



# AFCC eNEWS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER  
VOL. 5 NO. 6  
JUNE 2010

## Denver Annual Conference a Great Success

AFCC's 47th Annual Conference, June 2–5, 2010, in Denver, Colorado, attracted over 1,000 attendees from 19 countries. The conference theme, *Traversing the Trail of Alienation: Rocky Relationships, Mountains of Emotion, Mile High Conflict*, formed an energizing base for the conference.

Listen to the plenaries online: Four exciting plenary sessions about alienation were presented at the conference and the audio recordings of these sessions are available free to members in the AFCC Member Center of the AFCC website.

[Read more about the conference...](#)

## Reminder Regarding Continuing Education for the Denver Conference

If you signed up to receive a certificate of attendance for the 47th Annual Conference, and you did not turn in a Verification of Attendance form while at the conference, please download, fill out and return this important form. This form must be completed in order for you to receive your certificate of attendance.

[Link to form...](#)

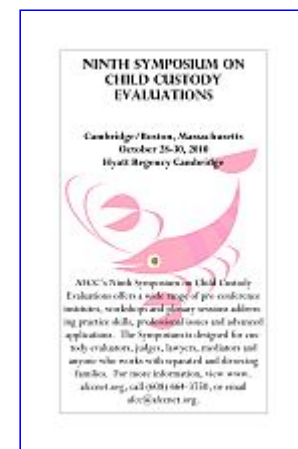
## AFCC Board of Directors

AFCC is pleased to welcome Mindy Mitnick of Edina, MN, to the Board of Directors beginning July 1, 2010. A special thanks to Hon. Emile R. Kruzick for his leadership and commitment to AFCC while serving as President. Philip M. Stahl, Queen Creek, AZ, has completed his term on the Board. AFCC thanks him for his outstanding service and contribution to the association. The new Executive Committee, effective July 1, 2010, consists of President Robert M. Smith, Windsor, CO, President Elect Linda B. Fieldstone, Miami, FL, Vice President Arnold T. Shienvold, Harrisburg, PA, Secretary Nancy Ver Steegh, St. Paul, MN, Treasurer Richard L. Altman, Napoleon, OH, and Past President Emile R. Kruzick, Brampton, ON.

## AFCC Annual Awards Presented

AFCC members Constance Ahrons, Bernard Mayer, Debra Carter, Lorraine Martin and the M.A.R.C.H. Mediation program were honored for their accomplishments at the AFCC 47th Annual

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES



### AFCC Ninth Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

October 28–30, 2010  
Hyatt Regency Cambridge  
Cambridge/Boston, MA

### AFCC 48th Annual Conference

June 1–4, 2011  
Hilton Orlando Bonnet  
Creek Resort  
Orlando, Florida

### AFCC Regional Training Conference

October 27–29, 2011  
Hyatt Regency Indianapolis  
Indianapolis, Indiana

### AFCC 49th Annual Conference

June 6–9, 2012  
Hyatt Regency Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

Conference Awards Luncheon on June 3, 2010.

[Read more...](#)

[See photos from the Awards Luncheon on the AFCC Facebook page...](#)

## FEATURED VIDEO

### Constance Ahrons: Old Dissolution Model Was Damaging

*Courtesy of Mediate.com*

Constance Ahrons, who was awarded the 2010 AFCC Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award, discusses the pre-joint-custody model for the relationship between ex-spouses. The cultural norm was to have no relationship, because that meant that the ex-spouses were hanging on.

[Watch the video...](#)

## AFCC Chapter News

The AFCC Board of Directors granted Chartered Chapter status to AFCC's Minnesota and Ontario Chapters, and granted Provisional Chapter status to Washington State. Congratulations to all for all their hard work!

## New Student Membership Rate

AFCC is now offering full-time students an electronic membership for an annual rate of only \$25. As of July 1, 2010, full-time students may join online at [www.afccnet.org](http://www.afccnet.org). Student members receive electronic access to *Family Court Review*, the monthly *AFCC eNEWS* and other discounts and privileges of AFCC membership.

## AFCC Member News

**Justice Harvey Brownstone**, AFCC member from Toronto, ON, is the first sitting family court judge to host his own television program, *Family Matters*, filmed in Victoria, BC. The show will combine educational segments, with expert guests as well as an interactive component designed to answer viewer's questions using YouTube, Skype and email submissions.

**Joseph Harman**, AFCC member from Emu Plains, NSW, Australia, has been appointed as Federal Magistrate in the Court of Australia the Parramatta Registry.

**Hon. Debra Lehrman**, AFCC member from Fort Worth, TX, was appointed by Texas Governor Rick Perry as Justice to the Supreme Court of Texas. Judge Lehrman is a previous president of the AFCC Texas Chapter.

**Marsha Kline Pruett**, AFCC member from Northampton, MA, has been awarded the 2010 Men-in-Families Best Research Article Award for an article she co-authored, "Promoting Fathers' Engagement With Children: Preventive Interventions for Low-Income Families," that appeared last year in *Journal of Marriage and the Family*.

## AFCC's 12th Annual Silent Auction

AFCC's 12th Annual Silent Auction was held during AFCC's 47th Annual Conference. This year's silent auction was a great

### AFCC 50th Annual Conference

May 29–June 1, 2013

J.W. Marriott Los Angeles at

L.A. Live

Los Angeles, California

### Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

October 14–15, 2010

*The Future of Family Law*

University of Toronto

Residences

Toronto, Canada

[More information...](#)

### Texas Chapter Annual Conference

October 15–16, 2010

*Children Caught in the Conflict: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*

Houston, Texas

[More information...](#)

### Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

January 28–30, 2011

Sedona, Arizona

[More information...](#)

### California Chapter Annual Conference

February 11–13, 2011

*The Future of Family Law*

The Mark Hopkins Hotel at

Nob Hill

San Francisco, California

[More information...](#)

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## ABOUT AFCC eNEWS

*AFCC eNEWS* is a monthly e-newsletter published by the Association of Family and

success and raised over \$10,000. Proceeds from the auction are earmarked towards AFCC's special projects and initiatives to support children and families struggling with separation and divorce. This year the funds raised will be used to support projects including AFCC's Court-Involved Therapists Task Force and Child Custody Consultation Task Force. Thanks to all those who donated items for the auction and to all of the auction volunteers who helped with this smashing event: Mary Ferriter, Annette Burns, Dick Altman, Emile and Josie Kruzick, Chris DeFavero, Landon and Jaelyn Blue, Arnie Shienvold, Betsy Thomas, Tom Gould, David Medoff and Matt Sullivan.  
[Click here for the list of contributors...](#)

## A Graduate Student's Reflections

Robin Ballard is a fourth year graduate student at Indiana University–Bloomington in Clinical Science and a registered mediator. She is one of the work force behind the new AFCC Mentorship Project. Here she reflects on being a student in AFCC and why this program is important to her.  
[Read more...](#)

## FAMILY LAW IN THE NEWS

### AI and Tipper Gore Split Puts Focus on Late-stage Divorces

*By Sharon Jayson, courtesy of USA TODAY*

The split that nobody saw coming isn't such a shocker to those who deal every day with marriage, separation and divorce.  
[Read more...](#)

### Mom Finds Her Kidnapped Kids Via Facebook

*Courtesy of CNET.com*

A Southern California mother was recently able to locate her long-ago kidnapped children via Facebook, according to numerous media reports.  
[Read more...](#)

### Plan to Settle Child Custody Disputes by Arbitration

*By Carol Nader, courtesy of smh.com.au*

Separating couples in disputes over children will be able to have a person other than a judge decide who gets custody, in a radical change proposed by the federal Australian government to reduce the number of families that end up in court.  
[Read more...](#)

Conciliation Courts (AFCC). AFCC eNEWS provides professionals with time sensitive and up-to-date topics including practice tips, research innovations and international news. Readers are welcome to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues.  
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### Editor:

Leslye Hunter  
[editor@afccnet.org](mailto:editor@afccnet.org)

AFCC welcomes your comments, questions or feedback. Please email the editor by [clicking here](#).

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#### Listen to Plenary Session Audio Online

Four plenary sessions were presented at the conference and the audio recordings of these sessions are available free to members in the AFCC Member Center of the AFCC website for download at <http://www.afccnet.org/members/login.asp>.

*Parental Alienation and the DSM-5*, presented by William Bernet, M.D.; Amy J.L. Baker, Ph.D.; Peter Jaffe, Ph.D.; Janet R. Johnston, Ph.D. and moderated by Linda Elrod, J.D., provides an overview of various definitions of alienation, discusses whether current knowledge provides support for a diagnostic category, and if so, whether it should be categorized as a mental disorder or relational problem, and addresses possible implications of including parental alienation in the DSM-5.

*Helping Families with Children Who Reject Parents: Consensus, Controversies and Future Directions*, presented by Robin M. Deutsch, Ph.D.; Steven N. Friedlander, Ph.D.; Richard Warshak, Ph.D. and moderated by Nicholas Bala, LL.B., LL.M., discusses three very different types of interventions, similarities and differences in principles and procedures, as well as experience with the outcomes of each approach.

*Addressing Allegations of Alienation: Judicial Dilemmas*, presented by Federal Magistrate Dr. Tom Altobelli, Hon. Paula Carey, Hon. Donna Martinson and moderated by Barbara Fidler, Ph.D., shares their thought processes and frustrations in addressing difficult questions such as how to ensure effective methods for identifying alienation, how to distinguish alienation from other forms of high conflict and estrangement and how to manage these cases effectively.

*Assessing Alienation in the Context of Domestic Violence and Child Brain Development*, presented by Linda Neilson, LL.B., Ph.D., examined how child brain development and typical attachment needs might be affected by domestic violence. Factors that can help distinguish genuine concerns from litigation tactics are discussed.

If you couldn't attend the conference or missed an important session, you can purchase conference sessions individually or as a complete set through AFCC's audio provider, Digital Conference Providers, Inc., at [http://www.dcpvidersonline.com/?event\\_id=AFCC11](http://www.dcpvidersonline.com/?event_id=AFCC11).

#### Conference Proceedings CDs Available

AFCC has a limited number of Conference Proceedings CDs. To purchase, please phone the AFCC office at (608) 664-3750. The CDs are \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members, including shipping to U.S. addresses. (International addresses will be charged a small fee for shipping & handling).

## **Thank You**

AFCC would like to thank its Platinum Sponsor, All About the Children, its Gold Sponsor, Complete Equity Markets, its Silver Sponsor, Gutterman Griffiths PC, and Local Sponsors Boulder Interdisciplinary Committee, Metropolitan Denver Interdisciplinary Committee, and Mustain-Wood, Walker & Schumacher, for helping to make the conference a huge success.

Special thanks to members of the AFCC Conference Committee: Co-chairs Hon. Denise McColley and Arnold T. Shienvold, Wendy Bryans, Debra Carter, Christine Coates, Kathleen Clark, Hon. George Czutrin, Barbara Fidler, Hon. Emile Kruzick, Jennifer McIntosh, and Robert M. Smith. Thanks to conference head shepherd Ernie Sanchez and shepherds Stephanie Bryan, Megan Embrey, Tom Gould, Chris Jones, Sherrie Kibler-Sanchez, Kendra Kinney, Kathy Lees, Mike Puiia, Christopher Sarson, Jessica Sherwood, Janet Switzer, Michele Tipple and Tricia Winslow.

AFCC offers its gratitude to the collaborating organizations that were important to the success of the conference: AFCC Colorado Chapter, American Humane, ABA Section of Dispute Resolution, ABA Section of Family Law, Association for Conflict Resolution, Canadian Judicial Council, Colorado Bar Association Family Law Section, Colorado Collaborative Law Professionals, Colorado Judicial Office of Dispute Resolution, Colorado State Judicial Institute, Colorado State Court Administrators Office, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719  
Phone 608.664.3750 Fax 608.664.3751 [afcc@afccnet.org](mailto:afcc@afccnet.org) [www.afccnet.org](http://www.afccnet.org)

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 Andy and Deb Schepard  
 Iris Shasha and Peter Salem  
 Arnie Shienvold  
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 Hugh and Judy Starnes  
 Matt Sullivan & Sherry Cassidy  
 Gretchen Taylor

### Organizations:

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### AFCC Annual Awards Presented

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#### John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award

**Dr. Debra Carter**, Bradenton, FL, was honored with the John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions and achievements by members of AFCC. Dr. Carter just completed six years of service on the Board of Directors of the Florida Chapter of AFCC (FLAFCC), including a one-year term as President. She served as chairperson of the Parenting Plan Task Force, the Social Investigation Parenting Plan Evaluation Task Force and the committee reviewing the Ethical Standards for Parenting Coordinators for FLAFCC. Dr. Carter co-chairs the Parenting Coordination Research Project, a joint project of the University of South Florida and the University of Miami. She spearheaded the FLAFCC group that created the monograph on Empirically Based Parenting Plans and the bench book that the Office of Court Administration for the State of Florida distributed for use in all 20 judicial circuits in Florida.

#### Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award

**Dr. Constance R. Ahrons**, San Diego, CA, was awarded the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award. Dr. Ahrons is the author of *We're Still Family* and *The Good Divorce*, and co-author of *Divorced Families*. Dr. Ahrons coined the term "binuclear family" and has pioneered the concept of a "good divorce." She is Professor Emeritus from the Department of Sociology and former Director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Training Program at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. In 2000-2001 she was awarded a fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard to pursue work on her longitudinal research on the effects of a parental divorce on grown children twenty years afterwards.

#### Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award

**M.A.R.C.H. Mediation** in Liberty, MO, was presented with the Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award. The program, Mediation Achieving Results for Children, was established to provide mediation services to parents living apart who are divorced or were never married, at no cost to them. The program has been featured nationally as a model program, and is so successful that its funding was exempt from the large cuts made by the governor in the state budget for the fiscal year.

#### President's Award

**Ms. Lorraine Martin**, Toronto, ON, was presented the AFCC President's Award by Hon. Emile R. Kruzick. Ms. Martin implemented the Family Mediation Pilot Project in Hamilton shortly after its first integrated Family Court was established. She was chosen in 1993 as the Clinical Coordinator of the Office of the Children's Lawyer and was charged with modernizing



the delivery of province wide clinical services to children and families throughout Ontario. She served on the AFCC Board of Directors for four years and was the Co-Chair of the AFCC Task Force on Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation.

#### **Meyer Elkin Award**

**Dr. Bernard S. Mayer**, Kingsville, ON, was honored with the Meyer Elkin Award for the most outstanding article in the *Family Court Review* for 2009. His article, "Reflections on the State of Consensus-Based Decision Making in Child Welfare," was published in January 2009.

#### **2010 Ambassadors**

AFCC Ambassador ribbons are presented to members who routinely go above and beyond in reaching out to prospective members and to those who contribute their time and expertise. Ambassador ribbons are presented to the AFCC President as well as to members who do not serve in an official leadership position. The 2010 Ambassador ribbons were presented to: **Nicholas Bala**, Kingston, ON; **Shelley Bresnick**, Lakewood, CO; **Barbara Fidler**, Toronto, ON; and **Christine Gille**, Pasadena, CA.

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### On Being a Student in AFCC

*By Robin Ballard*

I have just returned from another wonderful AFCC conference (Denver, June 2010), and I am happy to have this opportunity to reflect on the experience of being a student involved with AFCC. It was clear from the beginning of my graduate school training at Indiana University that our lab's research was going to be interdisciplinary: using psychology research methodology to study the practice of family law mediation. Compared to my fellow graduate students in the department who study classic psychopathology such as schizophrenia or alcoholism, my research was a little off the beaten track. Furthermore, attending a national academic psychology conference in my first year didn't give me high hopes that our research would be meaningful to other psychologists. Amidst thousands of poster presentations, only six posters fit into the "conflict resolution" category, and mine was the only one that had anything to do with families. It was a lonely poster session.

After that experience, attending my first AFCC conference (Vancouver, June 2008) was a huge relief. I volunteered at that AFCC conference to save money, but it also provided me a way to see a wider range of conference presentations. It was immediately obvious that this was a good intellectual home for our research: a truly interdisciplinary organization that appreciated empirical examination of family law practices. And while there weren't too many students in attendance, there were plenty of practitioners, which was a stark contrast to the other academic conferences I had attended. It was appealing to be able to interact with both academics and practitioners at AFCC.

As AFCC has become increasingly committed to attracting students, young professionals, and professionals new to the field, they have not only lowered student membership dues and planned future poster sessions but have also begun a Mentorship Project. Inaugurated at the Denver conference, the Mentorship Project seeks to pair an outstanding group of mentors with student and young professional mentees. Although AFCC is a small and focused association when compared to an enormous psychology association, it is the perfect place to be if you are a student engaged in interdisciplinary family law and social science research and practice. I'm so glad to have found a home for the research we conduct and a group that is so keen to develop the talents of the next generation of family court professionals.

*Robin Ballard is a fourth year graduate student at Indiana University – Bloomington in Clinical Science and a registered mediator. Her research has focused on the assessment of intimate partner violence in family law mediation and on testing new mediation interventions to improve outcomes for parents and their children. She has presented at AFCC conferences and is a co-author of several papers in press with Family Court Review. Having benefited from wonderful mentorship by psychology and law faculty at IU and beyond, she is excited to be part of AFCC's new Mentorship Project.*

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