
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mindy F. Mitnick, Ed.M., MA, is a licensed psychologist practicing in Minneapolis. She specializes in work with families in the divorce process and with victims of abuse and their families. Ms. Mitnick has trained professionals throughout the country and abroad in identification and treatment of child abuse, the use of expert witnesses in child abuse and divorce cases, effective interviewing techniques with children, interventions in high-conflict divorce, and the impact of psychological trauma. She has been a speaker for the National Child Protection Training Center, National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, National Association of Counsel for Children, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and numerous statewide multidisciplinary training programs. Ms. Mitnick has written and taught extensively about the assessment of child sexual abuse allegations during custody disputes. Ms. Mitnick served as a member of the ABA Criminal Justice Section Task Force on Child Witnesses and the AFCC Task Force on Guidelines for Court-Involved Therapy.

Judiciary

Hon. Thomas Barbar is an Associate Justice of the Middlesex Probate and Family Court. He was appointed to the bench in 2017. Prior to that he was a principal attorney at the Boston law firm of Deutsch, Williams.

Hon. Janine Rivers is an Associate Justice of the Suffolk Probate and Family Court. She was appointed to the bench in 2017. Prior to that, she had a solo practice representing clients in child welfare, juvenile justice, and various aspects of family law.

Hon. Claudine Wyner is an Associate Justice of the Hampden Probate and Family Court. She was appointed to the bench in 2017. Prior to that she was an attorney and shareholder for 15 years in the Springfield law firm of Marien & Hodge, where she practiced with a focus on family law.

Attorneys for the Child

Michael Flores, Esq., is the founder of Michael I. Flores, PC, a law firm in Orleans, MA, devoted exclusively to representing individuals in the practice of family and matrimonial law.

Claudette Jean-Girard, Esq., practices in Western Massachusetts in the areas of divorce, family law, guardianship of minors, and special education law.

Guardians ad Litem

Jessica Greenwald O'Brien, Ph.D., is the Director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law and of the Child and Family Evaluation Service at William James College in Newton.

Ann Rascati, Esq., is a partner in the firm of Cartwright and Rascati in Hyannis, MA and also practices with South Eastern Mediation and Arbitration, Inc. (SEMA).

Stephanie Tabashneck, Psy.D., J.D., is a forensic psychologist in Wellesley. She specializes in Category E child custody evaluations, substance use issues, forensic evaluations, and expert testimony.

Parenting Coordinators

Gary Todd, Esq., is a founding partner in the Boston firm of Todd & Weld, LLP. He has successfully negotiated, mediated and tried numerous family law issues at the trial court and appellate levels. In addition to Mr. Todd's litigation work, the Massachusetts Trial Court has appointed him to serve as Special Master, Discovery Master, Guardian, Conservator, and Attorney for Children.

Joanne Romanow, Esq., is an attorney and partner in the Boston law firm of Casner & Edwards. She handles high-conflict disputes in family law. Her practice encompasses all aspects of domestic relations and probate litigation, including divorce, custody, modification, child support, paternity, guardianship, and will contests.

Probation Officers

Amy Koenig is the Chief Probation Officer in the Berkshire Probate and Family Court in Pittsfield. She started in that court as a Probation Officer in 2005 and was appointed Chief in 2013.

Ryan Lefevre is a Probation Officer in the Barnstable Probate and Family Court.

Tahirah Edwards is a Probation Officer in the Bristol Probate and Family Court.

Moderators

Mary Ferriter, Esq. is an attorney with the Boston firm of Esdaile, Barrett, Jacobs & Mone. She has years of experience in matrimonial law. She is also a director of the Child and Family Evaluation Service and Coordinator of the High Conflict Co-Parenting Program at William James College.

Vicki Shemin, Esq., L.I.C.S.W., A.C.S.W. is a partner at Fields and Dennis in Wellesley specializing in mediation, collaborative law, and parenting coordination. She is a *SuperLawyer* and was honored to be named among the Top Women of Law by Mass. Lawyers Weekly.

Karen Stuntz, Esq., is a founding partner of McEvoy & Stuntz, LLP, a firm in Concord that specializes in family law. She co-authored *The Role of Child Counsel in Attorneys Representing Children in the Probate and Family Courts*, which appears in the *Massachusetts Law Review*.



“Can You Hear What I Need?” Eliciting, Understanding, and Integrating Children’s Perspectives in Family Law Cases

March 27, 2020

Regis College
Wellesley St.
Weston, MA

Keynote Speaker:

Mindy Mitnick, Ed.M., M.A.

Private Practice
Minneapolis, MN

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration before March 13, 2020
MAAFCC Member \$190
Non-Member \$215

Profession

Address

City

ST

Zip

AC & Tel No. Email

CE CREDIT: The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) parent organization is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. AFCC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. The conference is approved for 7.0 hours of continuing education for psychologists. Applications for continuing education for S.W., L.M.F.T., L.M.H.C., L.M.H.C., CPCS/CAFL and categories EIF GAL and PC credits have been made.

Enclose check and mail to:

Mass AFCC: c/o Rebecca Ryan
P.O. Box 24
Leeds, MA 01053

OR

Register on-line
at www.mafcc.org/pay.html
For further information, call Rebecca Ryan
@ 413-537-5684 or e-mail at
admin@mafcc.org

TOTAL

Registration March 14, 2020 and after

MAAFC Member \$210
Non-Member \$235

Online Registration & Special Rates available
for students + Probation Officers
at: WWW.MAAFCC.ORG

Massachusetts Chapter – Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Presents:

“Can You Hear What I Need?”: Eliciting, Understanding, and Integrating Children’s Perspectives in Family Law Cases

March 27, 2020
Regis College, Weston, MA

FRIDAY, March 27

8:00 - 8:30 A.M.
Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 8:45 A.M. **Introduction**
Mira Levitt, Ph.D., Committee Co-Chair

8:45 – 10:45 A.M **Keynote Address:**
Mindy Mitnick, Ed.M., M.A.

- I. What is the status of the use in domestic relations cases of children’s “voices” from a national and international perspective?
 - o What is the impact of including the child’s “voice?”
- II. What is the science of forensic child interviewing and what does it tell us about process?
 - o How does this data apply to domestic relations cases?
 - o Do issues of professional role and context change the process?
- III. Understanding the reliability – in legal terms – of information obtained from children
 - o How does this differ from reliability/validity in social-science research terms?

10:45 – 11:00 A.M. **Break**

11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Keynote Address continued:
Mindy Mitnick, Ed.M., M.A.

- IV. What factors play into what weight we give information obtained from children?
 - o How can we assess these factors?
- V. Special cases:
 - o Allegations of Domestic Abuse
 - o Allegations of Alienating Behaviors

12:00 P.M. – 12:45 P.M.
Lunch/Professional Networking/Presidential Remarks
Jennifer Clapp, Esq., MA-AFCC President

12:45 P.M. – 2:15 P.M. Panel One:
Best Interest or Child Preference?
Michael Flores, Esq.
Claudette Jean-Girard, Esq.
Karen Stuntz, Esq.,
Jessica Greenwald O’Brien, Ph.D.
Ann Rascati, Esq.

2:15 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. Break

2:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. Panel Two
Child-Informed or Child-Inclusive Process?
Tahira Edwards
Amy Koenig
Ryan Lefevre
Joanne Romanow, Esq.
Vicki Shemin, Esq., L.I.C.S.W., A.C.S.W.
Stephanie Tabashneck, Psy.D., J.D.
Gary Todd, Esq.

4:00- 5:00 P.M. **A View from the Bench**
Hon. Thomas Barbar
Hon. Janine Rivers
Hon. Claudine. Wyner
Mary Ferriter, Esq., Moderator

5:00: Day Ends.

DIRECTIONS
Regis College
235 Wellesley St.
Weston, MA 02493

781.768-7000

North on Rt. 95/128: Exit 24 to Rt. 30 West. Continue approx. 2 miles to right onto Wellesley St. Regis is about ¼ mile on left.

South on Rt. 95/128: Exit 26 to Rt. 20 West. Continue approx. 2 miles to right onto Wellesley St. Regis is about ¼ mile on left.

Mass. Pike West: Ext 15 to Rt. 30 West. Continue approx. 2 miles to right onto Wellesley St. Regis is about ¼ mile on left.

Rt. 30 East: From Framingham/Natick. Rt. 9 to Rt. 27 North to Rt. 30 East to Wellesley St. on left. Traffic is heavy on Rt. 30 in the morning.

Conference in Rm 202 College Hall

FREE PARKING

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Donna Feinberg, L.I.C.S.W.
Jonathan Fields, Esq.
Lisa Gallagher, Psy.D.
Lesley Goldsmith, Esq.
Alexander Jones, Esq., M.S.W.
Mira Levitt, Ph.D., Co-chair
David Medoff, Ph.D.
Jessica Greenwald O’Brien, Ph.D.
Vicki Shemin, Esq., L.I.C.S.W., A.C.S.W.
Robert Zibbell, Ph.D., Co-chair