

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY LAW SECTION COUNCIL

Date: December 3, 2022
Location: Webers Inn, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Time: 9:30 AM

MINUTES

I. Administrative Matters

A. Attendees

1. *Council members present:* Shelly Kester (Chair), Kristen Robinson (Chair-Elect), Liisa Speaker (Treasurer), Don Wheaton (Corresponding Secretary), Josh Pease (Recording Secretary), Keela Johnson, Peter Kulas-Dominguez, Steve Reinheimer, Steve Heisler, Sean Blume, Alicia Storm, Mat Kobliska, Cara Willing, Hon. Carla Testani, Jim Chryssikos, Randy Pitler, Michelle Letourneau, Gail Towne, Amy Spilman, Kristen Wolfram
2. *Ex officio:* Liz Sadowski, Liz Bransdorfer, Amy Yu
3. *Section Members:* Julie Griffiths, Laura Nieusma, Dion Roddy, Jordan Ahlers, Lindsey DiCesare, Lana Panagoulia, Ellen Paynter

B. Chair Kester called the meeting to order at 9:28 AM and found quorum with 20 council members present (there is one empty seat on council with Hon. Tina Yost Johnson stepping down in October).

C. *Election:* Council received applications from two section members for the open council seat: Rong Kohtz and Laura Nieusma. Johnson nominated Julie Griffiths from the floor. Wheaton moved to close nominations, and Heisler seconded. Julie Griffiths was elected as the newest council member.

D. *Chair Report:* Thanks to Heisler for this continued work on the section's website. Kester urged committee chairs to send their pictures to be posted on the website and called out the chairs who had not yet done so. Kester opened discussion about having a webinar regarding the new State Bar succession planning requirements. Heisler can create a page on the website with links to resources. Kester said that she will contact the State Bar to ask about what they have available. There was a

recommendation to make family law-specific resources. Someone will see what the ABA has done in other states. Wheaton is announced as the new liaison for the LGBTQ+ Section.

- E. *Recording Secretary*: Pease moved to approve minutes from the November meeting with an amendment of adding Jordan Ahlers to the of attendees, and Blume seconded. Robinson made a friendly amendment to change “SBM” to “resort” under the Midwinter section, and Speaker made a friendly amendment to correct the spelling of Pitler’s last name under attendees. Both amendments were accepted. The motion passed by acclamation, with two abstentions (Wheaton, Wolfram).
- F. *Corresponding Secretary*: Wheaton submitted the section blurb to SBM for publication.
- G. *Treasurer*: No report.

II. Key Committee Reports

- A. *Legislative Committee*: No report.
- B. *Amicus*: No report.
- C. *Court Rules*: No report.
- D. *Dedicated Family Court*: There is still no movement on court rules from the Supreme Court. The committee is working on revisions to the draft legislation to send back to Legislative Services Bureau. A letter was sent to the Governor’s office regarding the importance of appointing experienced family law attorneys to family court judgeships, particularly referencing the open Kent County seat.

III. Standing Committee Reports

- A. *Adoption*: No report.
- B. *ADR/Collaborative*: No report.
- C. *Annual Meeting*: Robinson is looking for ideas for the presentation at the next annual meeting.

- D. *CLE/ICLE*: Approximately 550 people attended FLI this year. Planning for next year will start in January.
- E. *Domestic Violence*: The committee is considering more focused criteria for ex parte orders where there are domestic abuse issues. There is consideration of creating a SCAO form similar to PPOs with boxes to be checked. The committee will next be discussing coerced debt.
- F. *Family Court Forum*: No report.
- G. *Family Law Journal*: The deadline to submit articles for the next issue is 12/15.
- H. *Family Law Journal Advertising*: Blume is sending mailers to the companies which had booths at FLI.
- I. *Family Support*: No report.
- J. *Member Education and Public Relations*: The first webinar will be posted on 1/13, and it is a Q&A about how social media is used by fact finders in family law cases. The second webinar will be in February with the LGBTQ+ Section. Youth Lawyers Section would like to collaborate.
- K. *Membership*: Almost all of the swag is gone following FLI. Made \$60 on pins. Kester would like to see membership and member education committees help direct attorneys to resources to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue, with discussion of putting on a webinar.
- L. *Midsummer/Midwinter*: Midwinter sold out, with nearly twice as many people as last year. It is 1/21-28 at Punta Maroma in Mexico. Sponsors might be able to Zoom in. Midsummer is 8/3-6 at Mission Point. Speakers are lined up. Sponsorship requests will go out after Midwinter. Committee is looking ahead to a contract for 2024.
- M. *PAC*: \$30,405 in the bank. Considering how to get section members to donate. There may be an article published in the journal about how PAC spends the money.
- N. *QDRO/Taxation*: No report.

- O. *Technology/Social Media*: Heisler has asked the State Bar about having a password-protected page on the section's website, but no response. The form for committee chairs to fill out has been emailed.

IV. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

- A. *Court Administration and Procedure*: No report.
- B. *GAL Committee*: Meetings will start in January.
- C. *SCAO Child Support*: The committee will be meeting monthly starting in January.
- D. *SCAO Forms*: SCAO does look at all the comments they receive. Suggestion to put a link on the section's website to where comments can be submitted. Suggestion of a column in the journal about how to submit comments.
- E. *Shared Parenting*: No report. Letourneau and Sahera Housey will chair.
- F. *Parental Education*: No report.
- G. *SDNL*: Speaker talked with Tom Boyd about the registry idea and having a SCAO rep at future meetings. Information from the Supreme Court was that the registry is unnecessary as everything is in the Judicial Data Warehouse.

V. Liaison Reports

- A. *Children's Law Section*: No report.
- B. *Committee on Civil Procedure and Courts*: No report. Looking for a liaison, but committee meetings aren't open to the public.
- C. *LGBTQA Section*: The section is doing a presentation on lawyer well-being on 12/7.
- D. *Probate and Estate Planning Section*: No report.
- E. *Board of Commissioners*: No report.

VI. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:47 AM.