to learning from them and developing a broader perspective for AFCC's future.



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018

## Q & A with AFCC Keynote Speaker Shawn C. Marsh

Dr. Shawn C. Marsh, Director of Judicial Studies and Associate Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, will present a keynote address, "Towards a Trauma-Responsive System of Justice: Untangling Trauma from Drama", at the AFCC 55th Annual Conference, *Compassionate Family Court Systems: The Role of Trauma-Informed Jurisprudence* in Washington, DC June 8, 2018. He is also the first author of "Preparing for a Trauma Consultation in Your Juvenile and Family Court", produced by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and was gracious enough to allow us to catch up with him to ask a few questions.

**Q: Your keynote title is extremely thought-provoking. Can you tell us a little about the differences between trauma and drama, and where toxic stress fits into this equation? Is the word "trauma" overused?**

I crafted the title to acknowledge a tension we are seeing in courts and to grab the attention of participants – so I'm glad it seems to be working! For this talk, I'm specifically interested in exploring the challenge justice professionals face when trying to appropriately contextualize and respond to *behaviors* versus *behaviors associated with traumatic experiences*. The trauma-informed movement in the justice system is providing frameworks and strategies to tackle this challenge, and I do think we are seeing improvements in practice and outcomes as a result. However, I also think an unintended consequence of this movement is the word "trauma" does tend to become overused and often lacks shared meaning across stakeholders. This can be problematic in that words matter: every negative experience is *not* traumatic; rather, stress tends to operate on a continuum. Further, not all challenging behaviors are a result of potentially traumatic experiences, and not all potentially traumatic experiences result in challenging behaviors. Helping courts and allied systems untangle the complexities of these issues – i.e., the "trauma from the drama" – remains an important part of the trauma-informed court movement.

**Q: Is the meaning of trauma changing? Are we seeing different forms or gradations of trauma, perhaps necessitating a redefinition?**

One should expect that the definition of a term or concept like “trauma” will likely change over time and with advances in our scientific fund of knowledge. For example, how we think about traumatic stress reactions in the context of combat is substantially different today than during the Civil War. What I do think will remain relatively consistent is that there can be different types and degrees of stress, adversity, trauma, etc. Many people find it helpful to think of stress as operating on a continuum from something like “helpful to harmful.” Although this is somewhat oversimplified for reasons I hope to cover in my keynote, I think it does serve as a useful heuristic on which to base ongoing dialogue. One important component of this dialogue is where, how, and even if to fit a diagnosis such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

**Q: Are trauma-informed practice and a trauma-responsive system of justice different? How do they work together?**

I view them as being very similar, and organizations such as the National Centers for Child Traumatic Stress have done wonderful work identifying the elements of what it means to be “trauma-informed” at various levels of ecology. I will say some people do prefer the term “responsive” versus “informed” to message a more active versus passive orientation to the work, but I think the basic tenets of care pretty much remain the same. From the conceptual framework I tend to use in my work with courts, these conditions of care and healing include ensuring safety, supporting personal agency, and nurturing pro-social support across the domains of environment, practice, policy, and persons – *for both the consumers and administrators of justice*. It also is important to remember that although outcomes of interest are perhaps different across institutions (e.g., hospitals versus courts), each is part of a larger community of healing in which coordination is absolutely critical.

**Q: How does assessing the source and extent of trauma change the way a case or client is handled?**

It supports matching of need with appropriate services/interventions – which is obviously critical. For example, treating a child for ADHD when she is actually trauma reactive is not likely to get you too far! But, perhaps just as important, it can fundamentally change how actors in a system view and interact with the case/client. For example, moving from “he’s aggressive” to “he’s scared of a perceived threat” (fight response) can help contextualize sometimes-puzzling or frustrating behavior and allow one to respond more supportively. In many ways, it can lead to a calmer environment that benefits everyone.

**Q: What is the one thing you hope people will understand about trauma after attending this conference?**

Trauma-responsive systems of justice are ultimately about *people*. And, when done well, it is good for both the consumers *and* administrators of justice. More on that at my talk...!



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018

## Top Ten Tips for Stress Management for Family Law Professionals

*Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW*

1. Food isn't just fuel; it's medicine, so be mindful what you eat. Don't roll your eyes because you "know" this; pay real attention by writing down everything you eat for a couple days. As a food-loving Louisianan, I don't deny myself much, but I do concentrate on nutrient-dense fruits and veggies to counteract the occasional indulgence.
2. Move around a lot to de-stress and help your body stay efficient and limber. An activity-tracking watch (Garmin, Fitbit, etc.) is a terrific reminder and record-keeper. A friendly competition recorded online is good motivation. Ten thousand steps a day is your minimum. Cardio and weight-training several times a week is essential to stress management. If you exercise more, you can eat more.
3. Speaking of apps: Use them for time management, especially with difficult clients. Tell your clients at the beginning of the meeting that your phone will chime ten minutes before the end of the appointment, as a reminder to wrap it up. This trains the histrionic clients to get to the point, because you WILL end the appointment on time.
4. But apps need limits: so be sure you take tech breaks. Smartphones are addictive; you see the messes your clients get into with them. You need family, friend, and alone time tech-free. "Social networks" are the most anti-social system around.
5. Social time: means REAL face-time. Eat dinner at a real table with no phones and no television. It's a great time to teach your kids how to have real conversations (and to learn what's really going on with them.) Marriages don't survive without actual people being physically and emotionally connected to one another without electronics.
6. So don't put off your vacations. Recreation will refresh your spirit, your body, and your intimate relationships. And you'll find you're sharper at work when you return.
7. Seek mentoring relationships. If you're a newbie, it's one of your best career-building and stress-management tools. If you're a seasoned professional, offering to mentor someone will keep you connected. Losing one's peers is one of the greatest stressors of "mature" professionals.

8. Your office staff takes care of you while you take care of your clients. Hire carefully and make your expectations very clear. One of those expectations needs to be “NO DRAMA.” The staff needs to be competent at their jobs AND treat each other respectfully. If you have staffing problems, deal with them promptly. Your office should be your safe place, not your ground zero.

9. Have a financial plan and stick to it. It’s a new year; get your family and professional budgets in order. Financial stress is behind a lot of divorce and substance abuse. Free yourself.

10. Revisit your dreams and goals often. Designing Your Life by Bill Burnett & Dave Evans is a book that requires more than reading. It will ask you to redefine your life. Evaluate your health/love/work/play and take actionable steps to improve the areas you wish. It’s especially rewarding to do with a group of friends.

*Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW is a mediator, custody evaluator, therapist and parenting coordinator in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is a founding member of the AFCC-LA.*



## Early-to-Mid-Career Initiative

Have you heard about AFCC's Early-to-mid-career (E2M) initiative? Last year's fellows Kristin Doeberl and Liana Shelby formed the networking group prior to the 54th Annual Conference in Boston. Kristin and Liana had recruited almost 20 members for the group with the assistance of other senior members and AFCC's Board of Directors. The Boston conference offered an opportunity to meet and mingle with interested E2M members with whom they had been corresponding via email. They were also able to introduce the group to the larger AFCC community and encourage new members to join. Over the course of the four-day conference, E2M held several events.

## E2M Buttons

You may have seen people walking around with "Ask me about E2M" buttons. All Board members, as well as the majority of E2M members, wore the buttons to identify themselves as someone to ask about the group.

## Luncheon Table

Two tables were reserved near the front of the stage for E2M members and had a great turnout, including new prospective members.

## Dine-Around

On Thursday night, a great group (including more new, prospective members!) joined Kristin and Liana for dinner at Sonsie on Newbury Street. It was a really nice opportunity to get to know each other, and to learn more about each E2M member's work, interests, and professional experiences.

## Meeting

There was also a meeting on Friday morning at 7:15 am, with nearly 20 people in attendance! Everyone introduced themselves, shared their reasons for wanting to join the group, and spoke about what they hoped to get out of the E2M group.

Since the conference, current fellows Robin Timme and Daniel Nau (with the help of Liana and Kristin) have picked up the baton and have made progress on the E2M group. We currently have a [E2M Facebook group](#), a monthly newsletter, a [webinar](#)



[series](#), and upcoming events at the 55th Annual Conference. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please email [Corinne Bennett](#), AFCC Program Coordinator.



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018



## Meet Beth Fawver McCormack, President of the Illinois Chapter

Beth F. McCormack practices exclusively in family law matters, with experience in complex litigation, as well as mediation and collaborative law. The philosophy under which Ms. McCormack practices is founded on compassion and empathy. She sees it as her responsibility to be aware of her clients' needs, seeking the most appropriate solution for each individual.

Litigation is always a viable option; however, negotiating a fair and reasonable settlement is often the less stressful and most-cost effective solution. In order to better serve her client's needs, Beth became a Collaborative Law Fellow with the Collaborative Law Institute of Illinois.

Ms. McCormack has been named a Super Lawyer by her peers and takes great pride in that she believes strongly in the importance of attorneys working collaboratively to create the best outcome for their clients. She has also been named Top 50 Women Super Lawyer and Top 100 Super Lawyer.



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018

## Meet Natalie Snyder, President of the Indiana Chapter



Natalie Snyder is a Certified Family Law Specialist certified by the Family Law Certification Board. She is also a trained collaborative lawyer, a trained parenting coordinator, and has been named a Super Lawyer for Family Law in Indianapolis Monthly magazine. She has lectured and written on various family law issues and represented medical, legal, accounting, financial, closely held business owners, family farms, executives, and other professionals and spouses. In addition to complex legal divisions of assets and debts, Natalie has specialized in developing unique custody and parenting time plans to meet the needs of her individual clients. Natalie is a board member of the Indianapolis Bar Association, and she is the past Chair of the Family Law Section of the Indianapolis Bar Association. Natalie is an Indianapolis Bar Foundation Distinguished Fellow and was a member of the Foundation's Grant Committee in 2012.

Natalie resides with her husband and daughter in Cicero, Indiana. Natalie has concentrated her practice in legal matters related to relationship transitions including matrimonial and family law, high conflict family resolutions, paternity, cohabitation agreements, premarital and postnuptial agreements, child custody, relocation, parenting time, support, and interstate disputes and modifications. Natalie has specialized in the peacemaking process of alternative dispute resolution through collaborative law, mediation, parenting coordination, and other closed processes for counseling and

evaluations, including specializing in high conflict parents, personality disorders, and addictions in families. Natalie understands the lifelong consequences of conflict on children and helps to resolve matters through peacekeeping processes, when possible, and litigation when not possible.



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 1  
JANUARY 2018



### **Meet Debra Weaver, President of the Florida Chapter**

Debra Weaver, PhD is a clinical and forensic psychologist with over 30 years' experience. Her clinical background and expertise are in the areas of assessment, forensic services, abuse, and trauma.

In the forensic arena, Dr. Weaver has over the years, conducted a wide variety of psychological evaluations and custody evaluations for county and State family courts, along with dependency courts in three States. In addition, Dr. Weaver is also a Child Protection Team psychologist.

Dr. Weaver has been a member of AFCC since 2000 and FLAFCC since 2011. She became a member of the FLAFCC Board of Directors in 2013 and assumed the Presidency of FLAFCC in December 2017.