



ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

NCJFCJ endorses AFCC *Guidelines on Examining Intimate Partner Violence*

On October 21, 2016, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts' (AFCC), publication, *Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence: A Supplement to the AFCC Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation (Guidelines)*. [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 encompassed by who we are as an organization. The annual appeal letter was recently mailed to all AFCC members. Please consider giving today, every gift makes a difference. Receiving your gift by the end of 2016 helps us plan for next year, and will provide US taxpayers with a deduction for the 2016 tax year.

Will you contribute to allow a hard working professional like yourself attend an AFCC conference? [Donate online today.](#)

MONTHLY E-
NEWSLETTER
VOL. 11 NO. 11
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Upcoming AFCC Conferences

AFCC 54th Annual Conference

Turning the Kaleidoscope
of Family Conflict into a
Prism of Harmony
May 31-June 3, 2017
Sheraton Boston Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

AFCC Chapter Conferences

[Arizona Chapter Annual Conference](#)

January 27-29, 2017
Sedona, Arizona

[Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference](#)

January 27-28, 2017
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Thank you to those who have already donated to the scholarship fund! [Scholarship Donors 2016-2017](#).

AFCC Webinars

Online Registration Will Open for New AFCC Webinar

[Registration](#) opens today (November 16th) at 11:00am Eastern for new AFCC webinar:

Challenging Issues in Parenting Coordination

Debra Carter, PhD

December 14, 2016

1:00pm-2:00pm Eastern Time

Classic Rewind: Ask the Experts – Ten Tips for the Holidays

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP, Wellesley, Massachusetts

Every year, families must confront parenting challenges around the holidays and there are some long-standing tips that can help. The *AFCC eNEWS* is re-running a previous, and updated Ask the Experts column on Ten Tips for the Holidays. [Read more](#).

AFCC December Trainings in Baltimore

Attend the December Trainings!

There is still time to register for December Trainings. Register and attend to fulfill your continuing education requirements! Each training is eligible for up to *12 hours of continuing education*.

Alcohol and Other Drugs: It's a Family Affair

Judge Peggy Fulton Hora and Steve Hanson

A two-day training program for parenting coordinators, mediators, lawyers, judges, therapists, parent educators, and other family law professionals, to provide the knowledge they need to do a more effective job with families where alcohol or other drugs are mixed in to already difficult situations.

December 5-6, 2016

[California Chapter Annual Conference](#)

February 10-12, 2017

Costa Mesa, California

AFCC Webinar Series

Challenging Issues in Parenting Coordination

Debra Carter, PhD

December 14, 2016

1:00pm Eastern

What Family Law Professionals Need to Know About Self-

Represented Litigants

John Greacen, JD and

Katherine Alteneider, JD

February 8, 2017 1:00pm

Eastern

Visitation Resistance

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD

April 12, 2017 1:00pm

Eastern

LGBTQ Clients and Family Law in a Post-Obergefell

Era

Allan Barsky, JD, MSW,

PhD

June 20, 2017 1:00pm

Eastern

AFCC Trainings

Alcohol and Other Drugs: It's A Family Affair

Judge Peggy Fulton Hora

(Ret.) and Steve Hanson

December 5-6, 2016

University of Baltimore

Student Center

Baltimore, Maryland

Managing Intractable

Managing Intractable Issues in Child Custody Disputes

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP
December 7-8, 2016

[View the brochure.](#)

[Register now!](#)

Spotlight Series: Courthouse Dogs Program

Dogs reduce stress in human beings. If you have ever petted or cuddled a dog when you were upset, you know the calming effect it can have. But did you know that this effect has been studied and there is evidence that petting a dog temporarily lowers blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol levels as well as increasing a sense of well-being and safety? These effects have been documented even with people who are simply in the presence of a dog, but not actually touching it. Kathy Clark, PhD, Director of Programming and Research at the Marion County Family Court in Ohio brought a program introducing a facility dog, Camry, to their court with extraordinary results. [This is Camry's story.](#)

AFCC 54th Annual Conference - We're Going to Boston!

Sponsorship and Print Advertising Deadline

December 5 is the deadline for sponsors to be listed on the inside cover of the program brochure and for print ads to be included in the program brochure, which is mailed to 22,000 family law professionals. Conference sponsors include businesses, law firms, practice groups, individuals, and non-profit organizations. If you are interested in discussing opportunities please contact [Corinne Bennett](#), AFCC Program Coordinator.

[View opportunities.](#)

Sneak Peak: Plenary Speakers

Professor Robert Mnookin, Director of the Harvard Negotiation Project, will discuss *From Bargaining in the Shadow to Bargaining with the Devil: Implications for Family Practitioners.*

Issues in Child Custody Disputes

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP

December 7-8, 2016

University of Baltimore
Student Center

Baltimore, Maryland

Parenting Coordination: Practice Foundations

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD

March 6-7, 2017

Loyola University Chicago,
Philip H. Corboy Law
Center

Chicago, Illinois

The Model Standards and Beyond: Custody Evaluations and Risk Management

David A. Martindale, PhD, ABPP

March 8-9, 2017

Loyola University Chicago,
Philip H. Corboy Law
Center

Chicago, Illinois

Are you an AFCC member? [Join](#) or [Renew](#)

The opinions expressed in articles published or linked to in the *AFCC eNEWS* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

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Corinne Bennett

Dr. Bernie Mayer asks *Can We Talk? What We Have Learned About How to Have Productive Conflicts About Family Policy*.

Colin Rule, Founder and COO of Modria.com and Professor Nancy Welsh, Penn State Dickenson School of Law, will present on Online Dispute Resolution.

The complete conference program brochure will be available online by the end of the year. All AFCC members will receive a print copy in the mail in mid-January 2017.

Meet the AFCC Fellows

The AFCC Fellows program is a pilot project through which early to mid-career professionals become engaged with AFCC through conference attendance, participation in Board of Directors' Meetings, committee and task force work, and presenting at one of the AFCC conferences. Fellows are chosen from the host community for AFCC's annual conference and are responsible for introducing their peers to AFCC. Click on their names to learn more about this year's Fellows: [Liana Shelby, PsyD](#) and [Kristin Doeberl, JD](#).

Member News

Congratulations to AFCC Member, **Joanie Raymond**, who was appointed as a family law magistrate for the Circuit Court for Frederick County in Maryland.

Robert Simon, PhD, has been appointed to the Board of the World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights. He is the first non-Australian on the Board. Congratulations Robert!

Chapter News

[Meet Gerri L. Wong](#), President of the **Ontario Chapter**

Call for 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, 2017, in order



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to be considered by the committee prior to the election at the AFCC 54th Annual Conference, May 31-June 4, 2017, in Boston. The term is three years, beginning July 1, 2017, and concluding June 30, 2020. 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, c/o AFCC, 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719, or via email to afcc@afccnet.org.



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On October 21, 2016, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts' (AFCC), publication, [*Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence: A Supplement to the AFCC Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation \(Guidelines\)*](#). These guidelines were developed during a five-year process using a drafting task force that was sponsored by AFCC, in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and in consultation with the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP). This collaborative effort brought together custody evaluators, domestic violence advocates, and judges to identify the best approaches to conducting custody evaluations that account for domestic violence.

These *Guidelines* supplement the AFCC's Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation with respect to the evaluation of child custody and access cases where intimate partner violence may be an issue. The *Guidelines*, which are aspirational in nature, were developed to assist members of the AFCC and others who conduct child custody evaluations, and examine how they should identify the occurrence of intimate partner violence and the possible effects on children, parenting, and co-parenting. The *Guidelines* incorporate a broad view of intimate partner violence that includes physically, sexually, economically, psychologically, and coercively controlling aggressive behaviors, and include the following Guiding Principles:

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of children and parents.
- Ensure an informed, fair, and accountable process.
- Focus on the individual family.

“The Task Force worked long and hard and produced a very solid set of guidelines that are truly needed,” said Hon. Dale Koch, former president of NCJFCJ and member of the Guidelines Task Force. “We believe these guidelines will raise the expectations judges have of the custody evaluations they receive. It really has the potential to improve practice.”

While the Task Force's process took five years to complete, in some ways NCJFCJ and AFCC have been on this journey since February 2007 when the two organizations partnered for the Wingspread Conference on Domestic Violence and Family Courts. Since then, both organizations have worked together to improve the ways in which family courts respond to domestic violence. This is another, very important, step along this journey.

The *Guidelines* are available on [AFCC's website](#).



An interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

Scholarship Fund Contributors 2016-2017

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AZ Chapter of AFCC
Robert Simon

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Spotlight on Marion County Family Court 'Courthouse Dogs' Program

Dogs reduce stress in human beings. If you have ever petted or cuddled a dog when you were upset, you know the calming effect it can have. But did you know that this effect has been studied and there is evidence that petting a dog temporarily lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels as well as increasing a sense of well-being and safety? These effects have been documented even with people who are simply in the presence of a dog, but not actually touching it. Kathy Clark, PhD, Director of Programming and Research at the Marion County Family Court in Ohio brought a program introducing a facility dog, Camry, to their court with extraordinary results. This is Camry's story.

Camry Facility Dog



Marion County Family Court

Marion, Ohio AFCC member Kathy Clark has worked with people in high stress situations for years and when she had an extremely stressful experience of her own, she thought of the comfort that dogs can bring. She called Canine Companions for

Independence (CCI) and asked if they ever used dogs to help highly anxious people in a courthouse setting. She found the organization CourthouseDogs.org, an organization that trained dogs for use with child victims, but did not find anyone who had used dogs specifically in family courts. Kathy decided to bring a facility dog to her courthouse and, in her inimitable fashion, went about the process to get the key stakeholders on board. She made a huge lasagna and invited the judges, magistrates, director of children's services, prosecuting attorney, director of mental health board, and court director to lunch and to view a 30-minute video about using dogs in various situations in which people need emotional support. She volunteered to be the handler, providing housing and all the expenses for a facility dog. She received unanimous support and the long process began.

Kathy began by completing an application for a facility dog. She did not qualify for a service dog since she did not have a disability and this dog was not going to be a helper to one specific person. This dog, although trained as a service dog, needed a special additional set of skills – to be able to lay quietly, non-reactively and without moving for an extended period of time. After passing tests to qualify for a dog (demonstrating that she could be firm and give correction in an appropriate manner and not just turn into a puddle when presented with puppy cuteness) Kathy had to wait almost a year. She obtained a grant to have two people from Courthouse Dogs come to the Marion County Courthouse and train the staff about the role of a courthouse dog. She invited members of the bar association as well as the judges, understanding how important everyone's support and enthusiasm would be to the success of the program.

In May, 2014, Kathy finally got the call she had been waiting for. Camry was available after having passed the necessary tests to show he was the right dog for that job. He was one of the 40 percent that graduated meeting the program's stringent requirements. Camry was a beautiful two-year old Golden Retriever-Labrador mix who was trained from birth. He is valued at \$25,000 (due to those two years of intensive training) but is on loan indefinitely to the program for free; CCI retains ownership. Kathy had to travel to one of the CCI centers to intensively train and bond with Camry for a week before she was allowed to take him home.

Camry lives with Kathy and her husband, Lance, and is treated like a normal, extremely pampered, well fed and groomed dog. He gets to play with other animals and run around freely. Once he goes to work, however, he is a different dog. He takes his work very seriously and is available to give comfort in a variety of stressful situations. To date he has worked with people going through custody evaluations, adoptions, juvenile court proceedings, civil protection orders, truancy hearings, diversion hearings, counseling sessions, Grand Jury hearings, divorce hearings, *in camera* interviews, child of divorce groups, trauma groups, supervised visitation, and victim advocacy. As new situations arise, he is requested and his duties expand.

There are certain rules that need to be followed before Camry's services can be utilized.

People are told that his job is to bring smiles and hugs, *not* to sniff for drugs. He must be impeccably clean and groomed – this helps to prevent any allergic reaction to him. The people have to agree to have him there or request his presence, and not be fearful of dogs and they must be okay with his shedding (Kathy carries a lint brush). The child has to meet him first. They must treat Camry gently and with respect. Kathy must keep him on a leash and watch for his safety. Sometimes his schedule is pre-arranged, other times the requests for him are spontaneous. Kathy has a bailiff on premises who is also trained to handle Camry so that she can get some of her own work done.

Camry is trained to do everything on command, including toilet. When he is at work, he will sit or lay at someone's feet, often in a witness box, for hours and must not react to the noise, yelling and commotion around him. This is important as people rely on dogs to be sentinels for danger; if they are relaxed, they are sending the message that we are safe. Kathy tells of his being on the grass right next to a train track for a toilet break when the train came roaring though so close his fur was ruffled. Camry did his business without reacting to the train.

Camry is completely drained when he goes home at night, having absorbed all the stress and negative emotions around him all day. Kathy says that he unwinds by running around the house like a lunatic and then collapsing on the couch. Camry is committed to work in the courthouse for five years, and most facility dogs retire after five-ten years. Kathy will get the first choice to keep him.

Camry is trained to obey commands and to never pick up food from the floor. Kathy tells of the first Father's Day (a month or so after he moved in with them) when she prepared an elaborate brunch feast for her family and left it on the counter to summon them. When she returned, the counter was full of empty platters, undisturbed with no crumbs anywhere. She thought she was losing her mind as she *knew* she had put out the food. Then Camry appeared. No matter how well trained, when off leash and out of sight, he is a dog.

Camry connects immediately with people and radiates acceptance, love, and comfort. This is the one quality of his that Kathy wishes she could share. It usually takes a good therapist a number of sessions, at least, to make that kind of connection. Kathy tells of a young man who within minutes of meeting Camry told the dog that he had suicidal thoughts. These thoughts had not been expressed to anyone before that time. One child said that Camry "took the butterflies out of my stomach," and children unwilling to testify have been able to with Camry by their side. The success stories are constant and extremely gratifying.

Camry is helping change the public's perception of judges and court, and humanizing the process. People recognize Camry from previous experiences and, on return visits to the court, gravitate to him. He is more than just a hardworking member of the staff; he is an ambassador for the facility dog program. Other courts have seen or heard about

Camry and are now requesting their own facility dog. An added benefit is that Camry's presence reduced stress and anxiety for staff.

Honorable Robert Fragale, Marion County Family Court judge, said: "Facility dogs completely change the normally intimidating atmosphere for individuals coming to court. This is especially true for children and those with special needs. This concept is completely in line with the underlying philosophy of Family Courts, to create a more welcoming and less stressful environment for the families that come before us. Camry has been a tremendous addition to the services we provide our community and we welcome any opportunity to make the court experience less intimidating and traumatic for the families we serve. Once Camry enters the room, you can feel a more relaxed attitude among all present. We look forward to a beneficial relationship for Camry not just with our court but any individuals in need of his services in our community. Thanks for the opportunity to have Camry as a member of our staff."

If you are interested in exploring this program for your court, please contact Kathy Clark at kclark@co.marion.oh.us.



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Ask the Experts: Ten Tips for the Holidays

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP, Wellesley, Massachusetts

1. Have a very specific plan for the holidays so there is no opportunity for confusion or conflict. Parents may alternate or split holidays, but when there is disagreement about this plan, consider the longer view of alternating holidays by even and odd years. Holidays are often a time of heightened emotions, and the reality of the loss associated with separation or divorce is no more apparent than when parents must spend a holiday without their children or without old traditions.
2. Try to continue traditions of the past for the children. If they are accustomed to spending Christmas Eve with one extended family, try to continue that tradition, if not every year then in alternate years. Parents should consider maintaining some of the family traditions the first year after the separation, and alternating beginning the following year.
3. If you can continue some traditions together, make them clear, attending to details of who, what, where, when, and how. Some families are able to be together without conflict arising, but parents often have different expectations about the experience itself, as well as the amount of time they will be together. The most important thing for the children is that they do not experience conflict between their parents.
4. Create new traditions that feel special to the children and family. This is an opportunity for the new family configuration to establish new traditions for the holidays including creation of a special holiday celebration or experience on a day other than the actual holiday. It is also an opportunity for the adult who does not have the children, to establish new practices such as time with friends, volunteering, movie days, and travel.
5. Think long-term—what do you want your children to remember about holidays when they have their own children? For children, holidays are magical. It is often the little rituals and practices that are most memorable, such as baking a pie, playing a game or lighting the fire.
6. Remember, children's memories include all senses—what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted and touched. To the extent possible, create a memory that involves each of these senses and describe it, e.g. we always listen to this music, eat cranberry sauce,

watch this movie, read this book, take this walk, and cut these branches. Do not allow conflict to enter into these memories.

7. Self-care is very important. Life for the adults has significantly changed. Find new ways to care for yourself, e.g. exercise, friends, books, movies, clubs, martial arts, dance, classes, activities that bring new energy and attention. You want to rejuvenate yourself and refocus on something to help you reconstitute yourself in your new life.

8. Keep your expectations small and be flexible. Focus on one thing that matters most to you during the holidays, e.g. some sense of connection to your family, having some time with extended family or close friends, creating a new tradition, continuing a tradition. Your holiday time will not be the same, but you can decide that you will have one small goal that you will work toward creating or preserving. Holidays may be accompanied by unmet needs and dashed hopes. By thinking small you can manage disappointment and decrease stress.

9. Though you, the parent, may feel disoriented and lost in the changed family, keep your focus on the children and the new family constellations. Make the holidays about your children, which means helping them to feel good about spending holiday time with the other parent.

10. In ten years or twenty years, what do you want to see when you look back on these years of change? From that long view you can highlight the tone and experience of these transformed holidays. Remember, children who find holidays stressful because of the conflict between their parents, have terrible memories as adults of holidays and of special family moments. It is in your hands to create fond, pleasant memories for your children. They can be traditional or not, but the message is that you and our family are important and we find ways to celebrate and enjoy holidays.

Robin Deutsch, PhD, ABPP is a former AFCC President and is a psychologist in Boston. She is the director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at the William James College, where she runs a postdoctoral fellowship program and offers a Certificate in Child and Family Forensic Issues.



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AFCC Fellows: Kristin S. Doeberl, JD

Kristin Doeberl has known since she was a young child that she wanted to be a lawyer, and a legal career has been her primary focus since college. She graduated *cum laude* from Wellesley College with a BA in Sociology with a concentration in Human Rights and a minor in Africana Studies. After college, she took a few years off from school to work as a paralegal. One of Kristin's jobs was in a private family office, a law firm for a single high net-worth family with offices in Boston, Reno, and London. Kristin felt that that she had more to offer as an attorney, so she enrolled in Northeastern University School of Law in Boston and earned her Juris Doctor in 2011.

While in law school, Kristin clerked for the Honorable Nancy Gertner (Ret.) a US District Court Judge in Boston. She also interned at several law firms. She met devoted AFCC members at these firms and realized that her personal philosophy and AFCC's mission were a good fit. Kristin admitted that she took one family law course in law school and hated it, swearing that it was the one field she would never choose. Once in practice, however, she fell in love with family law when she saw that the scorched earth approach was not the only option. She realized that a family lawyer could help people get through one of the most difficult times in their life with dignity and grace. Kristin saw that there was so much more than "winning" and that her role could be to help resolve family issues, doing as little damage as possible, and remaining child-centric.

Kristin is currently an associate attorney at Verrill Dana, LLP in Boston practicing exclusively in family law. Kristin is looking forward to her AFCC Fellowship as an opportunity to see how AFCC works from the inside. She is excited to join a community of like-minded people and sees the networking, support, and resources that are available as invaluable. She is interested in taking on a leadership role in the long term.

Kristin and Liana Shelby, another AFCC Fellow, will be presenting a workshop about family reunification therapy at the AFCC 54th Annual Conference in Boston.

Kristin and her wife, Meghan Russ are currently expecting their first child in January, and are excited beyond words.



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AFCC Fellows: Liana Shelby, PsyD

Liana Shelby was born and raised in Oahu, Hawaii and, seeking a complete change of scenery, went to college at Boston University. She graduated with honors and a BA in Psychology and returned to Hawaii to attend graduate school. Liana earned her master's in Clinical Psychology at Argosy University in Honolulu and her PsyD in Clinical Psychology from the Hawaii School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University. She then had the opportunity to work with Native Alaskan and rural populations at Hope Counseling Center (part of the Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium) in Fairbanks, Alaska when completing her predoctoral internship. She recently completed her Postdoctoral Fellowship in Child and Family Forensics, Child and Family Evaluation Service at William James College in Newton, Massachusetts.

Liana specialized in eating disorders, focusing on anorexia nervosa, in her graduate studies and was exposed to forensic psychology during a practicum, and she became interested in the combination of psychology and the law and criminal work. She discovered family law as a post-doctoral student and found that she likes doing the assessment work and enjoys child custody evaluations.

Liana is currently working at Mass Mental, a community mental health center, as part of a team treating mental illness and problematic sexual behavior. She is also doing contract work in risk assessment. When not working, Liana is studying for her licensing exam or hiking with her dogs and her new husband, Stephen.

Liana hopes that the AFCC Fellowship program will help invigorate younger and early career professionals, interest them in AFCC and the interdisciplinary nature of family law work. She sees her role as being an AFCC ambassador and helping to grow the organization among professionals who might not ordinarily learn about AFCC until later in their careers.

Liana looks forward to being mentored by AFCC members and welcomes the guidance.

As a part of their Fellowship experience, Liana and Kristin Doeberl, another AFCC Fellow, will be presenting a workshop about family reunification therapy at the AFCC 54th Annual Conference in Boston.



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Meet Gerri L. Wong, President of the Ontario Chapter

Gerri L. Wong was born and raised in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Graduated from McGill University and University of Windsor Law School, she is a family law lawyer, civil law mediation roster member, accredited family law mediator, and panel agent of the Office of the Children's lawyer. Gerri is also a sessional instructor at the University of Windsor Law School. She is the proud winner of Charles J Clark Award 2013 (recognition of community service) and named one of Canada's Best Lawyers in 2013 in family law mediation. Gerri was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice in 2014 as a "two hatter," practicing criminal and family law.