

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY LAW COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING [Corrected 5 March 2022]

Date: September 18, 2021
Location: Crowne Plaza, Lansing
Time: Networking 8:30 a.m.; Meeting 9:00 a.m.

I. Administrative Matters

A. Call to Order/Quorum

The council was called to order by Chair Sahera Housey, at 9:17 a.m.

B. Introduction of Council Members

The following (14) council members were present: Sean Blume, James Chryssikos, Christopher Harrington, Steven Heisler, Joe Hohler, III, Shelley Kester, Peter Kulas-Dominguez, Josh Pease, Randall Pitler, Kristen Robinson, Liisa Speaker, Amy Spilman, Gail Towne, and Donald Wheaton.

The following council members were absent: Viola King, Anthea Papista, Tina Yost-Johnson, Jenny Johnsen, Randy Velzen, Michelle LeTourneau-McAvoy, and Matt Catchick (excused).

Ex-Officio, former council members, liaisons, non-council member committee chairs, and lobbyists present: Elizabeth Bransdorfer, Sahera Housey, Stephanie Johnson, Steve Reinheimer, Traci Rink, Elizabeth Sadowski, and Amy Yu.

Guests present: Keela Johnson, Carla Willing, Julie Griffiths, Alicia Storm, Kristin Wolfram, and Ron Foon.

C. Chair Report (Sahera Housey and Chris Harrington)

- Sahera declared a quorum and then turned the gavel over to Chris Harrington.
- We took a moment of silence to remember our departed former chair, Bob Treat.
- Chris reported on Dedicated Family and other core mission goals for his term as Chair.

- We conducted an Election of Council members, and each candidate introduced themselves.
- Sahera introduced our special guest, House Rep. Kara Hope.

II. Key Committee Reports

A. Amicus – Anne Argiroff/Gail Towne. Gail reported there are no action items.

1. Gail reported on the various cases the Section participated in over the past year. The following are new updates or status of cases that are still pending (cases that are done and not reported here are *O'Brien v D'Annunzio* and *Veritas* case).
2. In *Pohlman v Pohlman* the Supreme Court remanded to the trial court for an evidentiary hearing on the issue of duress. The Supreme Court retained jurisdiction. That hearing occurred. Amicus is working on a brief to the Supreme Court after remand.
3. *Perry v DHHS* is pending in the Court of Appeals. Council has approved writing a brief, and amicus is working on deciding whether to write it now that the Children's Law Section has taken a contrary position.
4. Supreme Court denied leave in *In re Orta* but there were some interesting concurrences.
5. For *In re Versalle*, the committee is working on an amicus brief.
6. *Foster v Foster* is pending in the Supreme Court and the section has submitted the amicus brief.
7. *Estate of Hermann Von Grief* is pending in Supreme Court and the committee is drafting an amicus brief.

B. Court Rules – Jenny Johnsen/Peter Kulas-Dominguez.

- Peter reported on a summary of court rules the Section weighed in on over the past year, including the interim administrator rule for attorneys, attorneys putting birth dates of children on pleadings, hearings via zoom, service via email, transcripts of audio recordings,

C. Dedicated Family. Liz Bransdorfer reported on the goals of the Dedicated Family Committee. Liisa Speaker also presented on the benefits of a dedicated family law bench.

D. Legislation – Jim Chryssikos/Randy Velzen.

- Jim reported on a variety of legislation that the committee worked on this past year, including the secret marriage act, public access to zoom hearings, anti-trolling legislation. In this coming year, we will be dealing with mandatory joint custody bill. There is also a new subcommittee on uniform marital/premarital agreement act. There is a subcommittee on surrogacy. Elizabeth Sadowski reported that she expected a surrogacy bill to be submitted in the next few months.

E. Announcements

- Election Results: The following persons were elected to a 3-year term: Randy Pitler, Steve Reinheimer, Josh Pease, Hon. Tina Yost-Johnson, Alicia Storm, Don Wheaton, and Jim Chryssikos. Kristen Wolfram was elected to a 2-year term.

III. New Business.

- Sahera reported that Young Lawyers have requested that the Section sponsor the YLS Summit. There is no motion to sponsor.
- Sahera reported that Barbara Baker-Omerod from Owosso regarding Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee about whether we have war stories so they can write an article for the Family Law Journal.
- Family Law Section is co-sponsoring an Immigration seminar, about abuse, neglect, and central registry issues. May 25, 2021 at 1 p.m.

IV. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn by Don Wheaton, and Tina Yost Johnson seconded. Motion approved unanimously **16-0-0**. The meeting concluded at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liisa Speaker,
Recording Secretary.