

The Office of Child Welfare Parental Defense (CWPD), is charged with providing training, assistance, and advice to parental defense attorneys. CWPD has contracted with the Parental Defense Alliance of Utah to provide assistance to defense attorneys in an effort to ensure that families receive skilled, competent legal representation.

Highlights

- Held a two-day conference designed to improve the quality of legal representation for parents in Utah. Conference topics and speakers were solicited from the community of child welfare attorneys.

We held the conference May 20-21, 2011. The conference was held at Snowbird Resort in Little Cottonwood Canyon. It was well attended by 100 parental defense attorneys; 90% percent of whom indicated that they have attended this conference in years past.

The feedback from our conference was largely very positive. However, it snowed over 14 inches both days that the canyon was closed for a avalanche control each morning. Thus, our attempts at holding the conference closer to the Salt Lake Valley for the convenience of some of the attendees was thwarted. We started a bit late each day in order to allow for everyone to arrive, including some of our presenters. Additionally, the conference was held in another building apart from the hotel, thus attendees who were staying at the resort had to make trek from one building to another which was made difficult in the snow.

The feedback obtained from parental defense attorneys follows:

1. Was the program relevant to your work?

Yes: 97% No: 0 Somewhat: 3%

2. Overall, how would you rate the conference?

Fair: 3% Good: 42% Excellent: 55%

A few of the comments in relation to why the conference was so good were:

Why?

- Great keynote and main speakers
- Good presenters

The final agenda follows:

Thursday, May 19, 2011

7:30 AM - 8:20 AM

Conference Registration & Continental Breakfast

8:20 AM - 8:30 AM

Welcome & Opening Comments

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Key Note Address - Why We Should Be Proud to Represent Parents in Child Welfare Proceedings



Martin Guggenheim (Fiorello LaGuardia Professor of Clinical Law - NYU)

Mr. Guggenheim is one of the nation's foremost experts on children's rights and family law, Martin Guggenheim has taught at NYU School of Law since 1973. He served as Director of Clinical and Advocacy Programs from 1988 to 2002 and also was the Executive Director of Washington Square Legal Services, Inc. from 1987 to 2000. For 15 years, he taught the Juvenile Rights Clinic in which students represented accused juvenile delinquents in New York's Family Court. He then created the Family Defense Clinic, which represents parents and other adult relatives of children in foster care in New York City.

Mr. Guggenheim's presentation will focus on the constitutional rights of parents and the family. Including the relationship of the state and the family in constitutional terms and in terms of democratic theory. Also covering what is problematic about the way we handle child welfare today; why parents need and deserve excellent representation; and why we need a movement of parents' advocates to help change current law and practice.

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Children in the Court Room: The GAL's Perspective - GAL Director Rick Smith

Director of the Guardian Ad Litem Office, Rick Smith, will cover with us the recent case law and research regarding children in the court room. He will also discuss the Guardians perspective of the issue.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Case Law Update - Danielle Allison

Danielle Allison, of Expert Paralegal Services will review a few of the most significant appellate decisions and discuss with the group the top few areas that are most ripe for appeal. She will also outline what to preserve for the record in order to have a more successful appeal.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

Lunch

Participants will be treated to a non-working lunch at Schneitter's Restaurant. This will be a time to gather, talk, and develop relationships with other parent attorneys from across the State.

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Adoption Failure and Youth Aging Out of Foster Care - Marty Shannon, DCFS



Adopting children who have experienced trauma from abuse, neglect, drug exposure, grief and loss is a challenging undertaking. This presentation will explore data and experience regarding dissolved adoptions involving children who had been

in foster care, as well as, data regarding youth who age out of foster care

Presented by, Marty Shannon, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker working for Utah's Division of Child and Family Services as the Adoption Program Administrator. She has been working actively in the arena of child welfare since 1983. Prior to working for state government, she worked in two private non-profit child welfare agencies, first as a therapist with birth families, foster families, and adoptive families and then as director of an agency from 1991 to 2001. She has been involved with many boards and advisory boards, and presented at local and national conferences over the years. Identifying permanent families for youth in foster care is a personal passion of Ms. Shannon, as she is herself an adoptive parent of a daughter who lived in foster care when she was a teenager.

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Do's & Don't's for Litigators in a TPR Trial (Professionalism & Civility) - Judge Andrus



Second District Juvenile Court Judge J. Mark Andrus will discuss the practices of a litigator which result in better outcomes for their clients focusing on the standards of professionalism and civility. (1 hour of Professionalism and Civility Credit)

Judge J. Mark Andrus was appointed to the Second District Juvenile Court in September 1994 by Gov. Michael O. Leavitt. He serves Davis, Morgan, and Weber Counties. Judge Andrus received a law degree from the University of Utah College of Law in 1982. He was an attorney with the Salt Lake Legal Defender Association prior to accepting a position with the Davis County Attorney's Office in 1983. He has served as Presiding Judge in the Second District Juvenile Court, as chair of the Board of Juvenile Court Judges, as a member of the Utah Judicial Council, and as a member of the Juvenile Court Re-codification Committee, the Family Court Task Force, the Sentencing Commission, and the Board of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Judge Andrus is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and a faculty member on the Utah Judicial Institute. Judge Andrus is currently serving on the Court Improvement Committee. 09/09

Friday, May 20, 2011

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

Continental Breakfast

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

“Be There for Them”: The Influence of Fathers - Sociologist Renata Forste



BYU Chair of the Department of Sociology, Renata Forste, will review her latest research regarding the influence of fathers on sons – particularly among low income families.

Renata Forste is professor and chair of the Department of Sociology. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1992 and taught for three years at Western Washington University before joining the faculty at BYU in 1995. Previous to her appointment as department chair, she has served as associate dean in the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, and director of Latin American Studies. Her research focuses on child well-being in Latin America and on the role of men in patterns of family formation in the U.S.

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Breakout - Managing the Interplay of Criminal and Child Welfare Issues - Attorney Colleen Coebergh

Attorney Colleen Coebergh will discuss managing the interplay between criminal and child welfare issues at trial.

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Breakout - Prevailing in a TPR Trial - Panel Discussion

A panel of trial attorneys will discuss with the attendees cases in which they prevailed in a TPR trial.

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Breakout - Trial Preparation: Caseworker Cross Examination - Attorneys Lisa Lokken & Sharon Sipes

This session will focus on examining a caseworker on the stand. Sample questions will be distributed.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

Awards Luncheon

Awards Banquet

2010 Recipients

Rookie Attorney of the Year: Shamim Monshizadeh

Excellence in Appellate Advocacy: Danielle Allison

Trial Attorney of the Year: Jose Silva

Lifetime Achievement: William Schultz

Lifetime Achievement: Sharon Sipes

1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Developing a Theory of a Case and Executing that Theory at Trial - Attorney Greg Skordas



Greg Skordas is a shareholder in the firm of Skordas, Caston, & Hyde, LLC. His practice focuses primarily on criminal defense, criminal appeals, attorney disciplinary matters, juvenile defense and police labor law. Greg is the former Chief Deputy Salt Lake County Attorney, where he worked as a prosecutor from 1987 until 1995. Prior to his employment at the Salt Lake County Attorney's Office, he worked for the Salt Lake Legal Defender's Association.

Greg is a past President of the Salt Lake County Bar Association and Criminal Law Section of the Utah State Bar. He currently serves on the Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice, the Utah Sexual Violence Council, and the Boards of the Children's Justice Center at the Utah Law Related Education Project, as well as serving as attorney for the Board of the Rape Recovery Center and Intermountain Specialized Abuse Treatment Center. He has also served as legal advisor to the Intermountain Division of the National Ski Patrol.

- Conducted training seminars in Brigham City, St. George and Roosevelt.
- Extended limited financial assistance to two parental defendants who have been found by the court to be indigent for costs related to appeals.
- Conferred with, and acted as a resource for parental defense attorneys in Utah.