



AFCC Center for Excellence in Family Court Practice

AFCC is pleased to introduce the [Center for Excellence in Family Court Practice](#) (CEFCP), which will serve as an umbrella for AFCC service initiatives, think tanks, practice standards and guidelines and other work by AFCC task forces and work groups. "Over the last decade or so, AFCC has developed an impressive body of work and we anticipate continuing to do more in the future," said Linda Fieldstone, AFCC President. "The Center gives us a place to consolidate this work and to make it easily accessible to AFCC members and others." The CEFCP webpage describes initiatives and provides resources such as specific practice guidelines, related conference audio, journal articles and reports. [Visit the CEFCP to learn more](#)

New Look and Features at the AFCC Website

Visited the AFCC website lately? The look and function of the website—[afccnet.org](#)—have been enhanced. New to the site is the Center for Excellence in Family Court Practice (CEFCP). The CEFCP highlights AFCC initiatives and projects created through task forces and collaborative endeavors. Take a look around the site to find the new Starting a Chapter FAQs, and easier access to the *Family Court Review*, information on awards, the scholarship fund, and more.

Chicago Conference Calendar

Many important deadlines are just around the corner; take a look so as not to miss out on chances to book a room, save on your conference registration, apply for a conference scholarship, submit a poster proposal, and nominate a colleague, program or yourself for an AFCC award.

Rooms are Selling Out

In anticipation of a large turnout in Chicago, AFCC increased the room block at the Hyatt Regency by nearly 20%; however, even the larger block is already 95% booked. Given this response, we are strongly encouraging you to register for the conference and make hotel reservations right away!

Hotel rooms remain available in the AFCC block at the Hyatt Regency on June 6-8, 2012. To make a reservation or check availability, please call Hyatt Reservations toll free at (888) 421-1442 and request the AFCC special rate, or reserve [online](#).

AFCC has secured a limited number of additional rooms at nearby hotels. [Please visit the AFCC website](#) for more information as online reservation links become available.

Register Now to Save!

AFCC members who register and pay by March 16, 2012, will receive the best rates for conference registration. Not yet a member of AFCC? You can join with your conference registration! Register at the member rate and save \$10 on your first year of membership.

Apply for a Conference Scholarship

Scholarship applications must be received by March 1, 2012. Conference scholarships cover the cost of conference registration; including a pre-conference institute, a ticket to the welcome reception and The Second City Improv All Stars, awards luncheon, annual banquet, hospitality suite and a certificate of attendance. The AFCC Scholarship Fund is supported entirely through donations from AFCC members; if you have not already, please make a [donation](#) today. Your contribution provides scholarship recipients the invaluable knowledge and experiences gained from AFCC conference attendance.

Submit a Poster Proposal

The deadline to submit a poster proposal is March 15, 2012. Presenting a poster at the AFCC annual conference is an excellent opportunity to share your work and research with the interdisciplinary professionals who make up the AFCC community. See the call for posters for submission guidelines and suggested topics.

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Upcoming Conferences

[AFCC Chicago brochure](#)

AFCC 49th Annual Conference
Attachment, Brain Science and Children of Divorce: The ABCDs of Child Development for Family Law
June 6-9, 2012
Hyatt Regency
Chicago, Illinois
[Conference brochure](#)
[Register online](#)
[Scholarship guidelines and criteria](#)
[Scholarship application](#)

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[American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers— Illinois Chapter](#)

AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations
November 1-3, 2012
Arizona Grand Resort
Phoenix, Arizona

AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference
May 29-June 1, 2013
JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live
Los Angeles, California

AFCC 51st Annual Conference
May 28-May 31, 2013
The Westin Harbour Castle
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

AFCC Training Programs

[Nominate a Colleague or Program for an Award](#)

The AFCC Awards Committee will accept nominations until March 15, 2012 for awards to be presented at the annual conference. Nominate an AFCC member for the John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award; a researcher, colleague or even yourself for the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award; or a court-connected service program for the Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award. It's easy to make a nomination; just submit a brief letter explaining how the nominee fits the criteria for the award. See the [Awards page](#) for full descriptions of each award and complete nomination instructions.

Member Profile

Leslie Drozd, PhD, Newport Beach, California

When you meet Leslie Drozd you are struck by her serene, zen-like calm. She appears unhurried and relaxed, like someone who has nothing else to do than to give you her full attention. This demeanor belies the enormous level of activity and accomplishment going on behind the scenes.

[Read more](#)

Ask the Experts

Ten Things to Enhance Social Media Success for Family Law Professionals

By Annette Burns, Phoenix, Arizona

Here are ten things you can do to enhance your online experiences, even if you "don't believe in" social media.

[Read more](#)

Member News

Hon. Leonard Edwards, Los Altos Hills, California, was declared Los Altos of the Year by the *Los Altos Town Crier*. He is a past president of NCJFCJ and served as a Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara Family and Juvenile Court Judge for 26 years before his retirement in 2006. He is currently serving a half-time position as the Judge-in-Residence at the Center for Families, Children & the Courts, a division of the California Administrative Office of the Courts, as a consultant specializing in juvenile law, domestic violence, drug courts, judicial ethics and other issues relating to children and families within the court system.

Robert Emery, PhD, Charlottesville, Virginia, was the recipient of Distinguished Contribution to Family Psychology Award awarded by the APA Division 43—Society for Family Psychology in recognition of his special contributions to the advancement of the field of family psychology. Dr. Emery is associate editor of *Family Court Review*, a professor of psychology and director of the Center for Children Families and the Law at the University of Virginia.

Hon. Denise McColley, Napoleon, Ohio, was elected to serve as president of Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges for 2012. She was among nine newly elected to leadership positions, including three AFCC members: Diane Palos, Rocky River, Ohio, who was elected vice president; Pamela A. Heringhaus, Bowling Green, Ohio and Tiffany E. Beckman, Paulding, Ohio, who were elected as trustees. Denise is a former president of AFCC and co-chair of the AFCC Conference Committee.

Margaret S. Powers, LCSW, MSW, MA, Arlington Heights, Illinois has been selected for the National Association of Social Workers Northeastern Illinois District Lifetime Achievement Award.

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD, Palo Alto, California, was honored with the 2012 Joseph Drown Award for Outstanding Services to Children by the California Chapter of AFCC. Matt is on the board of directors of both AFCC and the California Chapter, is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Child Custody*, and has served on the AFCC Task Force on Parenting Coordination and co-chaired the AFCC Task Force for Court-Involved Therapy.

In Memoriam

With profound sadness and deep shock, the New Jersey Chapter of AFCC reports the untimely death of Phil Sobel, Esq. He was a founding member of the chapter and a Past President. He remained involved with the chapter as a member of the Executive Board and the Program Committee.

[Read more](#)

Chicago Trainings

Limited space remains for two excellent training programs, each presented by two well-known AFCC members. Join AFCC and Loyola Civitas ChildLaw Center in Chicago, March 5-6, 2012, when William Eddy, MSA, JD will present *Managing Personality-Disordered Parents* and March 7-8, when Joan B. Kelly, PhD, will present *Advanced Parenting Coordination Practice: Working More Effectively with Parents and Children*.

[Register today or view full program information and presenter bios](#)

Family Law in the News

What Makes a Good Family Court Judge

By Henry Gornbein, courtesy of *The Huffington Post*

Managing Personality-Disordered Parents
William A. Eddy, MSA, JD
March 5-6, 2012
Chicago, Illinois
[More information](#)

Advanced Parenting Coordination Practice
Joan B. Kelly, PhD
March 7-8, 2012
Chicago, Illinois
[More information](#)

AFCC Chapter Conferences

Florida Chapter Conference
Spirit of Cooperation
March 30-31, 2012
Renaissance Tampa International Plaza
Tampa, Florida
[More information](#)

Washington Chapter Conference
Systemic Solutions for Families in Crisis
April 13-14, 2012
Washington Athletic Center
Seattle, Washington
[More information](#)

Massachusetts Chapter Conference
The Search for Truth: Memory, Distortion and Deception in Family Law Cases
May 4, 2012
Regis College
Weston, Massachusetts
[More information](#)

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About AFCC eNEWS

AFCC eNEWS is a monthly e-newsletter published by the Association of Family and 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. All opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of AFCC.

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

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In over forty years of practicing family law, I have appeared before hundreds of different judges. I have found that some are rude, arrogant, and suffer from what is known as black robe syndrome. This means that they have forgotten—or never knew—what it was like to practice law, and have a holier-than-thou attitude. Most judges are considerate, will listen, and will try to resolve issues in cases.

[Read more](#)

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Professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict



Ten Things to Enhance Social Media Success for Family Law Professionals

Annette Burns, Phoenix, Arizona

Here are ten things you can do to enhance your online experiences, even if you “don’t believe in” social media.

1. Wade into something. If you’ve wondered about Facebook, take the leap and sign on. Nothing bad will happen, and you might find something interesting.
2. LinkedIn is a good starting point for folks who don’t want the chatter and goofing around of Facebook. LinkedIn is for business. You’ll receive links that might be of interest to you (easy to click and read).
3. Offer some content for free. Whether it’s in your emails or on a social media site you’re already using (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or the like), offer an interesting article that you think will be of use to the friends you talk with online. Give away information. The more you give, the more you get out of online activity. Social media should be 92% giving and 8% getting.
4. General information is fairly common on the web. If you can offer specific information you will stand out. Don’t post about mediation in general; post about a specific mediation issue, such as resolving impasse.
5. Online activity of any kind is just like a conversation. Whether you’re emailing colleagues, engaging on a listserv, or using a social media site, just write like you’re talking with friends over coffee.
6. Never, ever, ever think of simply using social media as a way to get business. If you’re planning to use social media as a form of advertising for yourself or your practice, don’t even start. While social media is a GREAT way to get business, it won’t work if you’re trying too hard.
7. Never get engaged in a discussion of anyone’s specific case online, whether on a listserv (even with people you trust), LinkedIn or Facebook. Professional communications online are for discussion of general issues, theories and resources that are helpful to a wide group of people. Individuals may try to get you to talk about a specific case, and that’s always dangerous, even in a closed group.
8. Go for quality of contacts (people you talk to online) and not quantity. It’s better to engage with six people who are really interested in the same things you are than to have 500 contacts who are too general to be of help or interest to you.

9. Social media is just like anything else: the more you put in, the more you get out. If you spend 5–10 minutes a day reviewing and updating things like your Facebook or LinkedIn status, or tweeting even once a day, you will see the value in less than a month. Consistency is key—along with quality over quantity!

10. Social media is the world's largest focus group. Listen and read—don't preach.



eNEWS

AFCC Member Profile

Leslie Drozd, PhD, Newport Beach, California

When you meet Leslie Drozd you are struck by her serene, zen-like calm. She appears unhurried and relaxed, like someone who has nothing else to do than to give you her full attention. This demeanor belies the enormous level of activity and accomplishment going on behind the scenes. Besides having a busy and successful clinical and forensic private practice as a marriage, family and child therapist; acting as a consultant to attorneys; providing case management and parenting coordination; being an expert on family violence and substance abuse; founding and serving as editor in chief of the *Journal of Child Custody*; writing numerous scholarly articles; frequently presenting and training for AFCC and AFCC Chapters; co-editing (with Kathy Kuenhle) an important new book, *Parenting Plan Evaluations: Applied Research for the Family Court*, and co-authoring a book in progress; Leslie is also a wife, mother of two and doting grandmother of four, who loves to sail in her “free” time.

Tell us a little about your background and how you became interested in the field of family law, divorce and separation.

Years ago, I taught junior high school. In 1981, I wrote an educational program for first-time juvenile offenders and their families called “Short Stop.” It is still used in Orange County. I love to teach and I was always interested in children and families. I was planning to go to law school, but decided I could help children more if I got my doctorate in psychology. I trained as a family therapist and much of the work that came to me involved issues of separation and divorce. I actively sought as much training as I could find on child custody evaluations in the late eighties and early nineties and a substantial part of my practice became evaluations.

How did you first find out about AFCC?

I first went to an AFCC national conference in Newport Beach, California, not far from my office. I was sold from day one. I have not, and would not, ever give up what I have learned or how I have been challenged to create new ideas in AFCC. I not only like the collegiality and the challenges to traditional ways of thinking that occur at AFCC events, but I cherish the friendships I have made since joining AFCC in the nineties.

What do you see as the greatest challenges in the field now?

I am struck by how really bright and informed people are succumbing, over and over again, to simple solutions to very complex issues before them, and in doing so are sometimes making recommendations that can or do harm children and families. In my mind the question is how we, as custody evaluators, attorneys and the court, methodically organize the data in a manner that allows us to minimize

fast/intuitive thinking and maximize rational, methodological, logical thinking so as to offset inevitable biases. We need a paradigm shift.

Tell us more about this paradigm shift.

It is my observation that we are at a crossroads—one in which a paradigm shift and a change in perception are called for. As we try to help the families before us, we need to shift from the world of "or" to the world of "and." In this world of "and," we need to form multiple hypotheses, consider multiple variables through multiple processes and procedures; consider the current research; and ultimately we need to come up with multiple solutions for the more and more complex problems these families present—with solutions that involve this and that, not this or that. The world of "or" is one of the past. The world of "and" is the one of the present and the future. Without such a paradigm shift, we will fail to provide the services these families need.

What would you like to see happen in the field ten years from now?

I would like to see everyone reading the literature and knowing how to make the distinction between "good" and "bad" research. I'd like to see those involved in high-conflict cases have a way to conceptualize and analyze the case before them, perhaps through the use of decision trees.

What advice would you give someone entering the field of family law today?

Hang out with the winners. Seek the best and brightest in the field—most of whom you will meet in AFCC. Immerse yourself in AFCC, not only for the professional relationships and knowledge you will gain, but also for the personal friendships you will develop.



In Memoriam

With profound sadness and deep shock, the New Jersey Chapter of AFCC reports the untimely death of Phil Sobel, Esq. He was a founding member of the chapter and a Past President. He remained involved with the chapter as a member of the Executive Board and the Program Committee.

Phil was born on December 24, 1941, and married his sweetheart, Esther, on his birthday. They had been married for 46 years. Phil is also survived by his loving daughter, Kirsten, and two adored grandsons, ages five and eight. His priority was his family. He passed away while on vacation with family members.

Educated at Harvard, Phil was a partner in the law firm of Sobel and Brown. Phil dreamed and worked diligently to facilitate real changes in the legal system. One of his primary goals was to find a way to allow divorce litigants to obtain a docket number and to avoid the court process. He believed that by working cooperatively with other professionals that solutions could be reached to settle issues for the parties. A pioneer in advocating for collaborative divorce, Phil was a member of the New Jersey Collaborative Law Group and the New Jersey Council of Collaborative Practice Groups.

Phil was always quick to offer his time to a new project and was involved in a number of projects with the New Jersey Chapter of AFCC. Whatever task he undertook was approached with enthusiasm and consummate professionalism. Phil was an avid tennis player, an enthusiastic theater-goer, and a knowledgeable sports fan. Highly articulate, he had a keen sense of humor. Recently, after viewing the silent film *The Artist*, he quipped to a chapter past president, who was also in the audience, "I liked the movie, but I really had a hard time hearing what the actors were saying to each other."

Phil was a true "Renaissance Man." He will be greatly missed.