



**Presenters:**

**Zealous Advocacy in CHIPS Cases: What Parent's Attorneys Need to Know to Effectively Advocate for their Clients**

**Brian Ansberry**

Brian Ansberry, MS, has been the Guardian Ad Litem Program Manager with the Seventh Judicial District since December 2001. Brian is also the GAL Coordinator of Becker, Clay, Douglas, Otter Tail, and Wadena Counties. In his work Brian has witnessed how parents who are not represented struggle to navigate the court system. The lack of strong attorney representation can impact a parent's ability to make the best decisions for their children. Brian has also experienced how attorney representation can help to provide insight on how to make those decisions that will hopefully result in a safe and permanent home for the children.

**Suzanne Arntson**

Suzanne Arntson is the Child Welfare Manager in Scott County, MN. Suzanne received her BSW from the University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire and her MSW from Augsburg College. Prior to the Child Welfare Manager position, Suzanne was a Scott County Child Protection Supervisor for eight years. She worked as a child protection worker in Barron County, Wisconsin and Scott County, MN prior to becoming a child protection supervisor. Suzanne was on staff with the Department of Human Services and worked with the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children. Contact information: [sarntson@co.scott.mn.us](mailto:sarntson@co.scott.mn.us) or phone: 952-496-8212

**Amy Chantry**

Ms. Chantry graduated from Valparaiso University School of Law in 1997. Upon being admitted to the bar in 1997, Ms. Chantry worked as a law clerk for the Honorable David R. Battey, in Alexandria, Minnesota. Ms. Chantry began representing parents in child protection and permanency matters as a full-time public defender Benton County in 1999. In 2006, Ms. Chantry opened her own law practice and continues to represent parents in child protection and permanency matters throughout the state. As part of her practice, Ms. Chantry also works as a contract Administrative Law Judge with the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. Ms. Chantry can be contacted via telephone at 320-282-8966 or via e-mail at [tachantry@gmail.com](mailto:tachantry@gmail.com).

**Elizabeth Carlson**

Elizabeth Carlson, Ph.D., L.P. is a Senior Researcher and Affiliate Graduate Faculty at the Institute of Child Development and Director of the Irving Harris Training Programs at the University of Minnesota. For over 20 years, Dr. Carlson has conducted research on

the Minnesota Longitudinal Study of Risk and Adaptation, publishing numerous papers on the effects of early experience on social/emotional development and psychopathology. She is co-author of the book, *The Development of the Person*, the primary publication from the longitudinal study. Dr. Carlson also directs the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Certificate program that provides training in early childhood development and its application to policy and practice, and she is an internationally recognized trainer in infant attachment. She works directly with young children and families at risk in clinical practice and provides clinical consultation.

### **Sharon Grewell Benson**

Sharon Grewell Benson is a graduate of the U of M Law School and is a sole practitioner at Benson Law Office, LLC. Over the past twenty years, she has practiced in the St. Cloud area as an attorney at St. Cloud Area Legal Services and Central Minnesota Legal Services, practiced as an assistant Seventh District Public Defender, and practiced in her own firm – both with her husband and as a sole practitioner. Her background ranges from family law, child protection, and work as a Guardian ad Litem, to criminal defense. She is a member of the Supreme Court Juvenile Protection Rules Committee and a Qualified Child Protection Parent Attorney. Ms. Benson may be contacted at Benson Law Office, 320-202-8046, [s.bensonlaw@gmail.com](mailto:s.bensonlaw@gmail.com).

### **Lisa Crockett**

Lisa Crockett a mother of seven who moved to Minnesota for a better life for her family. In 2006 Lisa became involved with a group of women at Merrick Community Center who wanted to make a difference in the lives of parents involved in the child welfare system. Lisa went through extensive amount of training around the child protection system and the culture of communities. Lisa has held weekly groups with young ladies around domestic violence, housing, nutrition, and teen pregnancy. Lisa has also interacted in summer camp activities and other programs in connection with St. Paul Youth Services and local police department to keep inner city youth off the streets. Lisa is now a Parent Mentor Coordinator with Minnesota Communities Caring for Children helping parents navigate their way through the child welfare system

### **Carmen Finn**

Carmen Finn is Director of Treatment Services at Wayside Family Treatment Center. She has over fifteen years of experience providing direct services to families and individuals struggling with chemical and mental health issues. Finn received her bachelor degree from Eastern Michigan University, and is currently a graduate student in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Argosy University-Twin Cities. Finn received her addiction diploma at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and is licensed as an alcohol and drug counselor in the state of Minnesota. Finn is also a certified addiction counselor through the Minnesota Certification Board. Additionally, she is also an accredited Triple P practitioner, an evidence-based positive parenting program, by The University of Queensland in Australia. Finn is currently a member of the MARRCH Ethics Committee. Her interests include gender, ethics, research, LGBT issues, and addiction and the family.

### **Cathleen Gabriel**

Cathleen Gabriel graduated from Hamline School of Law in 2004. During law school Mrs. Gabriel was a law clerk in the Washington County Attorney's Office. (2002-2004). Mrs. Gabriel clerked for the Honorable Karla F. Hancock in Sherburne County from 2004-2006. Mrs. Gabriel was an assistant Benton County Attorney from 2006-2008. In the Benton County Attorney's Office she primarily represented Benton Human Services in child protection, commitment and maltreat matters. In July 2008, Mrs. Gabriel contracted with Wright and Sherburne Counties to represent parents. In 2013, Mrs. Gabriel also started working part-time for the Public Defender's Office in the juvenile division. Mrs. Gabriel was a former president of the 18th district bar association, is the chair of the Wright County Defense Panel, voluntary attorney for the Wright County Legal Clinic and a member of the Sherburne and Wright children's justice initiative teams. Mrs. Gabriel's law office is in Annandale, MN. Her office number(s) are 763-269-4452 and 651-253-2675.

### **Jon Geffen**

Jon Geffen is a respected and experienced attorney who practices in many areas, including civil maltreatment law. For more than a decade, he has helped numerous individuals contest maltreatment findings. Mr. Geffen has argued maltreatment cases in administrative settings, district court, and the Minnesota Court of Appeals. After graduating from William Mitchell College of Law *cum laude* in 1997, he began practicing law with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services ("SMRLS") in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mr. Geffen repeatedly learned from clients the damaging collateral consequences of a civil maltreatment finding. In 2006, he was appointed as an Assistant Attorney General and represented the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Here, Mr. Geffen gained a deeper knowledge of how maltreatment determinations affect licensed professions including child care, foster care, and chemical dependency counseling. Since 2009, Mr. Geffen Jon has been a partner at Arneson and Geffen, PLLC in Minneapolis.

### **Nicole Gronneberg**

Nicole Gronneberg has worked as a court appointed parent attorney in Ramsey County since 2012. In this role, she represents parents in child protection, permanency and appellate matters. Nicole is a zealous advocate for parents. She believes in the value of family and in the importance of giving a voice to underrepresented populations. Prior to her work as a court appointed attorney, Nicole clerked for the Honorable Marybeth Dorn in Ramsey County from 2010 to 2012 on the Juvenile and Family rotation. Nicole is currently the court appointed parent attorney delegate for the Ramsey County Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) team. In addition to her work as a parent attorney in juvenile protection matters, Nicole practices family law and recently finished her first year teaching Representation for the Writing and Representation: Advice and Persuasion course at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Ms. Gronneberg may be contacted at Gronneberg Law Office, 612) 875-6238, [nicole@advolawmn.com](mailto:nicole@advolawmn.com).

**Anne Tyler Gueinzus**

Ms. Gueinzus is the Managing Attorney at the Children's Law Center of Minnesota, where she manages volunteer attorneys who work directly with foster care youth, and provides direct representation for a discrete number of foster care youth. She has served on the Minnesota Juvenile Protection Rules Advisory Committee since 2009 and has been representing children in juvenile court since 1997. She received the Minnesota State Bar Association's 2010 Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz Child Advocate & Service Award and was selected a 2014 Attorney of the Year by *Minnesota Lawyer* magazine. Anne has authored several articles and "Practice Points" on legal issues that arise in CLC cases as well as co-authoring a 2014 William Mitchell law review article with former CLC staff attorney Julia Hillel regarding permanency best practices for foster care youth. She received her Juris Doctor from Hamline University School of Law and her Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern University.

**Susan Humiston**

Susan Humiston is Director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility and Client Security Board. She has more than 20 years of litigation experience, as well as a strong ethics and compliance background, including service on the Minneapolis Ethics Board, and as an investigator for the Fourth District Ethics Committee. Prior to her appointment, Susan was Vice-President and Assistant General Counsel for Alliant Techsystems Inc. and its public company spin-off Vista Outdoor Inc., and was a litigation partner at Leonard, Street and Deinard, now Stinson Leonard Street. She clerked for U.S. District Court Judge David S. Doty, is an honors graduate of the University of Iowa College of Law, and received her B.A. with honors from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**Megan Hunt**

Megan Hunt discovered her passion for juvenile law in 1993, while attending William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline) at night and working as a law clerk in the Anoka County Public Defender's Office and has been representing children and parents in juvenile court ever since. In 2007, Ms. Hunt opened Hunt Law Office located in Stillwater, MN, and is currently employed by the Tenth Judicial District Public Defender's Office in Washington County defending children on charges ranging from petty alcohol consumption to certification cases for 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder. Ms. Hunt also represents children, parents and guardians ad litem in all phases of child protection cases including permanency trials and appeals. Ms. Hunt was appointed in 1999 by Governor Jesse Ventura as a public defender representative on the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. She served as a Minnesota representative on the Midwest Juvenile Defense Association from 2000-2004 and presently serves on the Washington County Juvenile Operations Group and the Children's Justice Initiative (CJI). Both committees work to improve services provided to families and children in child protection cases statewide. Ms. Hunt may be contacted at Hunt Law Office, [megan@huntlawofficemn.com](mailto:megan@huntlawofficemn.com), (651) 283-1862.

**Demond Jackson**

Demond Jackson is a husband and a father of nine children. He has been active in the community for the past seven years. He is a resident leader for the Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation located in Saint Paul, MN for the past four years. Mr. Jackson remains active in the community of Frogtown in which he resides. Mr. Jackson had the opportunity to be one of the first participants of an organization called Fathers for Education in the Saint Paul Public Schools and a member of Lifting Individual Families to End Poverty. These great opportunities landed him on Minnesota Communities Caring for Children Parent Leadership Team where he has served for the past three years as a Parent Consultant. He is a mentor with the Parent Mentor Program and enjoys helping parents to navigate their way through the Child Protection System.

**Jennifer Jackson**

Jennifer Jackson has employed an Assistant Dakota County since 2001. Ms. Jackson's current caseload is civil commitment and child protection. She clerked for the Honorable Patrice K. Sutherland in Dakota County from 1998 to 2001. She currently serves on the Minnesota County Attorney's Association (MCAA) Juvenile Law Committee and ICWA subcommittee. As a representative of the MCAA; served as a member on Governor Dayton's Child Fatality/Near Fatality Work Group. Ms. Jackson attended WMCL and graduated in 1998.

**Diana Rugh Johnson**

Diana Rugh Johnson is a Child Welfare Law Specialist who also serves as a Judge Pro Tempore in the Juvenile Court of DeKalb County, Georgia. She has been practicing law for ten years, specializing in child welfare law and Social Security Disability. Ms. Rugh Johnson holds a Master's Degree in Biochemistry from Clemson University and a law degree from Georgia State University. Diana is a member of the National Association of Counsel for Children and was the 2010 recipient of their Stephen Cahn Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. She is a member of the Georgia Supreme Court's Committee on Justice for Children and the Parent Attorney Advocacy Committee. She serves on the steering committee of the ABA's Parent Representation Project and on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children. Ms. Rugh Johnson teaches other child welfare attorneys in Georgia and across the United States on a variety of topics including trial skills, effective case planning, understanding drug tests, and due diligence in medically-complicated cases.

**Janine LePage**

Janine LePage has worked as an Assistant Crow Wing County Attorney for the past 20 years, having relocated to Brainerd from the Twin Cities in 1996. During that time, her primary responsibilities have centered around child protection. Recently she has moved into a different area of practice, but maintains a strong interest in the issues commonly present in these very difficult cases.

**Hon. John McBride**

John McBride was appointed to the District Court in January 2003 and is currently chambered in Washington County, Tenth Judicial District. Prior to his appointment to the Bench he was a civil trial attorney for 25 years. Judge McBride was awarded The Hamline University School of Law, Distinguished Alumni Award in 2000 and was named a Super Lawyer by Law and Politics in 2000. Judge McBride served as lead Judge for the Children's Justice Initiative in Chisago County for 10 years. Currently Judge McBride serves as Chair of the Juvenile Protection and Adoption Rules Committee and is a member of the CJL Advisory Committee.

**Deena McMahon, MSW, LICSW**

Deena McMahon is a family therapist with over 30 years' experience. She has developed a national reputation for excellence in areas ranging from attachment therapy and adoption dynamics to childhood sexual abuse and trauma. In addition to her therapy caseload, Ms. McMahon provides forensic assessments and frequently serves as an expert witness in court proceedings regarding permanency placements, child custody, and other issues. She is a faculty consultant for the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program, as well as an adviser to numerous child protection agencies, adoption organizations, and parent support groups. Ms. McMahon presents national and regional trainings on a variety of mental health topics to a wide range of parents and professionals including state judges, social services, educators, foster care providers, and mental health workers. Several of Ms. McMahon's trainings have been adopted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services as best practice protocol; she also developed a children's mental health curriculum which is required across Minnesota for foster care licensing CEU. Additionally, Ms. McMahon authored the Child Development chapter of the Minnesota Juvenile Protection Court Bench Book, the manual judges rely on for best practice. For more information about Deena McMahon, please visit [mcmahonccs.net](http://mcmahonccs.net).

**Judith Nord**

Judith Nord has served as a Staff Attorney with the State Court Administrator's Office since 1995. For the past 25 years, Ms. Nord's focus has been on improving outcomes for abused and neglected children and their families. Ms. Nord is the Manager of the Children's Justice Initiative, a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Judicial Branch and Minnesota Department of Human Services designed to address systems change in the juvenile court process. Ms. Nord has also served as staff to the Minnesota Supreme Court Juvenile Protection Rules Committee and the Adoption Rules Committee, as well as a number of other Supreme Court committees and taskforces. Prior to her work with the Judicial Branch, Ms. Nord practiced law as a public defender and as a solo practitioner representing adult and child clients in dissolution, paternity, child protection, and juvenile delinquency matters. She also served as a guardian ad litem and attorney in family court and juvenile court matters. And as a court-appointed appellate attorney in the Dakota County Juvenile Court. She serves as a member of several professional associations and organizations, including as past Chair of the Minnesota State Bar Association Children and the Law Section. Ms. Nord holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of

Minnesota, and received her Juris Doctor degree from Hamline University School of Law (now Mitchell Hamline) in 1990 where she was an Associate with the *Law Review* and served as Production Editor of the *Journal of Law and Politics*. Ms. Nord may be reached at [judy.nord@courts.state.mn.us](mailto:judy.nord@courts.state.mn.us).

### **Cherise Payton**

Ms. Payton is part of the Parent Mentor Network. She has participated with Minnesota Communities Caring for Children Circle of Parents Program. Ms. Payton has completed several "Prevent Child Abuse" trainings. She has served as a case manager, community advocate, youth program director. In 2016, Ms. Payton was honored by Superior African Heritage Community where she received the Empowerment Award in recognition of community leadership and service. In her spare time, she spends time with her family, listening to music, and talking to her plants. Ms. Payton can be reached at [cpayton@pcamn.org](mailto:cpayton@pcamn.org)

### **Anne Quincy**

Anne Quincy is the supervising attorney of the Government Benefits unit of Legal Aid of Minneapolis, a legal services office serving low-income residents of Hennepin County. A graduate of Loyola School of Law in Chicago, she has worked in civil legal services for more than 25 years, in Illinois and Minnesota. Ms. Quincy has represented claimants in SSI and Social Security disability appeals through all administrative levels and in federal court. She has represented welfare and Medical Assistance beneficiaries in administrative hearings, and in state and federal district court in individual and class actions. Ms. Quincy is admitted to practice in Minnesota and in the U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota. Ms. Quincy may be contacted at Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, (612) 746-3745, [aquincy@mylegalaid.org](mailto:aquincy@mylegalaid.org).

### **Larene Randle**

Larene Randle is Director of the Parent Mentor Network at Minnesota Communities Caring for Children. She also worked as the Parent Coordinator with Mitchell Hamline College of Law Parent Mentor Program. Ms. Randle started out as a parent from the community who wanted the voices of parents to be heard in the child welfare system over eight years ago. For the last four years, she has been on the Parent Leadership for Child Safety and Permanency team, which is a partnership between Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota and the Department of Human Services Children's Trust Fund. Ms. Randle is a master trainer and curriculum writer in the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System. She has also co-chaired for African American Disparities Committee at Minnesota Department of Human Services. Ms. Randle currently sits on the Minnesota Board of Social Work as a Public Member.

### **Hon. John Rodenberg**

Judge John R. Rodenberg was appointed by Governor Mark Dayton to the Minnesota Court of Appeals, where he has served since February 2012. Previously he served as a district judge in the Fifth Judicial District, chambered in New Ulm. He has served as a member of the Minnesota Special Redistricting Panel, the Minnesota Judicial Council, and the Minnesota Courts Public Trust and Confidence Work Group. Prior to joining the

bench, Judge Rodenberg was a partner in the law firm of Berens, Rodenberg & O'Connor, New Ulm, from 1982 until 2000. Judge Rodenberg received his Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Olaf College in 1978 and his Juris Doctorate from Hamline University School of Law in 1981. Judge Rodenberg has received the Rosalie E. Wahl Judicial Award of Excellence from the Minnesota State Bar Association Public Law Section. He is a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association, the Ninth District Bar Association, the Brown County Bar Association and the Minnesota District Judges Association. Judge Rodenberg has served as a member of the Minnesota Children's Justice Initiative Advisory Committee, the Minnesota Drug Court Initiative workgroup, the Minnesota Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules of Public Access to Records and chaired the Minnesota State Law Library/Self-Help Center committee. Judge Rodenberg is married to Dianne Rodenberg and they have raised three children.

### **Jessica Ryan**

Jessica Ryan is an enrolled member of the Brothertown Indian Nation, where she also serves as an elected Tribal Council member. She graduated from Hamline Law School in 1997. Ms. Ryan has clerked for State and Tribal Court Judges and currently represents Tribes in both state and tribal court proceedings as an attorney in a law firm that specializes in practicing federal Indian law. 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. Ms. Ryan was actively involved in collaborating to revise the Tribal/State Agreement; participated in developing the Juvenile Judge's Benchbook – ICWA Chapter; and has served on numerous Supreme Court Committees including the Race Bias Task Force; the Minnesota Tribal Court/State Court Judges; the Juvenile Rules Committee; and has been active in the Children's Justice Initiative. Ms. Ryan helped establish the Hennepin County ICWA Guardian ad litem panel and subsequently served as guardian ad litem for ICWA cases for several years. She has served on the Board of Directors for a number of American Indian non-profit organizations. Ms. Ryan has been admitted to practice law in Minnesota and several Tribal Courts; and has served as an appellate Court Judge for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and an Associate Judge for the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

### **October Seaberg**

October Seaberg is a parent who was involved in the CHIPS process and, with great success, her family was reunified. She has also witnessed the adoption process following a CHIPS case with her sister's children. Ms. Seaberg has seen many aspects of the court system involving children and has been able to see wonderful opportunity to help others. Ms. Seaberg is a parent mentor for Minnesota Communities Caring for Children specializing in ICWA cases. She also works as a fulltime optician for Vision Pro Optical in Duluth, Minnesota. She volunteers as a Women's Life Skills group leader and teaches recovery skills to people for Celebrate Recovery. She is actively involved in her church and loves greeting people on Sundays. Some of the things she learned while in the court system encouraged her in being accountable to not only her children in living a healthy lifestyle, but also to her community. Ms. Seaberg finds that being of

service to others is one of the greatest callings and she is proud to be in that position after proving it is possible to live through adversity.

### **Elizabeth (Zeb) Henderson Shreve**

Zeb Henderson Shreve is a bilingual (English/Spanish) mental health professional with The Family Partnership. She has been working with survivors of domestic and dating abuse since 1998. She has worked as a domestic violence advocate in legal, shelter, community, medical and mental health settings. She currently provides mental health therapy in both English and Spanish, and has clinical specialties in include working with issues related to trauma, violence and abuse, acculturation stress, adolescent mental health and gender and sexual identity development. Ms. Henderson Shreve holds a BA in Latin American Studies from Smith College and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Minnesota.

### **Shannon Smith**

Shannon Smith is Executive Director of the ICWA Law Center located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ms. Smith graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School with honors in 1999. She has been with the ICWA Law Center since 2000. The ICWA Law Center is committed to strengthening, preserving, and reuniting Indian families consistent with the mandates and spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act. She has over 16 years of experience working in the field of Indian child welfare. She has provided direct legal representation to hundreds of Indian families impacted by the child protection system in state and tribal courts. Ms. Smith is respected for her legal expertise and has conducted local and national trainings furthering efforts to increase the understanding of the historical necessity, practical applications, and future implications of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

### **Eren Sutherland**

Eren Sutherland currently works as an immigration attorney at Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (“MMLA”) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Eren works in part with clients referred from the Hennepin County Public Defender who have pending CHIPS, juvenile, or criminal proceedings. Prior to joining MMLA, Eren worked in private practice representing clients in immigration matters in Iowa City, Iowa. Eren graduated with honors from The University of Iowa College of Law in December 2013.

### **Elizabeth Vadnais**

Elizabeth Vadnais is a parent of 5 children ranging in age from 27 to 10 years old. She has a degree in Elementary Education. She provided childcare for years while her children were growing up. She also taught preschool for several years and was a substitute teacher. Unfortunately, she eventually was a parent involved in the chips process. It was a difficult experience, yet still a time for growth. Ms. Vadnais started her own group for parents desiring a change and an opportunity to learn and grow. She learned to take all of her experiences and use them to become a better person, while trying to help others. She looks forward to a future working with parents involved in the child protection system.

**Joanna Woolman**

Joanna Woolman is an Associate Professor of Law at Mitchell | Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota. She also is the director of the school's Child Protection Program. Professor Woolman directs a clinic where law students work with social workers and parent mentors to provide direct representation to parents in the child protection system. Professor Woolman's work with the Child Protection Program includes conducting statewide attorney trainings, community events, and policy work to promote best practices in the area of child protection. Professor Woolman researches, publishes, and presents on issues relating to women's experiences in the criminal and child protection systems. She also teaches criminal law. Professor Woolman received a B.S. from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1998 and a J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 2004. Prior to coming to William Mitchell College of Law full time in 2011, Professor Woolman worked as a public defender.

**Pat Zenner**

Pat Zenner has been practicing law for over 27 years. She has been a full time juvenile public defender for 18 years and then opened her own practice with a part time juvenile public defender contract. Throughout her law career she has represented children, parents and guardians ad litem in the area of child protection.