

Conference Program Description

Association of Family and Conciliation Courts
California Chapter Annual Conference
CUSTODY COMPLEXITIES: HARD DECISIONS –
An Interdisciplinary Dialogue
February 10-12, 2017

PRE-CONFERENCE INSTITUTES (Feb. 10th, 12:30pm to 4:45pm):

Institute One

Assessment of Intimate Partner Violence: Using the New AFCC Guidelines for Examining the Effects of Intimate Partner Violence

Presenters:

Robin M. Deutsch, Ph.D, ABPP, Leslie M. Drozd, Ph.D., Laurel Brauer, JD, CFLS

Family courts are challenged by increased reports of intimate partner violence. The goals of this institute are to develop competence in the practices and procedures for assessing intimate partner violence with full awareness of ethics and standards appropriate to professional practice in a diverse populations. In this institute we will review new laws related to intimate partner violence, types of IPV, effects of IPV on children and parenting, and evaluation practices. Using a case example, we will apply the new AFCC Guidelines for Examining the Effects of Intimate Partner Violence on Families: A Supplement to the Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the impact of intimate partner violence on children and alleged victim and perpetrator, on parenting, and coparenting.
2. Demonstrate the components of an evaluation of IPV
3. Apply a systematic approach to providing a sound evidence-based report and opinion

Credits:

APA: 4 HOURS; CPA: 4 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 4 HOURS, 5.225 – 4 HOURS, 5.215/5.230 – 4 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 4 HOURS; BLS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – 4 HOURS

Institute Two

The Child's Voice in Court: The Roles and Responsibilities of Minor's Counsel

Presenters:

Hon. Louise Bayles-Fightmaster, Hon. Dale R. Wells, Comm. Ret., Diana Herrington, MFT, Carol Adams, JD, CFLS, William Spiller, Jr., JD, Diane Vargas, JD, Merlyn Hernandez, JD, CFLS

The information that children give us about their experiences in their families is critical in determining and protecting their best interest during Court proceedings. Minor's Counsel (MC) has an important role in communicating a child's views and preferences to the court. This training will examine both legal and psychological dimensions to the work of MC. The legal dimension includes the limits on the role of MC, privilege issues, and how to disentangle stated preferences from best interests. The psychological dimensions includes how to integrate an understanding of the family context of a child's words, how to develop rapport with children of various ages, and how to present an integration of the information that will be most helpful to the court.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this institute participants will be able to:

1. Describe the limits on their role that Minors' Counsel need to be aware of
2. List three rapport-building techniques to use when interviewing children and teenagers
3. Identify three areas of education that minor's counsel should develop beyond the Family Code requirements

Credits:

APA: 4 HOURS; CPA: 4 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 4 HOURS, 5.225 – 4 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 4 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 2 HOURS, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 2 HOURS

Institute Three

Intervening with Children's Complex Resistance/Refusal Dynamics

Presenters:

Bill Eddy, JD, LCSW, CFLS, Shawn D. Skillin, JD, Lyn R. Greenberg, Ph.D., ABPP, Shawn McCall, Psy.D., Ellen Mauldin, MFT, Albert R. Gibbs, Ph.D.

Cases involving children's resistance to and/or rejection of a parent are among the most complex, challenging and controversial. While risks to children's adjustment are well established, considerable controversy exists regarding definitions and causes of these dynamics, and when and how to intervene with children, either the favored or rejected parent, and when/if to employ dramatic interventions such as changes in parenting plans. Our speakers will offer multiple perspectives and tools – including the impact of different high conflict personalities, initial interventions with parents, early interventions for children and families, and options for entrenched and hybrid cases. The workshop will also offer guidelines for considering custody reversals, based on each family's unique situation and characteristics, and for addressing "The Stark Dilemma," i.e. concern the attempt to repair the parent-child relationship may be unsuccessful or involve an unacceptable degree of emotional costs. Case material and interchange among the panelists and participants should make this an engaging program.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to list 3 High Conflict Personality types.
2. Participants will be able to list at least three types of distancing between parent and child.
3. Participants will be able to identify early signs that children are failing to master developmental tasks or are being placed at risk by adult conflict.
4. Participants will identify intervention strategies that can be useful at early, middle, and late stages of family disruption, and methods for systematic and coordinated treatment planning.
5. Participants will be able to apply guidelines for considering custody reversals, based on each family's unique situation and characteristics.

Credits:

APA: 4 HOURS; CPA: 4 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 4 HOURS; 5.225 – 4 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 4 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 2 HOURS, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 2 HOURS

Institute Four

Ethical Issues and Challenges for Consultants and Expert Witnesses

Presenters:

David A. Martindale, Ph.D., ABPP, Hon. Robert Schnider, Ret.

The presenter and attendees will discuss the services currently being offered by forensic mental health professionals; the ethical issues associated with the provision of certain services; and, the ways in which

misunderstandings between retaining attorneys and service providing mental health professionals can be avoided. Actual cases (disguised where necessary) will be discussed.

Learning Objectives:

After having attended this Institute, attendees will be able to . . .

1. Identify the ways in which consulting services differ from evaluation services.
2. Describe three specific ethical issues that arise in offering consulting services.
3. Identify specific actions that can be taken to minimize retention bias.

Credits:

APA: 4 HOURS; CPA: 4 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 4 HOURS, 5.225 – 4 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 4 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 4 HOURS

WELCOME & PLENARY ONE (Feb. 10th, 5:30pm to 7:15pm):

The Slippery Slope from Research to Advocacy

Presenter:

Marsha Kline Pruett, Ph.D., MSL, ABPP

How does research get used and misused in the service of legal decision making and public policy? This plenary begins with an examination of ways that family law has come to rely on research and what we all want to know from research. But given the vast number of potentially useful research articles and studies, how to recognize the quality of research becomes an important frame of reference for family law professionals. In addition to understanding how to use research(ers) to advocate for clients or a policy position, it is equally important to be able to recognize when advocacy crosses over into advocacy bias. Common types of bias will be elucidated using an article that could be understood differently based on its “reading and presentation.” Suggestions for how to wade into the research world while maintaining the moral and empirical high ground will be offered.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will...

1. Analyze ways research is used in family law, evaluating most effective ways
2. Learn how to distinguish the quality of research
3. Be able to recognize advocacy biases
4. Learn techniques for maintaining the moral and empirical high ground

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1 HOUR, REC. & ELIM. OF BIAS – 0.5 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1.5 HOURS

PLENARY TWO (Feb. 11th, 8:30am to 10:30am):

Social Science Research and Child Custody Determinations: An Evidence-Informed Perspective

Presenters:

Michael A. Saini, MSW, Ph.D., Leslie Drozd, Ph.D., Hon. Reva G. Goetz, Ret., Mike J. Kretzmer, JD, CFLS

In a climate of increased demand for accountability and effectiveness in the family courts, there is a growing demand to consider the best available social science evidence when working with children and families involved in child custody disputes. Based on an evidence-informed framework, this plenary will present an update of the current research regarding some of the most important and complex issues that arise in family court, such as gatekeeping, alienation, intimate partner violence, joint custody, relocation, co-parenting children with chronic medical conditions and developmental disorders, gay and lesbian co-parents, and cultural issues, among others. Rather than a plain summary of the evidence, topic based decision trees will be offered to consider the factors that should be considered based on the social science research. The scientific information provided will assist legal and mental health professionals to proffer empirically-based opinions, conclusions and recommendations when working with children and families in family law matters.

Learning Objectives:

This plenary will help you to:

- Describe the evidence-informed framework for applying social science evidence to family law matters
- Identify ways practitioners can remain informed about current evidence that impacts their practice with children and families
- Demonstrate knowledge of the current evidence as it relates to important and complex issues relevant to family law matters
- Apply social science evidence to child custody determinations.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 2 HOURS

SATURDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS (Feb. 11th, 11:00am to 12:30pm):

Workshop One

The Hidden Dynamics of Custody Issues with Special Needs Children

Presenters:

Richard Ross, JD, CFLS, Amanda Selogie, JD, Vickie Brett, JD, Ann Simun, Psy.D.

Parenting children with special needs creates a whole new dynamic in divorce proceedings especially in the areas of child custody and child support. But how can this information be presented to the judge and/or in settlement processes? This workshop will focus on the practical issues of custody and child support of special needs children from educational rights, special needs planning, and the responsibilities after the child turns 18 years old. It will also focus on how to bring the child's special needs before the mediator and judge, what to include in declarations, and how and what to advocate on behalf of your parent client and the best interest of the special needs child. Considerations for the family law practitioner, mediator, or judge where one parent recognizes and identifies a child's disabilities and special needs and the other parent is in denial or disputes the child's alleged disabilities and special needs.

Learning Objectives:

Four learning objectives. This workshop is designed to help participants:

- a. How to advocate for the disabled child in child custody and child support court hearings.
- b. Develop parenting plans for families with disabled children based on child's unique needs.
- c. Develop trial strategy using the special considerations of a disabled child.

- d. Make appropriate recommendations and judgements for these unique families.

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1.5 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 0.5 HOURS, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 1 HOUR

Workshop Two **Creative Solutions for Complex Custody Cases**

Presenters:

Stan J. Katz, Ph.D., Alan Yellin, Ph.D., Lisa Helfend Meyer, JD, CFLS, Hon. David Weinberg, Comm. Ret.

High conflict custody cases may require non-traditional and sometimes drastic solutions in order to effect positive change within the family. Judges, mediators and psychologists traditionally have implemented the same standard orders which often fail to decrease conflict and/or improve relations between child and parents and between battling and contentious parents. There are also legal constraints on what judges can legally order. Creative solutions require thinking out of the box, putting pressure on resistant parents through a variety of financial, decision-making and time share interruptions. This workshop will focus on how to break through resistance through novel and innovative legal and psychological techniques.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will learn:

1. To identify cases which require creative and innovative solutions;
2. How to approach and present a complex case including what Orders to request;
3. Specific innovative methodologies including effective monitoring, technology and non-traditional forms of family therapy.

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1.5 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1 HOUR, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 0.5 HOURS

Workshop Three **The Danger of a Single Story: Paradigms, Power and Stereotypes in Custody Court**

Presenters:

Leslie Ellen Shear, JD, CFLS, Robert A. Simon, Ph.D.

Novelist Chimamanda Adichie warn about “the danger of a single story.” That danger arises in our work when family law professionals view families through the lens of a paradigm like “restrictive gatekeeping,” “alienation,” or “high conflict.” Reducing complexity to fact patterns can result in missing much of importance. “Groupthink” among professionals often reinforces a single story of family relationships. We will explore how the very analytical tools we rely upon on can create bias when we tell a single story.

Learning Objectives:

Attendees will:

1. Reflect upon how the danger of the single story includes elements misuse of power, blindness to important characteristics, bias and stereotyping.
2. Reflect upon how the very theoretical paradigms we have developed to understand families both help us and blind us in our work.

3. Consider ways of countering the danger of the single story in custody cases.

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 0.5 HOURS, REC. & ELIM. OF BIAS – 1 HOUR; BLS: CUSTODY – 1 HOUR, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 0.5 HOURS

Workshop Four

Collaborative Divorce and Divorce Team Co-Mediation: A New Paradigm for Resolving Disputes Respectfully Without Litigation

Presenters:

Carol R. Hughes, Ph.D., LMFT, Cathleen Collinsworth, CDFA®, MAFF™, Bruce Fredenburg, LMFT, Brian Don Levy, JD

This workshop describes how Collaborative Divorce and Divorce Team Co-Mediation are especially suited for child custody issues. Family-centered, confidential, out of court processes, keeping children at the center of concern rather than in the middle of a battle, both offer couples the opportunity to efficiently co-create their divorce agreements with integrity, dignity, respect and cost efficiency. Couples use an interdisciplinary team of co-equal professionals, including Neutral Child Specialist, Collaborative Lawyers or Lawyer-Mediator, Divorce Coaches and Neutral Financial Specialist, with licensure in their respective fields, extensive experience with families experiencing divorce and specialized training in Team Co-Mediation and Collaborative Divorce processes.

Learning Objectives:

Upon the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Describe Collaborative Divorce and Divorce Team Co-Mediation and explain their respective benefits, pros and cons to divorcing couples and families;
2. List each Collaborative Divorce Interdisciplinary Team and Divorce Team Co-Mediation Professional and describe his or her role on the team;
3. Describe and explain the exceptional value added by the Neutral Child Specialist in a Collaborative Divorce or in a Divorce Team Mediation process;
4. Identify the training requirements to become a Collaborative Divorce and Divorce Team Co-Mediation Professional and know where to find training.

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1.5 HOURS; BLS: MEDIATION/NEG. OF FAM. LAW DISPUTES – 1 HOUR, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 0.5 HOURS

LUNCHEON & DROWN AWARD (Feb. 11th, 12:45pm to 1:30pm)

PLENARY THREE (Feb. 11th, 1:30pm to 3:00pm):

Streamlining Family Courts and Custody Evaluations: What Needs to Change

Presenters:

Hon. Harvey Silberman, Hon. Marjorie Slabach, Comm. Ret., Frank Davis, Ph.D., Mary Elizabeth Lund, Ph.D., Robert L. Kaufman, Ph.D., ABPP, Judith R. Forman, JD, CFLS

Family Courts in California are overwhelmed by demand and constrained by reduced resources. Child custody evaluations, originally developed as a tool for resolving custody disputes with input from mental health professionals, are criticized as too lengthy, too complicated, and taking too long to complete; in some cases, evaluations arguably impede settlement and encourage litigation. A panel of judicial officers and mental health professionals will address these concerns and describe new developments for California courts which will impact custody cases, including a model program for high-conflict families. The panel will also address dilemmas of custody evaluations, including means to limit scope and procedures as well as considerations for promoting post-evaluation settlement. There will be a presentation of survey data on possibilities for mentoring early-career child custody evaluators.

Learning Objectives:

After the plenary, participants will be able to:

1. Describe a model for helping high-conflict families in family court.
2. List three ways of improving child custody evaluations.
3. Identify methods for mentoring new custody evaluators.

Credits:

APA: 1.5 HOURS; CPA: 1.5 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 1.5 HOURS, 5.225 – 1.5 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1.5 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1.5 HOURS

SATURDAY AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS (Feb. 11th, 3:30pm to 5:30pm):

Workshop Five

Safety, Communications and the Internet for Children and Families

Presenters:

Nancy W. Olesen, Ph.D., Michael A. Saini, MSW, Ph.D., Leslie M. Drozd, Ph.D.

The rapid increase in online communications has opened access to online worlds, including social networking, gaming sites, in-apps, virtual worlds, video sites and blogs. Online technologies have also created new ways children can stay connected with their parents. Although digital relationships may benefit parent-child relationships, spending time online can create new challenges for children's internet safety, both within parental relationships and within broader digital networks. Guidelines have been proposed for keeping children safe online, but it remains unclear whether these are relevant to child custody disputes. This will be an interactive workshop with the use of multimedia and participant engagement.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe ways to use virtual contact programs to maintain parent-child relationships
2. Provide information and advice about the protection of children in high-conflict families who use virtual contact programs to maintain contact with non-residential parents.
3. Present information to families, attorneys and the court about recent research and guidelines to help parents protect their children in activity on social media.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1 HOUR, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 1 HOUR

Workshop Six

Domestic Violence: Symptoms of Abuse In and Out of the Courtroom

Presenters:

Jill Murray, Psy.D., LMFT, Adam Dodge, JD, Hon. A Veronica Saucedo, Comm., Laurel Brauer, JD, CFLS

Domestic violence manifests in a myriad of ways – the very least of which is physical. There is a global misunderstanding of abusive behaviors and their impact on victims. From the DVRO perspective, this workshop will showcase the types of abuse and the current trends, common client behaviors and how to educate them, the impact on kids, practical implications for the courtroom and obtaining the TRO and RO, and the aftermath realities once the restraining order is obtained.

Learning Objectives:

This workshop is to educate participants to:

1. Identify DV in its various forms and elicit needed information from victims;
2. Develop a strategy for obtaining (or ordering) DVRO;
3. Understand DV implications on the children and post RO.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS, 5.215/5.230 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – 2 HOURS

Workshop Seven

To Settle or Not to Settle: That is the Question

Presenters:

Lorie S. Nachlis, JD, CFLS, S. Margaret Lee, Ph.D.

Our beginning premise is that a settlement rather than continued litigation involving an evaluation does not always serve the child's best interests. To explore the risks and benefits of the different paths, we will need to examine the positive and negative values that each of us assigns to settlement and to litigation. This presentation will explore these assumptions and examine the factors that provide support for and against a given path. Through didactic presentation and examination of multiple cases, we will provide the participants with tools to thoughtfully consider the options if and when settlement may not be good enough.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will understand some of the BIC benefits that can accompany negotiating a settlement in a case.
2. That participants learn to consider various factors when strategizing whether to settle a case or pursue more legalistic approaches.
3. That participants become aware of a range of unintended consequences that can arise when cases are settled with insufficient information to reliably predict a reasonably successful outcome.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 1.5 HOURS, REC. & ELIM. OF BIAS – 0.5 HOURS, BLS: MEDIATION/NEG. OF FAM. LAW DISPUTES – 1 HOUR, CUSTODY – 1 HOUR

Workshop Eight

Modest Means Moves: Preparing For and Trying the Modest Means Move-Away Case

Presenters:

Leslie Ellen Shear, JD, CFLS, Mike J. Kretzmer, JD, CFLS, Gitu Bhatia, Psy.D.

One of the most challenging situations in Family Court is the presentation of a “move-away” case where the litigants have modest means. Judges are often confronted with poorly conducted move-away trials that do not give the Court the information necessary for wise decisions, and unduly consume court time and resources. This program will lay out how move-away cases can best be organized and presented by parties and counsel to assist the Court in developing long-distance parenting plan orders. There will also be discussion of alternatives to court resolution and how to be sensitive to cultural issues.

Learning Objectives:

The participants will be able to:

1. Describe steps needed to work with the client in anticipation of a relocation trial – parent education, managing expectations, proposing a parenting plan.
2. Give an outline of how to organize the complex law and facts in modest means cases for presentation to the Court.
3. List several methods for handling such matters when either one or both litigants are self-represented.
4. List three ways a mental health perspective can be helpful.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 2 HOURS

PLENARY FOUR (Feb. 12th, 8:30am to 10:30am):

It Takes A Village: Addressing Children's Attachments to Multiple Parents and Grandparents

Presenters:

Deborah Wald, JD, CFLS, Hon. Amy M. Pellman, Philip M. Stahl, Ph.D., ABPP

Many factors are contributing to a shift in family configurations. These factors include advances in medical science, which have enabled in-vitro fertilization, sperm and egg donation and surrogate parenting, as well as societal advances, which -- among other things -- have led to broader acceptance of same-sex parents. Along with these advances comes increasing recognition of the importance of continuity in parenting, placing the child’s psychological relationships at the center of the family court's concerns. This plenary brings together experts who will address the challenging legal and psychological issues raised by new family forms, including the new multiple parent law and grandparent visitation.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this institute participants will be able to:

1. Identify three different kinds of multiple-parent families
2. Describe the most important issues judicial officers find relevant to determining the best interest of a child in multiple parent cases
3. Assess and compare family dynamics facing mental health professionals in multiple parent cases

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1.5 HOURS, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 0.5 HOURS

SUNDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS (Feb. 12th, 10:45am to 12:45pm):

Workshop Nine

Intimate Partner Abuse, Parenting & Related Law & Science

Presenters:

H. Yvonne Seeley, JD, CFLS, Nancy K.D. Lemon, JD, Hon. Joni Hiramoto, Mindy Mechanic, Ph.D.

New law and social science will be presented at this workshop which will illustrate the impact of DV upon children and should effect parenting plans and custody orders. Attendees will learn that developments in social science persuaded the California legislature to enact FC§3044 and to amend FC§§3011 and 3020 and the new case law is trending for the protection of children who witness DV.

This training will explore what is actually occurring in Court regarding domestic violence and parenting plans. Will the parenting plan differ if a DV action has not been filed? Will the plan differ if the children have not witness the DV? Will the plan differ if a DV is filed and there is a concurrent family law action? Or if the DV is a stand-alone action? Will the DV Court make the children protected parties if they witness the abuse?

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to describe historical trends that form the context for new appellate decisions and statutes affecting survivors of domestic violence and their children.
2. Participants will be able to explain the scientific data that underlies three of California's Family Code Statutes protecting survivors of domestic violence and their children.
3. By understanding the trends and data upon which the cases and statutes are grounded, participants will be better able to apply the cases and statutes accurately in their work and help courts arrive at decisions that are in the best interest of children who have been in homes where domestic violence has taken place.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS, 5.215/5.230 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – 2 HOURS

Workshop Ten

Parentage Notwithstanding Genetics

Presenters:

Glen H. Schwartz, JD, CFLS, Hon. B. Scott Silverman, Angus Strachan, Ph.D.

California parentage law is made up of a series of statutes that wind a trail from common law to the reflection of modern day values and redefinition of family. This workshop explores that unique statutory scheme of parentage, in which the issue is not always dependent of the genetic truth. The workshop is presented in an entertaining hypothetical format of common and not so common factual situations that illustrate the application of the law, with a teaching style that is a combination of lecture and interactive screen presentation. *Additionally*, each attendee of the workshop will receive a current edition of the "Parentage Litigation Reference Guide," used by Judicial Officers throughout the state.

Learning Objectives:

This Workshop is designed to demonstrate and discuss with Bench, Bar and the mental health community that:

- 1) California has a very unique and complicated statutory scheme of parentage;
- 2) This statutory scheme is not dependent on biological relationship;
- 3) This statutory scheme is continuing to evolve and reflect today's social landscape.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 2 HOURS

Workshop Eleven
Grandparent Visitation: Recent Developments

Presenters:

Stephen B. Ruben, JD, CFLS, Philip M. Stahl, Ph.D., ABPP, Hon. Michael E. Whitaker

The relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild can be one of great joy and importance for both grandparent and grandchild. A divorce or separation may tear families apart and alter or sever relationships, including those of a child bonded to loving grandparents. When a child's parents block ongoing contact with grandparents, the grandparents may in turn consider taking legal steps to maintain contact with the child. The workshop will address this dynamic and the implications of several important decided cases: the U.S. Supreme Court in *Troxel*; the California Supreme Court in *Harris*; and California Courts of Appeal in *Finberg* and most recently in *Stuard*.

Learning Objectives:

The participants will be able to:

1. Describe the legal presumptions in place, the burden of proof and the types of cases that would qualify for granting visitation.
2. Enumerate the variety of roles that mental health professionals can play as mediators or evaluators.
3. Understand the factors that the court uses in determining the time-share for the grandparent as well as any further court monitoring.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: MEDIATION/NEG. OF FAM. LAW DISPUTES – 1 HOUR, CUSTODY – 1 HOUR

Workshop Twelve
How Attorneys and Consultants Can Best GUIDE the Client

Presenters:

Michele Bissada, JD, CFLS, Nancy W. Olesen, Ph.D.

Working with high-conflict families takes planning, preparation, and collaboration with legal and mental health counterparts. This multidisciplinary panel proposes ways to guide our clients through the process. The panel will provide tips for professionals on how to address substantive issues, ideas on “untraining” clients’ bad habits; and pointers on giving child development issues and advice—all within ethical bounds. The panel will discuss educating clients on custody evaluations and recommending mediation and the

best communication practices. Case examples will highlight how attorneys and consultants can guide clients through the unique challenges of high-conflict situations.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe the ways that mental health professionals can help attorneys and their clients through the evaluation and litigation process.
2. Differentiate ethical from unethical “coaching” while helping attorneys and clients.
3. Provide effective feedback to parents and to attorneys about the strengths and weaknesses of the case, the parenting, and other factors facing the family.

Credits:

APA: 2 HOURS; CPA: 2 HOURS; RULE OF COURT: 5.210 – 2 HOURS, 5.225 – 2 HOURS; MCLE: GENERAL – 2 HOURS; BLS: CUSTODY – 1 HOUR, PSYCH & COUNSELING – 1 HOUR