



Conference Planning Committee and Faculty

Right from the Beginning: Permanency Planning 2013

River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN
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Conference Faculty

ANN STIEHM AHLSTROM

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Ms. Ahlstrom is a staff attorney with the Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office and is one of the Managers for Minnesota's Children's Justice Initiative. Her legal experience has focused on child protection for more than 30 years. This experience includes agency representation as a county attorney in Hennepin County, policy work on concurrent permanency planning and Title IV-E for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and 11 years with the Children's Justice Initiative. She also had five years' experience representing parents and children as a public defender in Hennepin County. She has served on multiple state level committees and task forces related to child protection, child maltreatment, and children in foster care.

CHRISTEEN BORSHEIM

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Ms. Borsheim is the Director of Child Safety and Permanency at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. During her tenure at the Department, Ms. Borsheim has served as the Manager of Child Welfare Training and Quality Assurance Programs, Supervisor of Children's Research, Planning and Evaluation and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs, and Child Welfare Quality Assurance Program Consultant. Prior to joining the Department in 2001, Ms. Borsheim had nearly 15 years' experience as the Director of Traverse County Social Services Department. Ms. Borsheim holds a B.A. degree in social work and a Master's of Public Affairs degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.

DEBORAH BESKE BROWN

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Ms. Beske Brown is an agency policy specialist with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Safety and Permanency Division. She has over 25 years of child welfare services experience, primarily with foster care and adoption services. She offers knowledge of child welfare services, including: county social service systems, state and federal laws, foster care funding and permanency planning.

KRISTINE BUFFINGTON

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Ms. Buffington is a cum laude graduate of Eastern Michigan University with her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. She earned her Master's Degree in Social Work from Western Michigan University. She has 28 years of experience in the field of social work as a case manager, clinical therapist, agency administrator, and a national trainer and consultant regarding issues of child traumatic stress and trauma-informed care. She is an affiliate member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and has been a participant and chair of a number of national and state level committees to address traumatic stress, child welfare, and juvenile justice issues. Her current focus is to advocate for trauma-informed care system transformation. She believes that saving a youth and their education is about saving lives, and how critical it is to look at the role of traumatic stress when addressing these issues.

HON. MICHELLE A. DIETRICH

Judge Dietrich is a Minnesota district court judge in the 5th Judicial District, Lyon County. She was appointed to the bench in June 2008 by Governor Tim Pawlenty and was elected in 2010. She serves as Assistant Chief Judge for the 5th Judicial District and is chambered in Lyon County. Judge Dietrich is Lyon County CJI Judge. Judge Dietrich earned her J.D. from

Hamline University School of Law in St. Paul in 1994, and her B.A. from Central University of Iowa in Pella in 1991. From 1997 – 2008 Judge Dietrich served as Redwood County Attorney, and Assistant County Attorney from 1995-1997.

HON. KEVIN EIDE

Judge Eide is a District Court Judge in the 1st Judicial District, chambered in Carver County. He was appointed to the bench in January 2001, and was elected in November 2002 and 2008. Judge Eide earned his J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law in 1979 and his BA from St. Olaf in 1975. He serves as an instructor at the MDJA/MDFA Fall Judges Conference, SCAO Winter Judges Conference, Annual Conference of Guardian ad Litems and CASAs, New Judge Orientation Conference. He served as faculty for the Misdemeanor Clinic at William Mitchell College of Law and as mock trial judge for the University of Minnesota Law School. Judge Eide is a Minnesota Delegate for the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 2009, Chair of the Minnesota Juvenile Protection Rules Committee, Co-author of the Minnesota Judges Juvenile Bench Book, Chair of the Minnesota Court Operations Advisory Workgroup, Lead Judge for the Carver County Children’s Justice Initiative, Minnesota Delegate for the National Center for State Courts- Child Welfare- 2007.

SAMANTHA J. GEMBERLING

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Ms. Gemberling is a shareholder at Wolf, Rohr, Gemberling, and Allen, P.A. Her practice is focused on helping clients navigate through difficult and emotional legal challenges, including dissolution, child custody disputes, paternity, child abuse/neglect, and juvenile delinquency. She also helps clients grow their families through adoption, third party custody, and grandparent custody. She has significant trial experience. She has represented parents in child protection proceedings for most of her career. She has argued before the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Supreme Court on termination of parental rights and other cases. She is a qualified Rule 114 neutral and a trained Parenting Consultant. Ms. Gemberling is an active member of the Minnesota family law practice community. She was admitted to practice in 1997, and is licensed in Minnesota and Arizona. She is a co-founder of a local organization to promote collegiality among family law attorneys, and was recognized as a 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 Minnesota Rising Star. She is frequent speaker and presenter at legal education trainings. Ms. Gemberling is also a fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

MELISSA GEORGE-HUMPHREY

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Ms. George-Humphrey is with DCH Mental Health Services, White Earth Indian Child Welfare. Her first spirit name/Indian name was given to her in her infancy by her maternal grandmother; it is Waabiigoniis, which in English means White Blossom. Melissa belongs to the Gigoon (Fish) Dodeem (Clan). Ms. George-Humphrey is a descendent of the Mississippi Band of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe [Anishinaabe]. She resides on the banks of the Mississippi River on the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation with her husband, their children, and their many relatives. Melissa is a licensed independent clinical social worker through the Minnesota Board of Social work (since 1999). She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Women’s Studies from Hamline University in St. Paul in 1993 and her Master of Social Work (with a clinical concentration in health/mental health) from the University of Washington-Seattle in 1997. She has her own business: Booshke-Mental Health, Inc. where she serves as a mental health professional and consultant. Ms. George-Humphrey is dedicated to promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of American Indian people through her service to Indian Country.

ANNE GUEINZIUS

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Ms. Gueinzius is the managing attorney of Children’s Law Center of Minnesota (CLC). In addition to her direct representation of a discrete number foster care youth, she assists CLC volunteer attorneys in their direct representation of foster care youth. She received her Juris Doctor from Hamline University School of Law and her Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern University. Ms. Gueinzius has served on the Minnesota Juvenile Protection Rules Advisory Committee and has been representing children in juvenile court since 1997. She is an active member of the Children’s Justice Initiative in both Ramsey and Hennepin Counties and she is a current member of Minnesota Women Lawyers, the Minnesota State Bar Association, and the Hennepin County Bar Association. She received the 2010 MSBA Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz Child Advocate & Service Award and is a frequent contributor to CLC's newsletter authoring "Practice Points" on legal issues that arise in CLC cases.

GEOFF HJERLEID

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Mr. Hjerleid is a Senior Assistant Olmsted County Attorney and has represented social services in child protection matters for over 15 years. Prior to this assignment he was a criminal prosecutor as well as an assistant public defender representing parents in CHIPS cases. He was appointed by the Supreme Court and serves on the Board of Continuing Legal Education and Committee on Equality and Justice, and he previously served on the Gender Fairness Implementation Committee. Mr. Hjerleid is President of the Olmsted County Bar Association, and an adjunct professor at St. Mary’s University of Minnesota where he teaches healthcare ethics and public policy.

HON. MARK IRELAND

Judge Ireland is a Minnesota district court judge in the Second Judicial District, Ramsey County. Judge Ireland is the lead Children’s Justice Initiative in the Second Judicial District. He is also on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota District Judges Association. Prior to becoming a judge, he was an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota, civilly prosecuting consumer fraud matters. He was also the founder and supervising attorney at the Foreclosure Relief Law Project, which helped families facing foreclosure and communities affected by the foreclosure crisis. His earlier work as an attorney has been profiled in local and national media, including Minnesota Public Radio, *USA Today*, and the *Washington Post*. He was named a “Rising Star” by *Minnesota Law & Politics* magazine, an “Up & Coming Attorney” by *Minnesota Lawyer*, and won the Direct Service Award by the Minnesota Justice Foundation in 2009.

NANCY JONES

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Ms. Jones is an Assistant Hennepin County Attorney. She received her B.A. in child psychology and her J.D. from the University of Minnesota. Before joining the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office, Ms. Jones was employed by Hennepin County as financial worker and child support officer. She was assigned to Child Support Division before transferring to Child Protection Division. Since 1990, Ms. Jones has specialized in state ward and adoptions cases. She was appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court committees for Family and Guardian ad Litem Rules, and she was a trainer for the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System on permanency, concurrent planning, and court report writing. And, she has presented numerous CLE presentations in areas of paternity, juvenile protection, and adoption.

CANDACE LAGO

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Ms. LaGou is with Red Lake Family and Children's Services.

HON. MICHELLE LAWSON

Judge Lawson is a District Court Judge in the 7th Judicial District, chambered in Clay County. She was appointed to the bench by Governor Mark Dayton in October 2012. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Lawson served as Chief Assistant Clay County Attorney, Interim Clay County Attorney, Facilitator at the University of St. Mary, and Associate Attorney at Vogel Law Firm. She is the lead judge for the Clay County Children's Justice Initiative.

JANINE LEPAGE

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Ms. LePage is an Assistant Crow Wing County Attorney who has been practicing law for over 21 years. She has worked for Crow Wing County in the area of Child Protection since 1996. During her time with Crow Wing County, she has been the primary attorney representing Crow Wing County Social Services in all aspects of juvenile protection matters, including any appellate work. In addition, Ms. LePage represents the agency in administrative appeals involving maltreatment determinations, foster care license and daycare license appeals. Over the years, she has also handled the county's juvenile delinquency cases, civil commitments, and once in awhile, just to mix it up a bit, she picks up the prosecution of an adult criminal matter, including child homicide and criminal sexual conduct against a child.

REBECCA MCCONKEY-GREENE

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Ms. McConkey-Greene is an attorney for the White Earth Band of Chippewa. For five years, she has advocated for families and tribes involved in child protection proceedings in both state and tribal courts. Ms. McConkey-Greene worked for Anishinabe Legal Services from 2007 until December 2008 as a parent's attorney on child protection cases before the White Earth Tribal Court. She worked for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Child Welfare Department from December 2008 until December 2010.

KEVIN MCTIGUE

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Mr. McTigue is employed by Hennepin County as a supervisor in child protection intake. He has been in child protection for over 30 years and a supervisor in child protection for 25 years. He has supervised child protection field, family group decision making, long term foster care, and child protection intake. Mr. McTigue is on the executive board for the Minnesota Social Services Association. He offers training for DHS on Engaging Fathers in Child Protection Case Planning and Transitioning Adolescents into Adulthood. He recently started training social work unit supervisors on best practice in providing Trauma-Informed Supervision and use of the Child Welfare Practice Model. In the past, he has worked as a juvenile probation/parole officer, family therapist, and several adjunct positions with the University of Minnesota School of Social Work. He is the proud father of three adult children. His oldest has his master's degree in industrial engineering, his daughter is studying in France, and his youngest just joined the United States Marine Corps.

ALEX MILLER

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Mr. Miller is Manager of the Fifth Judicial District Guardian ad Litem Program. Mr. Miller received his Juris Doctor and Bachelor of Arts from St. Louis University. Mr. Miller has served on the Guardian ad Litem Advisory Committee and has been a Guardian ad Litem since leaving private practice 1999. He is an active member of the Children's Justice Initiative in both Rock and Nobles Counties.

MICAL PETERSON

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Ms. Peterson is employed with the Minnesota Department of Human Services where she serves as a deputy compact administrator for the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. She works on a wide variety of tasks with the primary goal of finding permanency for Minnesota children. Ms. Peterson previously served on the AAICPC Executive Committee as a member at large from 2011 to 2013 when she was elected as the AAICPC President. As President of the AAICPC, Ms. Peterson is responsible for:

- The administration of the association including chairing the executive committee along with proposing and implementing the annual work plan;
- Serving as an ex-officio member of all AAICPC committees;
- Being available for the AAICPC member body for questions and support as it relates to the Compact; and
- Planning and running annual business meeting.

Ms. Peterson is proud to be part of a team that works together to help children achieve permanency by reducing barriers to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. Together, we've strengthened the program to better serve the people of Minnesota by improving the efficiency of processing case timelines and providing better customer service to the public. Ms. Peterson enjoys the challenge of participating and learning about new projects as the Department is constantly growing and changing to adapt to the needs of Minnesota children and families. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve these families on a daily basis.

LISA FOLLETT POLLAK

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Ms. Follett Pollak has worked for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Human Services Division in the Social Services Department for the past 25½ years. She is the Social Services Department Coordinator and has lived on the Fond du Lac Reservation all of her life. She studied Social Work at the College of St. Scholastica and at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Ms. Pollak has presented on various topics locally and in California and Washington DC. She is very interested in issues and policies affecting the American Indian families and tribal programming. She has collaborated with tribal and county social services systems as well as probation departments throughout Minnesota to advocate for American Indian services. She is very interested in photography, spends a lot of time with her family, and enjoys hosting foreign exchange students.

HON. JOHN RODENBERG

Judge Rodenberg was appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals in 2012. Prior to his appointment to the appellate court, Judge Rodenberg served as a District Court Judge in the 5th Judicial District, chambered in Brown County, from 2000 to 2012. He graduated cum laude from Hamline University School of Law in 1981, and cum Laude from St. Olaf College in Northfield in 1978. He served as a member of the Minnesota Judicial Council from 2005, including election as vice chair; was the CJI Lead Judge for the 5th Judicial District and Lead Judge for Brown County; and served on the Minnesota Drug Court Initiative workgroup from

2006-2010. In May 2012 Judge Rodenberg was a recipient of the Rosalie E. Wahl Judicial Award of Excellence from the Minnesota State Bar Association.

JESSICA L. RYAN

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Ms. Ryan, an enrolled member of the Brothertown Indian Nation, graduated from Hamline University School of Law in 1997. She has clerked for State and Tribal Court Judges and currently represents tribes in both state and tribal court proceedings as an attorney with BlueDog, Paulson and Small. She is active in legislative policy analysis affecting Indian families and collaborates with various tribes, counties, and states to develop policy and practice that better serves American Indian families. She has been admitted to practice law in Minnesota, the Prairie Island Mdewakanton Sioux Tribal Court; the Court of the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa; the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community Tribal Court; the Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribal Court of the Lake Traverse Reservation; and the Northern Plains Intertribal Court of Appeals. Ms. Ryan has appeared *pro hac vice* in various states on issues involving children and sovereignty. Ms. Ryan is a guardian ad litem for ICWA cases and has two little ones with whom she enjoys spending time.

HON. GERALD SEIBEL

Judge Seibel is a District Court Judge in the 8th Judicial District, chambered in Stevens County. He was appointed to the bench in 1992 and elected in 1994, 2000, 2006, and 2012. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Seibel was an attorney with Fluegel, Anderson, Dalager & Seibel from 1985-1982, and an attorney with Meshbesh, Singer & Spence—Minneapolis from 1978-1985. He earned his J.D. cum laude from William Mitchell College of Law in 1978, and his B.A. cum laude from St. John's University in 1972.

MELISSA SHERLOCK

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Ms. Sherlock is an Adoption and Permanency Specialist with the Adoption and Guardianship Unit at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. She has worked in public child welfare for more than 15 years, initially as a county social worker providing direct practice child protection and adoption services. Since 2002, she has been immersed in social work policy and is the policy lead for children under guardianship of the commissioner and adoption, which primarily involves analyzing, developing and implementing applicable legislation. In addition, she engages in strategic planning for children under guardianship of the commissioner, develops and disseminates best practice guides, tools and resources, and provides training and technical assistance on a variety of topics related to best practices in permanency and adoption.

TED WAUKEY

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Mr. Waukey holds both a Bachelor of Arts degree in Indian Studies with a minor in Chemical Dependency and a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Bemidji State University. Mr. Waukey also received a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in the Child Welfare Scholars program. He worked in various positions in the area of Chemical Dependency before getting into the social work field, including a counselor at Four Winds Treatment Center in Brainerd and a CD Assessor at MIWRC in Minneapolis. Mr. Waukey served as the Consultant in Disparities for Indian Children in Out-of-Home Placement for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. He has recently returned as the Director of Family Services for Mille Lacs Reservation Family Services after accepting a position as a Program Coordinator with Leech Lake Child Welfare.

LESLIE YUNKER

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Ms. Yunker is a supervisor of Child Protection and Children's Mental Health Social Workers in Dakota County. She received her Master's Degree in Psychology from the Alfred Adler Institute and her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. Ms. Yunker is a partner with the Dakota County Attorney's office to develop and implement client focused and effective child protection practices for children and their families. She is currently facilitating efforts with key stakeholders to implement a short term, focused residential treatment model for youth with behavior challenges and their families. She has presented to a variety of audiences on topics including: Role of Social Workers in CHIPS, Effective Case Planning, Effective Strategies to reduce Foster Care Reentry, and Engaging Noncustodial and/or Incarcerated Parents in Child Protection Services.

PATRICIA ZENNER

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Ms. Zenner has been a public defender since 1990 representing juveniles and their parents in all aspects of CHIPS cases. She is the owner of Zenner Law Office in Stillwater, where she represents persons involved in criminal, juvenile, and CHIPS cases.