



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

## President's Message: Extending Our Reach

*His Honour Judge Peter Boshier, Wellington, New Zealand*

This is the first time that a New Zealander writes to you as president of AFCC. What an enormous privilege it is for me and for my country. I say this because the reach and influence of AFCC both within North America and beyond is potent and becoming ever more so. We have now exceeded a membership of 5,000 and going hand-in-hand with that will be maintaining the flavour of AFCC that most of you know makes it so special. [Read more](#)

## Q and A with the AFCC President

Welcome to new AFCC President, Hon. Peter Boshier. His Honour, Judge Boshier, is a law commissioner on the New Zealand Law Commission and the first AFCC President from New Zealand.

[Read more](#)

## Ask the Experts

### Low-Income and Never-Married Fathers and Families: Context and Perspective for Service and Support

*Jacquelyn L. Boggess, JD, Co-Director of the Center for Family Policy and Practice, Madison, Wisconsin*

Custody and other issues of parenting time and placement are areas of family law and family interaction that can be very contentious and emotional—with or without lawyers, and regardless of marital status. The adult conflicts, plus the difficulty inherent in providing a convenient, secure, and familiar residence for children in two different places, are obvious concerns. The difficulty can become impossibility in situations where both parents are poor. Many parents lack the resources to access the services of legal professionals but, more importantly for some families, parents may be unable to provide for their own and their children's basic needs—regardless of the parenting time arrangements. [Read more](#)

## Registration Now Open—AFCC Regional Conference Do You Hear What I Hear? Listening to the Voice of the Child November 5 –7, 2015, Columbus, Ohio

The [conference program brochure is available online](#) and [registration is open](#) for the AFCC Regional Conference at the Hyatt

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER  
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## Upcoming Conferences



**AFCC-AAML Conference**  
*Advanced Issues in Child Custody:  
Evaluation, Litigation and  
Settlement*  
October 1–3, 2015  
Capital Hilton  
Washington, DC  
[Program Brochure, Online  
Registration](#)

Regency Columbus! Join AFCC in the heart of Ohio for an outstanding interdisciplinary program, featuring the latest research, programs, policy and practice. This year's conference program addresses critical issues associated with the voice of the child: how to interview and understand children's responses, taking into account age and language ability; ethical and legal obligations for professionals who interview and represent children; and how to responsibly bring the child's voice into the court and dispute resolution process. [More information](#)

### Hyatt Regency Columbus

The [Hyatt Regency Columbus](#) is located in the heart of the city, connected to the Greater Columbus Convention Center and an easy walk to the trendy [Arena District](#), a lively neighborhood with numerous bars, restaurants and shops. [Huntington Park](#), [The Ohio State University Campus](#), [Capitol Square](#) and the popular [Short North Arts and Entertainment District](#) are also close by. [Make your hotel reservation online](#) or call 1-800-233-1234 and mention group code AFCC.

### Apply for a Conference Scholarship

Could some financial help make it possible for you to attend the conference? Scholarships cover registration fees for a pre-conference institute and conference, which includes the welcome reception, luncheon, and access to the hospitality suite. The application deadline is September 8, 2015, and recipients will be notified mid-to-late September. [Apply online](#)

### Exhibit Opportunities in Columbus

Talk to conference participants face-to-face and showcase your products and services with an onsite exhibit. The reasonable rate includes a conference registration. [More information](#)

### Registration Open to All—AFCC-AAML 2015 Conference

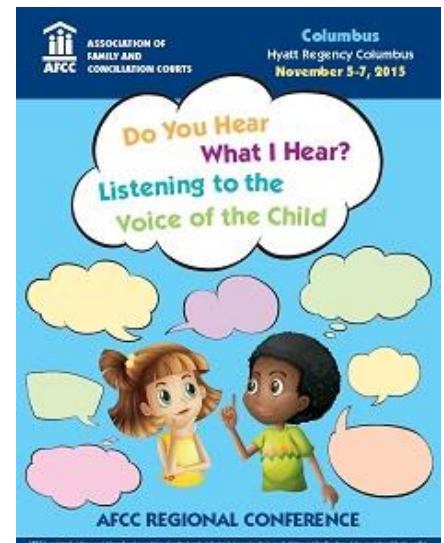
#### Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation and Settlement

**October 1–3, 2015, Capital Hilton, Washington, DC**

Learn new advanced practice skills, the latest research and policies related to children, marriage, separation and divorce from leading professionals in the field. Networking opportunities are plentiful—see old friends and colleagues and meet new ones. Early registration discounts end September 14—[register today](#).

### Hotel Block at the Capital Hilton—Over 90% Sold

The room block at the Capital Hilton is filling up fast! Register for the conference today, and make your hotel reservations now to ensure your room at the excellent conference rate of \$224/night. AFCC is working closely with the Hilton to add rooms to our block as they become available. If you are not able to reserve the room



### AFCC Regional Conference

*Do You Hear What I Hear?  
Listening to the Voice of the Child*  
November 5–7, 2015  
Hyatt Regency Columbus  
Columbus, Ohio  
[Program Brochure, Online Registration](#)

### AFCC 53rd Annual Conference

June 1–4, 2016  
Sheraton Seattle Hotel  
Seattle, Washington  
[Call for Proposals](#)

### AFCC 12th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

November 3–5, 2016  
Sheraton Atlanta Hotel  
Atlanta, Georgia

### AFCC Trainings

**Construction of an Effective Parenting Coordination Process: Structure, Tools, and Techniques**  
Debra K. Carter, PhD  
November 30–December 1, 2015  
University of Baltimore  
Baltimore, Maryland

### Complex Issues in Family Law and Child Custody

Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP  
December 2–3, 2015  
University of Baltimore  
Baltimore, Maryland

### AFCC Chapter Annual Conferences

**Australia Chapter Annual**

nights you need, please contact AFCC Meeting Manager, [Nicole Ellickson](#), or 608-664-3750. [Reservations at the Capital Hilton](#)

### **Don't Miss Two Excellent Plenary Sessions**

In the Opening Plenary, *How to Try a Family Case without Destroying the Family*, panelists, Magistrate Richard L. Altman, Joy M. Feinberg, Esq., Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA, and moderator, Sherry Cassedy, Esq., MA, will share effective strategies and discuss various processes and behaviors which, while not always possible, if implemented can minimize damage to the family relationships in divorce and child custody trials.

In Plenary II, *The De Facto Parent in the Modern Family: A Status Report*, panelists, J. Herbie DiFonzo, Esq., PhD, Dennis Hottell, Esq., Martha McCarthy, Esq., Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP, and moderator Ken Altshuler, Esq., will discuss and analyze the evolution of the de facto parent or psychological parent, adults in significant care giving roles who are not biologically related to the child from the perspective of judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, parents in all possible configurations, and the children for whom they care.

[More information, full program and registration](#)

### **Exhibit Opportunities at the AFCC-AAML Conference**

Talk to conference participants face-to-face and showcase your products and services with an onsite exhibit. The reasonable rate includes a conference registration. [More information](#)

### **Submit a Proposal to Present in Seattle 2016**

#### **53rd Annual Conference**

#### **Modern Families: New Challenges, New Solutions**

#### **June 1–4, 2016, at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel**

AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshop sessions through October 2, 2015. The conference theme will explore how today's modern family structures, including heterosexual marriage, unmarried cohabitants, same-sex partners (married and unmarried), adoptive children, children of assisted reproductive technologies, single parent and multigenerational families, kinship care, foster care and more, bring more complex legal, social and psychological challenges for professionals and families alike. [More information, submit a proposal](#)

### **Member News**

AFCC President, **Hon. Peter Boshier**, Wellington, New Zealand, was interviewed on the New Zealand National Radio Network about access to justice. [Listen here](#)

**Grace Hawkins** was presented the State Bar of Arizona's 2015 Award of Appreciation. The award is given to a non-member of the bar, "in recognition of outstanding service toward the creation of a

### **Conference**

August 14–15, 2015  
Sydney Shangri La Hotel  
Sydney, Australia  
[More information](#)

### **Florida Chapter Annual Conference**

October 1–2, 2015  
Holiday Inn Tampa West Shore  
Tampa, Florida  
[More information](#)

### **Colorado Chapter Annual Conference**

October 9–11, 2015  
Beaver Run Resort  
Breckenridge, Colorado  
[More Information](#)

### **Ontario Chapter Annual Conference**

October 23, 2015  
Toronto Reference Library, Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
[More information](#)

### **Arizona Chapter Annual Conference**

January 29–31, 2016  
Hilton Sedona Resort  
Sedona, Arizona  
[More information](#)

### **California Chapter Annual Conference**

February 19–21, 2016  
InterContinental Mark Hopkins  
San Francisco, California  
[More information](#)

### **Join AFCC**

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

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.  
[View member benefits](#)

### **Ask the Experts**

Is there a topic you would like to see covered by an AFCC Ask the Experts piece?  
[Email your suggestion](#)

The opinions expressed in articles published or linked to in the AFCC

better public understanding of the legal profession and the administration of justice, the judiciary or the legislative process." Ms. Hawkins was the director of the Family Center of the Conciliation Court for Pima County in Tucson, Arizona, until her retirement earlier this month, and has served on the AFCC Board of Directors.

**Susan C. Rhode**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has been elected to serve on the newly formed Mitchell Hamline School of Law Board of Trustees. [Read more](#)

## Save the Dates—December Trainings

AFCC, in collaboration with the [University of Baltimore School of Law Sarya and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts](#), is pleased to announce two new trainings. Both trainings will be held at the University of Baltimore, and a discounted rate will be available for those who wish to attend both. Debra K. Carter, PhD, will present ***Construction of an Effective Parenting Coordination Process: Structure, Tools and Techniques***, November 30–December 1, 2015, and Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP, will present ***Complex Issues in Family Law and Child Custody***, December 2–3, 2015. The full program, agenda and online registration will be available in August.

## Publication of the Month

### Planning for Shared Parenting: A Guide for Parents Living Apart

This helpful booklet for separating and divorcing parents brings developmental research to designing age-appropriate parenting plans for children birth through adolescence. Easy-to-read, simple explanations of child development are paired with tips for designing parenting plans for that age—perfect to hand out to clients or provide as a resource at the court. Discounted pricing available for orders over 1,000. AFCC members receive a 15% discount on publication orders. [Order today, see more AFCC titles](#)

## New Moderator—AFCC Court Services Listserv

Cori Erickson, MS, Idaho Statewide Children and Families Court Services Manager, is the new moderator of the AFCC Court Services Listserv. Grace Hawkins was the list's moderator until her retirement earlier this month. If you work in court services and would like to join this listserv for discussion and the sharing of information among court service professionals, please send your name, title or a brief description of your work to [Cori Erickson](#).

## Conferences of Interest

### NACC 38th National Child Welfare, Juvenile and Family Law Conference

The National Association of Counsel for Children will hold its

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Readers are welcomed and encouraged to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues. [Learn more or subscribe.](#)

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annual conference, August 24–27, 2015, in Monterey, California. Many leaders in the fields of child welfare, juvenile justice and family law will be in attendance. [Read more](#)

### **Third Annual International Courthouse Dogs Conference**

The Courthouse Dogs Program is holding its annual conference October 5–6, 2015 at the King County Courthouse in Seattle, Washington. Participants will learn about how children of different cultures react to dogs, model courthouse dog programs, the importance of purpose bred dogs, and much more. Registration closes September 25, 2015. [Read more](#)

### **Family Law in the News**

#### **History of Abuse Seen in Many Girls in Juvenile System**

*Timothy Williams, New York Times*

As many as 80 percent of the girls in some states' juvenile justice systems have a history of sexual or physical abuse, according to a report released Thursday. The report, a rare examination of their plight, recommends that girls who have been sexually trafficked no longer be arrested on prostitution charges. [Read more](#)

#### **Same-Sex Couples among Utah's Newest Foster Parents**

*Marjorie Cortez, Deseret News*

Within days of becoming licensed foster parents, newlyweds John Wright and Wilson Bateman got a telephone call from a caseworker. A boy and his two sisters needed a foster family. Would they like to meet them? [Read more](#)



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In 1978, the New Zealand Government ordered a Commission of Inquiry into why family law was not working well in New Zealand. The result of that was the creation of a specialist family court in 1980 and only judges who were qualified to work in that court were permitted to do so. I was appointed a judge in 1988 and so my attachment to this specialist area of family law runs very deep.

I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge the challenges that the AFCC Presidency brings. When I look at the sheer talent that sits on the AFCC Board, I could be somewhat daunted. But I am not, and I have much to thank my predecessor, Dick Altman, for in this respect.

In his presidential message written this time last year, Dick described how he was introduced to AFCC in 1993, and how he started attending regularly because of the very positive impact that the learning to which he had access had on both his family law practice and then subsequently as a judicial officer. To me, Dick has displayed all the fine qualities of a president and a judicial officer. His ease of personality, collaborative and approachable style and utter commitment to the ideals of AFCC have been an inspiration. I count myself as very fortunate to have him as a role model.

The theme for our recently held 52nd Annual Conference in New Orleans was *Children in the Court System: Different Doors, Different Responses, Different Outcomes*. There were rich pickings in the 84 workshops that we offered—enough diversity to have something for everyone. In the keynote address, Julie Kenniston was an inspiration when talking about “the language of youth.” She was so skilled and so interesting that I believe all of us will think twice before we frame questions for children and young people in the future. And, at the plenary in which I was involved on Friday morning, Bill Howe in silk-like fashion had us talking about access to justice in the modern era.

One of the hallmarks of AFCC is its currency and diversity of issues for exploration. For instance, at successive conferences, we have focused on specialist topics such as family violence, alienation, relocation, attachment, the voice of the child and high conflict cases. Our plenary on access to justice allowed us to explore the most up to date issues that are relevant to good access to justice and what that expression really means. I think that AFCC has a very large part to play in influencing the form that access to justice should take. In this regard, we have an Access to Family Court Services Task Force that consists of three work-streams including the completion of a survey created by board member and Toronto academic, Mike Saini. The result of that should be to better inform us on the different professional perspectives of access to justice concerns.

For our regional conference this November in Columbus, Ohio, we have chosen 24 workshop topics and, I have to say, I found the selection of workshop process harder than I have previously because of the uniformly high standard of submitted abstracts. The extent of interest and expertise on offer is an enormous vote of confidence in the value that attaches to AFCC by presenters wishing to inform and to inspire.

Our organisation is easily the biggest international family law body and while it is of course very accessible to North Americans, it is less so to other countries that would nevertheless benefit just as much from what we have to offer. And so, part of our strategic plan is to extend our reach so that we become better known, particularly in Europe. Our plan is to participate in conferences in England and in Ireland in April next year and to ensure that family court professionals, wherever they may be, are made very aware of the existence of AFCC and how it can help them in their professional lives. In particular, the new ideas that keep emerging at AFCC conferences must help in the global search for increased competence and efficiency.

During my term as president, I most want to concentrate on consolidating our appropriate growth and maintaining our high standards. I like the way in which AFCC encourages and is prepared to entertain debate and at times, controversy. From my perspective as a family court judge and as a law reform commissioner, I want to ensure that AFCC is shared even more widely and that we move towards an increased global understanding and collaboration. Our children are such a precious resource that nothing less than our striving for excellence will do.

Thank you for this incredible opportunity to serve as president. I cannot wait to get started and to work with the astute and well-organised AFCC office to ensure that your own experience of AFCC is not just up to your own expectations but beyond that.



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Welcome to new AFCC President, Hon. Peter Boshier. His Honour, Judge Boshier, is a law commissioner on the New Zealand Law Commission and the first AFCC President from New Zealand.

*What does your position of law commissioner entail?*

The New Zealand Law Commission is responsible for giving law reform advice to the government. I am one of four commissioners who work with staff to develop reports on references that we receive from our government. I also continue to sit as a family court judge.

*How did you become interested in the field of separation and divorce?*

I became a lawyer in 1975 and our law firm's practice involved a lot of family law. The court started appointing me to act for children. I was appointed as a judge in 1988. In 1980, New Zealand decided to develop a specialist family court and I was asked to sit in that court. This worked well for me in view of my interest and experience.

*What advice would you give to someone new to the field?*

Family law is vibrant and ever changing. There are constant challenges in applying sound values and yet maintaining currency. Anyone new to the field will find it exciting but constantly evolving and developing.

*What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the field currently?*

The field of family law is now much broader than it used to be. We look at families differently. Marriage is no longer a "necessary given foundation." The biggest challenges I see are providing safe, nurturing, holistic environments for children in a context that may be very different from how we were brought up and how we personally see the world.

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

Technology is sweeping us along and changing our daily routines in every respect. I would like to see family law do the same and provide access to justice, which is appropriate, helpful, and which enhances the ability of those that really need protection and help to get it quickly.



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

Judicial decision making is very rewarding. It is because one can put into practice experience and learning, and intervene in a way which is right and helpful. The law reform aspect of my work is more measured, but allows more vision and creativity. To have the chance to influence the development of law is a privilege.

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

I think the first time I attended an AFCC conference was in Vancouver very nearly 30 years ago. In those days, AFCC was not nearly as well-known as it is now, but clearly I had spied in "conferences worth attending" this particular one. Now AFCC has the very real advantage of its brand being so respected and well known. I think most specialists working in the family law field know about AFCC.

*What do you like most about AFCC?*

Without doubt, AFCC's greatest attribute is its ability to stage plenary presentations and workshops that offer attendees rich pickings in terms of both practical enhancements to work ability and at other times the results of research which alter our thinking and practice. It is a rich bed of learning.

*What is your proudest personal achievement?*

I suppose it has to be my appointment as Head of New Zealand's Family Court. It was an enormous honour and I found the opportunity very rewarding.

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

Travel fascinates me and after our recent New Orleans conference my wife and I travelled with friends to the Galapagos Islands. I find the ability to experience different cultures and explore the world very exciting.

*Tell us something about yourself that your AFCC colleagues don't know or answer a question that you wish had been asked.*

I am rather fond of doing gigs and you may have noticed that we sang a couple of songs at the annual banquet at this year's conference. My gigs have not always been successful however and on one formal occasion about half of the assembled judges walked out. I would rather forget that in a way, but then again it serves as a reminder that in life, you don't get it right all the time.



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## Ask the Experts

### **Low-Income and Never-Married Fathers and Families: Context and Perspective for Service and Support**

*Jacquelyn L. Boggess, JD, Co-Director of the Center for Family Policy and Practice, Madison, Wisconsin*

Custody and other issues of parenting time and placement are areas of family law and family interaction that can be very contentious and emotional—with or without lawyers, and regardless of marital status. The adult conflicts, plus the difficulty inherent in providing a convenient, secure, and familiar residence for children in two different places, are obvious concerns. The difficulty can become impossibility in situations where both parents are poor. Many parents lack the resources to access the services of legal professionals but, more importantly for some families, parents may be unable to provide for their own and their children's basic needs—regardless of the parenting time arrangements.

Community-based fatherhood programs and service providers focus on poor and unmarried noncustodial fathers who are facing welfare and child support systems that create or exacerbate barriers to parenting time. They assert that many fathers and mothers know and understand the value of good parenting and involvement from fathers, but that society, and particularly government agencies and institutions, do not value any contribution of fathers that is not financial. They contend that many unmarried fathers are poor and need jobs and training, but these groups also assert men's ability and capacity to nurture and support children in ways that include, but are not limited to, financial contribution.

The following points of perspective and understanding will provide a context for low-income families negotiating the family court system.

1. The structure of social welfare support systems to which poor families: men, women, and children, are expected to apply for aid and support is based on public policy that may create barriers to effective co-parenting relationships. Fathers of children who receive welfare or other safety net services are often poor themselves. They are unemployed or severely underemployed, and they owe child support. Child support policy is based on the "deadbeat dad" stereotype, resulting in all of the aggressive enforcement mechanisms that are necessary to induce those who do not want to pay child support, also used against poor fathers who cannot pay child support.

2. The child support enforcement system has become more complicated for low-income parents over the last twenty years. State child support agencies have moved toward expedited and, very often, administrative processes. Paternity establishment has moved toward voluntary, summary processes occurring outside the courtroom. Since these administrative processes are judicial in nature, and the concepts involved are legal, parents frequently assume that the administrative staff with whom they interact have judicial status and that the decisions these staff make are judicial rulings. Parents do not understand how or know whether they can present evidence that might persuade the court of their perspective or position.

The system is very complex and unremitting, and it is based on consistent payment of a set amount. Without an understanding of the system (or access to the services of a legal professional), parents who cannot pay are subject to seemingly insurmountable problems. Nonpayment subjects parents to the possibilities of accumulation of arrearages, conviction and jail for contempt, and loss of license privileges (both driver's and professional licenses are sometimes necessary to continue working).

3. Most low-income noncustodial parents want to contribute financially and emotionally to their children and families. However, like many poor custodial parents, they are dealing with their own lack of economic viability; including lack of education and training, lack of employment and employment opportunities, race and class discrimination, criminal records, and lack of identifying and validating credentials (driver's license, permanent address, and previous work history).

4. Very low-income parents and parents who have never been married have no divorce proceeding to anchor or initiate the parenting time petitioning or proceedings. Generally, poor, never-married couples are in the courtroom on the petition of the state for paternity establishment and child support, not of their own volition for custody and parenting time determinations.

Parents who are moved into the family court system by the state through the welfare agency or some other administrative agency have no control over the process. They may react and respond based on misunderstanding and misinformation, which can create additional barriers such as confusion, fear, and anger leading to disinterest and avoidance of the system and the process.

5. Some non-marital family situations are cohabiting families whose reasons for not getting married may include issues of eligibility requirements for social service programs used by the custodial parent. This is a concern when the social service needs of the child and family include child-care, housing, food stamps or cash benefits. This situation might naturally put the onus on the father as an outsider, whose presence could get the family benefits terminated (because he is living in the house regardless of the agency regulations against his residence). These families are unlikely to request court orders for parenting time or visitation.

6. Fatherhood programs that serve low-income men, mostly men of color, through employment and peer support service are generally not the recipients of funding or training around the issues of parenting time or custody. There are at least two very important reasons: (1) most of these programs serve men who have been summoned to the courtroom by the state child support agency for purposes of paternity and child support orders; (2) the most essential and most time consuming services these programs provide are employment and negotiation of the child support system.

7. In low-income communities of color, there is some concern about how men are treated in institutions—child support agencies, jails, police stations, and courtrooms. Parents (and communities) want safety and security for themselves and their children. This circle of concern and care includes men who may need protection from government agencies and institutions. Distrust based on fear, misinformation, and negative experience keeps parents away from courts and legal processes.

*Jacquelyn L. Boggess, JD, has worked with the Center for Family Policy and Practice since its inception in 1995. Her work as a policy analyst involves investigation of the welfare system, family law courts, and the child support system. Her particular interest lies in the interrelations among these systems, and how the social welfare policy and practice that result from this relationship affect low-income fathers, mothers, and children. Ms. Boggess has concentrated on the question of the impact of government initiated “family formation” and father involvement policy on the safety and well-being of women and children. Ms. Boggess has a particular interest in the impact of non-resident father involvement on mothers and children. Her work on this issue has resulted in connections and collaborations with domestic violence organizations and progressive advocacy groups working on poverty reduction, violence prevention, and economic justice for parents and children. Ms. Boggess is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School.*