



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

## **Program Now Available, Online Registration Open 11th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations Examining Unintended Consequences November 6-8, 2014, San Antonio, Texas**

### **AFCC Moves up to the Hyatt**

AFCC is pleased to announce that the Symposium will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa, after last week's notification that the La Cantera Hill Country Resort would be closing for renovations over the conference dates. Although room rates at the Hyatt are higher, AFCC arranged for the same rates and guest benefits. The room rate remains \$159/night single or double; resort fee included. The Hyatt is rated four diamonds by AAA, offers more upscale facilities, and more amenities for guests. Make your reservations [online](#) or by calling 888-421-1442 and requesting the AFCC rate.

### **Program Brochure Online**

The symposium brochure is now available [online](#). Read the session descriptions and make your plans to attend. Register before October 10 for the best rate on your registration. AFCC members get the best registration rates—if you are not yet a member, join with your registration and save up to \$100—that's well over half the cost of a year's membership.

[Register today!](#)

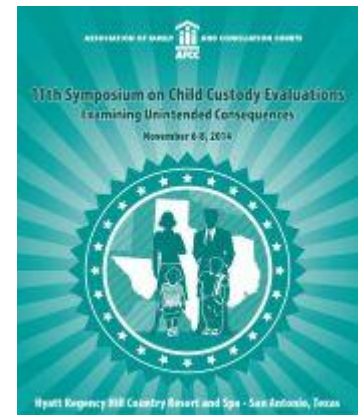
### **Apply for a Scholarship to the Symposium**

Scholarships to assist with the cost of attendance will be awarded by the AFCC Scholarship Committee. Scholarships will cover the cost of registration, pre-symposium institute, certificate of attendance, Friday's luncheon and access to the AFCC hospitality suite. The application deadline is September 4, 2014.

[Apply for a scholarship](#)

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER  
VOL. 9 NO. 7  
JULY 2014

### **AFCC Conferences**



**AFCC 11th Symposium on  
Child Custody Evaluations  
Examining Unintended  
Consequences**  
November 6–8, 2014  
Hyatt Regency Hill Country  
Resort and Spa  
San Antonio, Texas  
[Register today](#)

**AFCC 52nd Annual  
Conference**  
May 27–30, 2015  
*Children in the Court System:  
Different Doors, Different  
Responses, Different  
Outcomes*  
Hilton New Orleans Riverside  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## [Guidelines and criteria](#)

### **Exhibit Opportunities**

Introduce your organization and its products and services to the interdisciplinary professionals who attend AFCC conferences with an onsite exhibit or put your literature or marketing piece in the hands of each attendee with a registration packet insert. See the [prospectus](#) for more information.

### **President's Message**

*Richard L. Altman, JD, Napoleon, Ohio*

It was 1993 and a fellow lawyer, Denise Herman McColley (now a family court judge), encouraged me to attend a conference in Toledo, Ohio, for an organization that I had never heard of, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. It seemed every time I saw Denise she would mention this particular conference.

[Read more](#)

### **President's Profile**

#### **Meet AFCC's New President Dick Altman**

Magistrate Richard L. Altman serves Fulton and Henry Counties in northwestern Ohio, just west of Toledo, as a judicial officer in both criminal and civil matters, including and predominantly delinquency and domestic relations matters. Domestic relations has been his primary area of practice since 1998. From 1998-2004, he practiced mediation exclusively and now incorporates mediation tools into his work as a judicial officer.

[Read more](#)

### **Call for Proposals**

#### **AFCC 52nd Annual Conference**

#### **Children in the Court System:**

#### **Different Doors, Different Responses, Different Outcomes**

#### **May 27-30, 2015, New Orleans, Louisiana**

Submit a proposal to present a workshop session at the 2015 AFCC Annual Conference. Presenting at an AFCC conference is an excellent way to share your research, practice tools or programs with the interdisciplinary community of AFCC conference attendees. The theme of this conference will address the different ways children enter the court system, how these paths overlap, and how we as professionals can work together toward better outcomes by examining the challenges faced by professionals, children, their parents and guardians in the court system. Proposals must be submitted using the online form and received by October 1, 2014.

## [Call for proposals](#)

### **AFCC Regional Training Conference**

November 5 –7, 2015  
Hyatt Regency Columbus  
Columbus, Ohio

### **AFCC Training Programs**

#### ***The Model Standards and Beyond: Custody Evaluations and Risk Management***

David Martindale, PhD  
December 8-9, 2014  
University of Baltimore School of Law, Student Center  
Baltimore, Maryland

#### ***Parenting Coordination: Strategies for Helping Parents Improve Communication and Reduce Conflict***

Mindy Mitnick, EdM  
December 10-11, 2014  
University of Baltimore School of Law, Student Center  
Baltimore, Maryland

### **AFCC Chapter Annual Conferences**

#### **Australia Chapter Annual Conference**

*Children as a Starting Point: Assessing Families for Family Law Disputes*  
August 15, 2014  
Grand Hyatt  
Melbourne, Australia  
[More information](#)

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

*Understanding and Managing the Challenges of Relocation: A Factor Based Approach*  
September 26, 2014  
Country Springs Hotel and Conference Center  
Pewaukee, Wisconsin  
[More information](#)

[Guidelines and suggested topics](#)

[Submit a proposal](#)

## Fatherhood Research and Practice Network Launches, Funding Available

*Jay Fagan, PhD, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

*Jessica Pearson, PhD, Center for Policy Research, Denver, Colorado*

To evaluate fatherhood programs and learn how to best serve low-income fathers, Temple University, in collaboration with the Center for Policy Research in Denver, Colorado has launched the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN). The FRPN is being established through a five-year, \$4.8 million grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. Funding to support rigorous evaluation of fatherhood programs is available now. The FRPN has \$300,000 for grants in its first round of funding and expects to make three awards of approximately \$50,000 and one to two awards in the \$100,000-\$150,000 range.

[Read more](#)

## Member News

**Hilary Linton**, Toronto, Ontario, has been selected to receive the [2014 Ontario Bar Association Award for Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution](#). The award recognizes exceptional contributions and/or achievements in ADR.

**Justice Victoria Alexandra Starr** has been appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice in Milton, effective July 17, 2014. She has practiced in the area of family law and child protection since being called to the bar in 1996.

## Chapter News

Congratulations to new chapter presidents: **Sarah Quinlan** is now president of the **Colorado Chapter** and **Marilou Giovannucci** is the new president of the **Connecticut Chapter**.

## New Editor Sought for Family Court Review

AFCC seeks a new editor for its quarterly academic and research journal, Family Court Review (FCR). The five-year term of the new editor will begin in July 2016. Editorial responsibilities in collaboration with the current FCR Editor will, however, begin in June 2015 following the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference to ensure a smooth transition.

[Read more](#)

### Florida Chapter Annual Conference

October 16–18, 2014

The Wyndham Tampa

Westshore

Tampa, Florida

[More information](#)

### Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

*Exploring Relevant Issues*

*Facing Our Family Courts*

October 16–17, 2014

Marconi Club

London, Ontario

[More information](#)

### Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

*Tomorrow is Here: Examining the Challenges of the Modern Family*

February 6–8, 2015

Sedona, Arizona

[More information](#)

### California Chapter Annual Conference

*Inventing the Future: Getting Ahead of the Curve for California's Families*

February 6–8, 2015

Westin South Coast Plaza

Hotel

Costa Mesa, California

[More information](#)

### Join AFCC

Are you a member?

[Join](#) or [Renew](#)

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.

[View member benefits](#)

### AFCC Chapters

Network and share your interdisciplinary view of family court matters on a local level. There are currently chapters in

## Save the Dates—AFCC Trainings in Baltimore

A FCC and the University of Baltimore School of Law's Center for Families, Children and the Law are pleased to announce two training programs, held at the University of Baltimore School of Law, Student Center in Baltimore, Maryland. David Martindale, PhD, will present *The Model Standards and Beyond: Custody Evaluations and Risk Management*, December 8-9, 2014. Mindy Mitnick, EdM, will present *Parenting Coordination: Strategies for Helping Parents Improve Communication and Reduce Conflict*, December 10-11, 2014. Online registration and the complete training brochure, which will include daily agendas, will be available in September.

## Family Law in the News

### Coming to US for Baby, and Womb to Carry It

*Tamar Lewin, courtesy of The New York Times*

Other than the United States, only a few countries—among them India, Thailand, Ukraine and Mexico—allow paid surrogacy. As a result, there is an increasing flow in the opposite direction, with the United States drawing affluent couples from Europe, Asia and Australia. Indeed, many large surrogacy agencies in the United States say international clients—gay, straight, married or single—provide the bulk of their business.

[Read more](#)

### Cuts to Legal Aid Force Parents to Defend Themselves in Family Court Cases

*Emily Dugan, courtesy of The Independent (UK)*

The number of parents forced to represent themselves before the family courts jumped by 20,000 last year following the withdrawal of legal aid for almost all family cases, official figures obtained by The Independent show. The increase means that for the first time more than half of parents - 58 per cent - went into court without a lawyer fighting their case in 2013/14. Many were mothers from poor backgrounds.

[Read more](#)

the following states and provinces:

**Australia**  
**Alberta**  
**Arizona**  
**California**  
**Colorado**  
**Connecticut**  
**Florida**  
**Illinois**  
**Indiana**  
**Louisiana**  
**Maryland**  
**Massachusetts**  
**Minnesota**  
**Missouri**  
**New Jersey**  
**New York**  
**Ohio**  
**Ontario**  
**Oregon**  
**Texas**  
**Washington**  
**Wisconsin**

[Add an AFCC Chapter to your membership](#)

### AFCC Networks

New Zealand

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.

### Editor:

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

## **Fatherhood Research and Practice Network Launches**

*Jay Fagan, PhD, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

*Jessica Pearson, PhD, Center for Policy Research, Denver, Colorado*

The responsible fatherhood field has grown tremendously over the past two decades. Currently, 120 responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs are funded through the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, including 55 responsible fatherhood programs.

Hundreds of other state, county and community-based fatherhood programs are operating nationwide. However, while a growing number of programs serve fathers, there is limited knowledge about how participation in these programs affects low-income, non-resident and under-studied fathers and which programs, or interventions, are most effective.

Evaluations of these programs are needed in light of studies showing that higher levels of involvement with their non-resident fathers are associated with positive outcomes for children, such as graduation from high school, better peer relationships, less risk for domestic violence, fewer behavior problems and improved overall well-being.

In June, a new project was launched to support rigorous evaluation of fatherhood programs. Funded through the HHS Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN) seeks to:

1. Promote rigorous evaluation of fatherhood programs that serve low-income fathers. The FRPN will fund the evaluation of programs that aim to increase paternal engagement and parenting skills; improve fathers' ability to provide economic support; and increase parenting time, father-child contact, positive co-parenting and healthy relationships.
2. Expand the number of researchers and practitioners collaborating to evaluate fatherhood programs through in-person and virtual trainings.
3. Disseminate information, including new evaluation findings, that leads to effective fatherhood practice and evaluation research.

The FRPN is led by Temple University social work professor, Jay Fagan, PhD, and Jessica Pearson, PhD, the director of the Center for Policy Research, a Denver, Colorado, based evaluation research firm. Forty nationally recognized fatherhood practitioners, evaluation researchers and policymakers are also collaborating to provide direction for the FRPN.

“The launch of the FRPN marks an exciting opportunity for the fatherhood field,” explained Dr. Fagan. “In order to better serve fathers, we must have an understanding of what types of programs are most effective. The FRPN will help build capacity in the field to support and conduct well-designed, scientifically valid evaluation studies that improve program delivery and, ultimately, the way dads engage in their children’s lives.”

Over the next five years, the FRPN will focus its efforts in three specific areas: fathers’ engagement with their children, economic security and co-parenting/healthy relationships. The FRPN workgroups, made up of fatherhood researchers and practitioners, have collaborated to draft reports outlining research gaps and opportunity for future study within these areas. The FRPN plans to use these reports to help guide its competitive grant funding process and encourage researchers and practitioners to collaborate to evaluate fatherhood programs. The reports are available on the [FRPN website](#).

“Researchers have been studying the impact of paternal involvement for decades as federal support for the establishment of fatherhood programs has grown,” said Dr. Pearson. “However, we have only begun to scratch the surface when it comes to knowledge about effective interventions with low-income, non-resident fathers and under-studied populations. The FRPN will play a key role in expanding the knowledge base within these areas.”

### **Funding Opportunity**

Along with this official launch, the FRPN has released its first round of funding requests for proposals to support rigorous evaluation of fatherhood programs. The purpose of these grants is to increase the number and quality of evaluations of fatherhood programs and learn more about how to better serve low-income fathers, racial/ethnic minorities and other under-studied populations.

The FRPN will award approximately \$1.2 million over a three-year period. There is \$300,000 available for grants now. The FRPN expects to make approximately three awards of \$50,000 and one to two awards in the \$100,000-\$150,000 range out of this initial round of funding. **Letters of interest are due by July 30.**

Applicants will be notified of their official invitation to submit a proposal by August 15. Full proposals will be due by September 30 and award notifications will be distributed in October 2014.

The FRPN request for proposals is available for download at <http://www.frpn.org/about/request-for-proposals>.

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

In addition to funding evaluation projects, the FRPN will offer a variety of technical assistance resources and connect fatherhood researchers and practitioners based on geographic location and research area of interest. Later in 2014, the project will

announce the structure and availability of its one-on-one consulting, mentoring and peer support capabilities.

The FRPN website—[www.frpn.org](http://www.frpn.org)—serves as a comprehensive platform to provide evaluation and measurement technical assistance, connect researchers and practitioners, catalog fatherhood evaluation research and communicate funding criteria. It also includes a Researcher and Practitioner Forum, which allows researchers and practitioners to virtually connect and communicate with one another.

As the FRPN grows and begins reviewing applications for funding, it seeks to gain a better understanding of the training and technical assistance needs of practitioners, researchers and program managers to conduct evaluations of fatherhood programs. A simple [online survey](#) has been developed to help identify those needs. Responses will be used to help develop future in-person and virtual training opportunities, connect researchers and practitioners and develop funding opportunities for relevant projects. Those who work in the fatherhood field as practitioners, volunteers, administrators or researchers are encouraged to complete the FRPN needs assessment.

To learn more about the FRPN, please visit [www.frpn.org](http://www.frpn.org).

Fatherhood  
Research  
& Practice  
Network

FRPN representatives can also be reached at the following email addresses:

Jay Fagan, PhD, FRPN Co-Director  
[jfagan@temple.edu](mailto:jfagan@temple.edu)

Jessica Pearson, PhD, FRPN Co-Director  
[jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org](mailto:jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org)

Rebecca Kaufman, MSW, FRPN Coordinator  
[rebecca.kaufman@temple.edu](mailto:rebecca.kaufman@temple.edu)





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

## **President's Profile**

### **Richard L. Altman, JD, Napoleon, Ohio**

Dick Altman is a Magistrate in Fulton and Henry County, Ohio, the county seats of which are, respectively, Wauseon and Napoleon, located in northwest Ohio, just west of Toledo. His insistence that you call him by his nickname is one of the many ways in which you will immediately be put at ease by his calm, laid-back demeanor.

### **What does your current work as Magistrate entail?**

I am one of the judicial officers in both civil and criminal matters, including and predominately delinquency and domestic relations cases.

### **How did you become interested in the field?**

From 1983-87, I served as the chief assistant prosecuting attorney for Fulton and Defiance counties in Ohio. In 1987 I joined and became a partner in the Clemens, Korhn and Liming Law Firm in Defiance, Ohio. At that time it was a five attorney firm, which was one of the larger firms outside of the Toledo area. The firm was primarily an insurance defense firm, but it also did a general practice. Since no one else really wanted to do domestic work I guess I just sort of fell into it. After a while I found that I really enjoyed working with the families and, to be honest, it was the one area in which I really felt that I was able to help my clients in a meaningful way. By about 1996 DR work had become a major part of my practice. In 1998, I was asked to develop a multi-county mediation service. I left the firm and mediated all types of civil matters for the courts in Northwest Ohio until 2005, when I was sworn in as a magistrate.

### **What aspect of your work do you enjoy the most?**

The time I spent doing mediation exclusively was the most fun part of my career, but now I enjoy working with litigants to help them reach a resolution.

### **What advice would you give to someone new to domestic relations work?**

Run the other way! Kidding, kidding, in all honesty this type of work is not for everyone. My best advice is to find patience. It takes someone with a lot of patience to do this work well. You have to be willing to help your clients think logically and in a businesslike way at an incredibly emotional time. You have to be comfortable dealing with strong emotions and capable of working in that setting.

To those becoming lawyers, learn as much as you can, about everything you can, while you are in law school. Family law requires a varied education. You need to know a little

about a lot of things, everything from pensions and investments, to business, to child development, to real estate. It's a difficult area of the law to practice effectively.

Last, but not least, get comfortable with mediation and alternative dispute resolution. This goes back to learning all that you can in law school and taking advantage of opportunities for continuing education after. Join AFCC and attend conferences. Conferences are the best way to learn about the newest research, techniques and practice tools.

### **What are the greatest challenges you see in the field now?**

For judicial officers in family law, self-represented litigants present the greatest challenge. The trials are difficult. SRLs don't always know how to present the evidence that judges need to make proper decisions. If the other side gets a lawyer and both sides then want a lawyer, as a judge, what do you do? Do you grant a continuance or not?

SRLs present new challenges for practitioners. Everyone knows how to use the internet and that gets some people in trouble. They think they can handle their own case and then find themselves in way over their head. As a last resort, they hire a lawyer to try to fix it. This is nothing against the people who represent themselves, a lot of times they simply don't know what they're getting into. Some people just don't have the money to hire an attorney; others have the money, but would rather not spend it or think they can get by without an attorney. Many folks I see before me in court have been separated for years and are finally finalizing their divorce years later because they didn't know *how* to get divorced.

The system has been slow to respond to the complex issues presented by SRLs, and AFCC realizes we need to. A new task force is being formed on access to justice to address this very issue.

### **What would you like to see happen in the field in the next ten years?**

I would like to see us take social science research and truly learn to apply it to practice in the domestic relations field as it relates to children. There is great potential there to use social science research to improve lives, better educate parents, and better educate lawyers to be better at dealing with their clients. Educating young lawyers is key—people like Nancy Ver Steegh and Andy Shepherd—advocating for real change in how we teach the law in law schools, putting the focus on practical skills... and on the social science side, Marsh Kline Pruett, Amy Holtzworth Munroe and others, are applying social science research to family law issues. This work is so important to the future of our field.

### **How and when did you first learn about AFCC?**

There is more about this in my President's Message, but the short answer is Denise McColley in 1993. AFCC was holding a conference in Toledo and she told me I had to go. At the time, I had the first custody evaluation in Fulton County going to trial. The conference came at a great time and I learned a lot. I haven't missed an annual

conference since, and I think I've only missed one or two fall conferences. I love the opportunity to meet great people and exchange ideas related to family law.

**What is your proudest personal achievement?**

My children and my grandchildren, both of whom were home this past weekend...Grandpa is tired. I forgot how exhausting it is to chase a nine-month old around.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Fly fishing and spending time outdoors.

**Tell us something about yourself that your AFCC colleagues don't know.**

Well, I'm pretty much an open book, but most AFCC folks don't know that I have a pond on my property in which I manage the fish population. Managing the fish population means that I conduct fish surveys, make sure they are all healthy and that the numbers of predator versus bait fish are in alignment. I spend way too much time on the pond. Last winter, I was concerned the fish weren't getting enough oxygen due to the amount snow and ice cover on the pond—sunlight creates the oxygen in the water that the fish need under the ice—every morning, I would go out on the pond to scrape the snow off and drill holes in the ice.



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## President's Message

*Richard L. Altman, JD, Napoleon, Ohio*



It was 1993 and a fellow lawyer, Denise Herman McColley (now a family court judge), encouraged me to attend a conference in Toledo, Ohio, for an organization that I had never heard of, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. It seemed every time I saw Denise she would mention this particular conference.

At the time, I had two difficult cases that were troubling me. A domestic relations case, the first that the Fulton County, Ohio Common Pleas Court had referred for a psychological custody evaluation. Unfortunately for me, my client was coming out on the wrong end of that evaluation. The second case was a civil personal injury matter, which had been referred to mediation by the Superior Court of Allen County, Indiana. I had no idea what to expect from mediation; I had never heard of this dispute resolution process before the referral.

As I looked at the AFCC brochure, I noticed a session on cross-examining the expert witness in child custody evaluations (and the cross-examination was conducted by none other than current AFCC Board member Justice R. John Harper). There was also a session on how to effectively participate in mediation, presented by now AFCC Executive Director Peter Salem. I decided that this was just too good an opportunity to pass up and went to the conference. It was amazing!

I took away a great deal of information and used it to successfully cross-examine the expert witness. My client received a favorable decision from the court in the domestic relations matter. She was very happy and subsequently sent me a number of referrals. As a result of the mediation session in the civil matter, the case was resolved to my client's satisfaction. I remember thinking at the time what a stroke of luck it was that AFCC just happened to have sessions on those topics at that conference.

Shortly thereafter, I started attending AFCC conferences on a regular basis. I discovered that I had the same experience each time I attended. Every time I would come away from a conference reinvigorated and amazed at how well-timed the presentations were as related to what I was experiencing in my daily work. Until I had the opportunity to become an AFCC Board Member, I was mystified as to how AFCC always managed to have such timely topics for its conferences. Then I discovered the secrets: the first is called "Strategic Planning," the second, a truly dedicated conference committee, and the third are AFCC members.

Through the guidance of Peter Salem and the wise leadership of so many former AFCC Presidents and Board Members, our association routinely conducts strategic planning. The most recent strategic planning session took place during the presidencies of Nancy Ver Steegh and Arnie Shienvold, both of whom did an exemplary job of leading the planning process along with committee chair and former president Hon. Bill Fee.

The planning process enables the AFCC Board of Directors to reflect on its organizational capacity and the ways in which it builds value for its members. While we continue to look outward and bring new perspectives and new relationships to our work, the plan envisions the continuous evaluation and updating of core activities that strengthen the organization's foundation. We continue to review existing practice guidelines and other initiatives; assess conference and training programs; explore enhancements through use of technology; and cultivate chapters. We will continue to strive to provide you, our members, with an intellectual home and meaningful return on your investment in the organization.

Specifically, the 2014-19 Strategic Plan sets organizational goals to: 1) build on AFCC's capacity to mobilize meaningful discourse on critical issues concerning the prevention, management and resolution of family conflict; 2) leverage resources and activities to expand AFCC's sphere of influence; 3) extend engagement and training through a more robust use of technology; and 4) assure the long-term capacity of AFCC to fulfill its mission.

Importantly, while the strategic plan sets the direction, AFCC conferences would not be what they are without the outstanding work of the conference committee, whose current chairs are Hon. Denise McColley (a former AFCC president) and Matt Sullivan (current AFCC treasurer). They, along with a substantial list of committee members, spend countless hours thinking through and planning topics for conferences and then poring over numerous proposals for presentations to create the most cutting-edge conferences in the field.

Even with strategic planning and a hard-working conference committee in place, AFCC conferences would not be successful without our members. All of you who take the time to develop proposals, resulting in over 100 workshops every year, and who attend AFCC conferences, becoming part of the discourse that forwards our field.

In preparing for the upcoming fall conference in the Texas Hill Country of San Antonio, I was astounded by the depth and value I saw in the proposals for presentations. All of which just confirms for me, AFCC is *the* organization at the forefront of family law related issues. This is because of AFCC's dedicated members, who come from many different walks of life but share the common goal of wanting to assist families during times of conflict. For this, I thank you and ask that you continue to be involved and engaged with AFCC.

AFCC is your organization and it is an excellent organization because of you.

I look forward to working with as many of you as possible over this next year as president and hope to see you in San Antonio this fall and in New Orleans next spring.

## Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

### FAMILY COURT REVIEW: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

#### EDITOR JOB DESCRIPTION AND SEARCH PROCESS

##### Overview

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) seeks a new editor for its quarterly academic and research journal, *Family Court Review (FCR)*.

AFCC is the premier interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict. AFCC members are the leading practitioners, researchers, teachers and policymakers in the family court arena.

*FCR* is an interdisciplinary journal at the intersection of policy, research and practice that supports the mission of AFCC. *FCR* has over 5,000 subscribers worldwide. It had over 120,000 full text downloads in 2013. It is included in the Wiley Online Library (Wiley Blackwell serves as *FCR*'s publisher). In 2013, there were 3,665 institutions that purchased licenses to Wiley journals that included access to *FCR* and 5,217 institutions in developing countries with access to *FCR* at low or no cost via philanthropic initiatives. *FCR* is also included in the legal databases of Westlaw and Lexis. It is cited regularly in court decisions, including those of the United States Supreme Court, and has influenced court rules and legislation on family law policy and practice. *FCR* publishes practice guidelines developed by AFCC interdisciplinary task forces, as well as symposium issues based on themes developed jointly with AFCC.

AFCC seeks to appoint a new editor who will maintain *FCR*'s current organization, in which a law school faculty member serves as editor in chief and the editor-in-chief's law school serves as its sponsoring institution. *FCR* also has an associate editor for social science who is an expert in areas relating to family courts and family law. The editor-in-chief supervises a law student staff which performs editorial work on the articles in the journal and researches and writes student notes, some of which are published in the journal. The editor-in-chief commissions special issues of *FCR* and coordinates the review process of submitted articles by the editorial advisory board.

The five-year term of the new editor will begin in July 2016. Editorial responsibilities in collaboration with the current *FCR* Editor will, however, begin in June 2015 following the AFCC Annual Conference to ensure a smooth transition.

The preliminary application process is described below. Preliminary materials are due by January 31, 2015. The search committee anticipates interviewing finalists immediately prior to the AFCC Annual Conference on May 27, 2015, in New Orleans and making the selection of a new editor shortly thereafter.

More detail on *FCR*, the responsibilities of the editor-in-chief, and the application process follow below.

### **Journal Description**

*FCR*'s articles and special issues are concerned with all aspects of family law, family courts and the resolution of family disputes. *FCR* has historically placed an emphasis on publication of articles that advance practice innovations in family court including mediation, parent education, child custody evaluations, and parent coordination. Many of *FCR*'s special issues, noted above, originate in projects to improve practice or reports whose focus is identified jointly with AFCC. These special issues are often derived from input of the *FCR* Editorial Board, which meets yearly at the AFCC Annual conference.

As an interdisciplinary journal, *FCR* publishes contributions from the fields of law, court administration, mental health, medicine, the behavioral and social sciences, dispute resolution, education, public policy and other disciplines concerned with the welfare of children and families who come into contact with the family law system and/or family conflict. Types of articles published include thoughtful perspectives on the family court system, empirical research with clear implications for policy and practice, legal articles, articles that merge law and social science and descriptive articles of practice innovations. International perspectives on these topics are strongly encouraged and regularly published. In addition, *FCR* regularly publishes law student notes on topics of interest to student authors, which are edited by the editor-in-chief and student editors.

*FCR* publishes article submissions that are reviewed for publication suitability and quality by the editorial advisory board. Special issues are edited by guest editors who solicit and edit the work of interdisciplinary authors on topics such as family law education reform, family court reform, collaborative law, unbundled legal services, domestic violence, alienated children in divorce and separation, foster care reform, school discipline policies, attachment theory in family law, and parenting after divorce and separation.

### **Responsibilities of *FCR*'s Editor**

The editor is appointed by the AFCC Board of Directors on the recommendation of the AFCC search committee. Board action is required to renew or to terminate any contractual arrangement.

The editor is responsible for the content of *FCR* and administration and management of its editorial process. The editor ensures that the content of *FCR* supports the mission of AFCC and meets the needs of AFCC members and *FCR* subscribers. The editor functions autonomously from the AFCC Board and Executive Director and makes decisions about what articles are published in *FCR*, journal staffing and management, peer review processes and the role of the associate editor.

However, the editor is expected to maintain open lines of communication and collaborate with the AFCC Executive Director. The editor reports to the AFCC Executive Director

regarding issues related to managerial, operational, financial and administrative matters related to the AFCC contract with Wiley Blackwell.

The selected editor, the editor's sponsoring institution and AFCC, will enter into a written agreement to adhere to the following principles:

- overseeing the work of the associate editor for social science;
- commissioning special issues of *FCR* on relevant topics and identifying editors and potential authors for articles for special issues in collaboration with the special issue editors;
- establishing and maintaining high standards for articles published in *FCR*;
- selecting and training a qualified editorial board representing the diversity of disciplines that publish in *FCR*;
- ensuring that submitted manuscripts receive fair and timely reviews by qualified reviewers;
- identifying, managing, training and supervising the work of *FCR*'s law student staff;
- supervising student notes published in *FCR*;
- writing brief editorial notes for each issue; and
- ensuring that each issue of *FCR* is presented to the publisher on time and that each volume is within the page limits set by the publisher and AFCC.

### **Editorial Office Organization**

**AFCC** will provide:

- an editorial stipend;
- a travel stipend to attend the editorial board meeting at the AFCC Annual Conference; and
- facilities for the annual meeting of the *FCR* Editorial Board at the AFCC Annual Conference.

**Sponsoring Institution** will provide:

- appropriate release time to the editor from normal duties in each of the five years of the editorial term, as negotiated by the editor and the host institution;
- administrative and material support for the selection process of the law student staff for a sufficient number of staff members to produce a high quality journal;
- appropriate academic credit for the law student staff of *FCR*; and
- office space, equipment, technical support etc. for the editor and the law student staff.

**Wiley Blackwell Publishing** will provide:

- production for *FCR*;



- order fulfillment;
- marketing for *FCR*;
- a journal website for access to online journals; and
- copy editing services.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- tenured or tenure equivalent professor at a law school;
- record of publication and teaching emphasizing family law and family courts
- commitment to the mission of AFCC and its membership;
- current membership in AFCC;
- knowledge and understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to advancing the field of family law and family courts;
- interest in the process of managing and publishing an academic journal, with experience preferred;
- desire and ability to work with and supervise a law student staff and an editorial board;
- organizational ability, energy, creativity and initiative; and
- respect for interdisciplinary collaboration and a track record of working across disciplines.

## PRELIMINARY APPLICATION SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1. Please submit a letter of application addressing:
  - a. Why are you interested in becoming the editor of *FCR*?
  - b. What are your qualifications and assets as potential editor of *FCR*?
  - c. What do you expect to achieve in your term as editor?
  - d. How will your work as editor support the mission of AFCC?
  - e. What do you view as *FCR*'s strengths and how do you intend to preserve and build on them?
  - f. What do you view as *FCR*'s weaknesses and what changes would you make to address them?
  - g. What topics would you like to see *FCR* provide more attention to in the future?
  - h. What strategies will you use to attract special issue editors, quality manuscripts and potential authors?
  - i. Describe how you envision the relationship working between the editor and the associate editor for social science.
  - j. Describe how you envision the relationship between the editor and the editorial advisory board.
  - k. Describe how you would supervise the law student staff.
  - l. Describe your leadership experience and leadership styles.
2. Curriculum vitae, publications list and list of presentations at professional conferences.

3. Three letters of reference addressing your qualifications as editor.
4. Documentation of institutional support from your law school for your service as editor as described above.

**PLEASE SUBMIT THE ABOVE MATERIALS ELECTRONICALLY TO BY  
JANUARY 31, 2015 TO [psalem@afcnet.org](mailto:psalem@afcnet.org)**