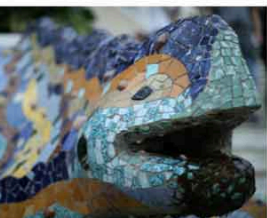




3rd Joint Family Law Conference and Networking Exchange

Barcelona Spain and Georgia USA

Not Just Continuing Legal Education... It's a Continuing Legal Experience!



Schedule

3rd Joint Family Law Conference and Networking Exchange Georgia USA and Barcelona Spain

OCTOBER 20 - 24,, 2024

10 HOURS CLE CREDIT (including 2 trial practice hours)

With the collaboration of:

IL-LUSTRE COL·LEGI de l'ADVOCACIA de BARCELONA (ICAB)

Carrer de Mallorca 283, Barcelona Spain



International family law disputes are prevalent in today's mobile society. This joint educational and networking program **for Georgia and Barcelona family law attorneys** will explore the procedural similarities and differences in the two jurisdictions, as well as cultural and strategic considerations in international cases.

Sunday, October 20, 2024

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Welcome Tapas and Wine Get-Together

Let's all gather together for a meet and greet!

The Honesty Bar, Room Mate Carla Hotel, Carrer de Mallorca 288



Monday, October 21, 2024

8:30 – 8:50 a.m.

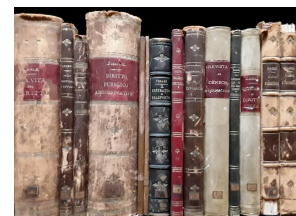
Check-In and Breakfast Bites/Coffee

8:50 – 9:00 a.m.

Opening remarks

Joaquím de Miquel Sagnier, ICAB Secretary and Librarian

M. Debra Gold, Esq. *mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting



9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

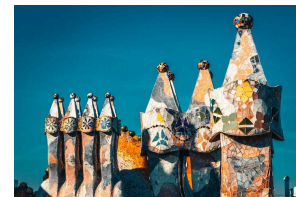
International Family Law and the Hague Convention: Divorce, Custody and Enforcement Disputes Across the Pond

M. Debra Gold, Esq., Moderator, *mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting

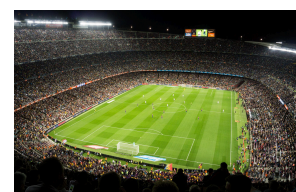
Steven P. Shewmaker, Esq., Shewmaker & Lewis, LLC

Joaquím de Miquel Sagnier, ICAB Secretary and Librarian

Cristina Diaz-Malnero Fernandez, President, ICAB Family Law Section



When the parties live in different countries, family law and custody issues have added challenges. The Hague Conference on Private International Law Conventions (HCCH) has promulgated and administers several international treaties, protocols, forms and other instruments that facilitate international family law litigation. As members of the HCCH, the United States and Spain are contracting parties or signatories to several of those treaties. This panel will give a general overview of the relevant Hague Conventions and other international treaties and laws applicable to cross-border family law litigation.



10:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Making Long Distances Work Outside of the Courtroom: Alternative Dispute Resolution, Parent Coordination and Ways to Keep the Peace

Louis J. Tesser, Esq., Moderator, Tesser Mediation

Erica McCurdy P.C., PCC, YPF, Atlanta Divorce and Parent

Javier Wilhelm Wainsztein, Ph.D., Director, Masters Degree in Professional Mediation, UPF-BSM

Eva Susana Fernandez Garcia, President, ANCOPA

ADR can play a big role in international family law litigation, both as a preventative measure, and as a means to resolve disputes outside of the courtroom. Parent Coordination and other co-parenting tools also help to deal with custody issues in a more peaceful way. What are the various forms of ADR and co-parenting tools utilized in Georgia and in Barcelona, and how do they compare/differ procedurally? What considerations, strategies, best practices and precautionary measures should attorneys include in ante-nuptial, post-nuptial and divorce agreements, and/or in Parenting Plans when the parties live, or plan to live, in different countries? What role does ADR play in Hague Convention Abduction cases? How do Parent Coordinators facilitate better parenting in high conflict cases?

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Break

10:45 – 11:15 a.m.

Family Building Through Assisted Reproduction and Surrogacy, and the Disposition of Embryos When the Family Crumbles

Lori Surmay, Esq., The Law Office of Lori M. Surmay

Carmen Varela Alvarez, Vice President, ICAB Family Law Section

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Cutting Edge Issues from Georgia to Barcelona - Part 1

Steven P. Shewmaker, Esq., Moderator, Shewmaker & Lewis, LLC

Donald Horace, Esq., Law Office of Donald S. Horace

W. Phillip McCurdy, Esq., The Law Offices of W. Phillip McCurdy, LLC

Carmen Varela Alvarez, Vice President, ICAB Family Law Section

Marta Rupilanchas Guirado, Secretary, ICAB Family Law Section

Discussions about significant family law reforms in the 21st century and the differences in the legal treatment in both jurisdictions, including:

- When Family Law and Criminal Law Paths Cross
- Pet Custody and Support
- Best Interests Custody Investigations and Evaluations

12:45 – 1:30 p.m.

ICAB Historic Law Library Tour

(Georgia attendees only)

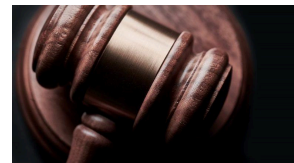
1:45 p.m.

Lunch (Georgia attendees only)

Restaurante El Ocho, C/ Roger de Llúria, 102

Afternoon/Evening

Optional city tours and free time



Tuesday, October 22, 2024

(Georgia attendees only)

8:15 – 8:30 a.m.

Meet at Arc de Triumf near Palau de Justicia de Barcelona

8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

**Navigating the Legal Landscapes of Barcelona and Georgia
Courthouse Visit to Palau de Justicia de Barcelona**

M. Debra Gold, Esq. *mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting
Rodrigo Prellezo de Prada, Abogado, Carmen Varela Family Lawyers

First, we will have a quick primer and overview of the history and structure of the Catalan legal system, with a focus on the similarities and differences to Georgia's legal system. Then, we will visit Catalunya's highest court, the *Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Catalunya* in the magnificent Palau de Justicia de Barcelona.

Afternoon/Evening

Optional Montserrat excursion and free time

Appreciation Dinner (By Invitation Only)

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.

Check-In and Breakfast Bites/Coffee

8:45 – 10:00 a.m.

Cutting Edge Issues from Georgia to Barcelona - Part 2

Donald Horace, Esq., Moderator, Law Office of Donald S. Horace
Lori Surmay, Esq., The Law Office of Lori M. Surmay
Juan Bernalte, Board of Directors, ICAB Family Law Section

Discussions about significant family law reforms in the 21st century and the differences in the legal treatment in both jurisdictions, including:

- Equitable Caregiver and Other Non-Traditional Family Structures
- Changing Trends in Spousal and Child Support

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Lost in Translation: Cultural Nuances in International Litigation

M. Debra Gold, Esq., *mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting
Rosa Peña

Litigating in a world different than our own can be challenging without an understanding of the unique customs and practices of the legal system and legal culture. Cultural differences and language barriers can complicate not only the presentation of evidence, but also the interpretation. Cultural norms and practices may also influence perceptions of credibility, reliability and the weight given to evidence and issues. In this section, we will explore the role of culture in cross-border international family law and custody cases.

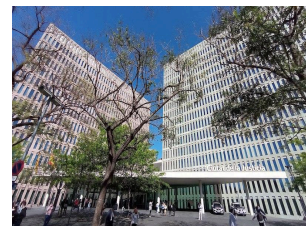
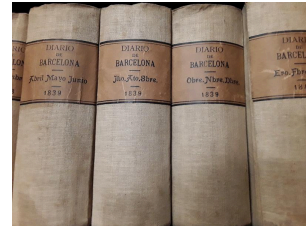
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Break

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

From the Judge's Perspective

Louis Tesser, Esq., Moderator, Tesser Mediation
Hon. Ural Glanville, Chief Judge, Fulton County Superior Court
Hon. LaTisha Dear Jackson, Chief Judge, DeKalb County Superior Court
Hon. Kevin M. Farmer, Judge, Fulton County Superior Court



Hon. Alice Benton, Judge, Fulton County Superior Court

Judge Marta Sánchez-Ocaña Fernández, Support Magistrate, Cabinet of the President of the Superior Court of Justice of Catalonia

Judges from Georgia and Barcelona discuss significant issues involved in international family law and custody litigation.

12:00 p.m.

Adjourn to Closing Reception

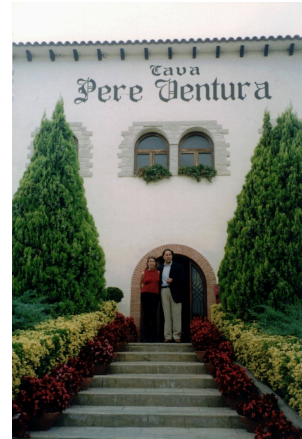
Afternoon/Evening

Optional city tours and free time

Thursday, October 24, 2024

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Optional Wine and Dine in the Penedès Wine Country. Visit **Can Bas** and **Pere Ventura Family Estates** to learn about wine and cava making, enjoy tastings, and feast on a lunch at a **Michelin restaurant** in the countryside.



Thank You To Our Generous Sponsors and Supporters

Your support enables us to provide quality educational experiences.

**We Could Not Have Done It
Without You!**

Il·lustre Col·legi de l'Advocacia de Barcelona (ICAB)

***mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting**

Soberlink

VB Website Studio

Iberik Translations, LLC

Talk and Type LLC

Barcelona Connections, LLC

Panelists

Hon. Ural D. Glanville



The Honorable Ural D. Glanville is a 1987 graduate of the UGA School of Law. After completing his J.D., he served on active military duty for several years, returning to Atlanta in 1993. He served as a prosecutor, criminal defense attorney, and civil litigator prior to beginning his judicial service, in 1996, as a Magistrate Judge in Fulton County State Court. In 2004, after eight years behind the magistrate bench, Judge Glanville was elected to serve as a Superior Court Judge in Fulton County. In his nearly twenty years on the Superior Court bench, Judge Glanville has presided over a wide array of matters ranging from domestic relations to felony offenses to negligence claims to bond validations. All the while, Judge Glanville continued to pursue his military career with the Army Reserves that began during his undergraduate years at UGA. Now a retired Brigadier General, Judge Glanville proudly served for 35 years. Judge Glanville is married to Lisa B. Glanville; the couple has two adult children.

Hon. LaTisha Dear Jackson

The Honorable LaTisha Dear Jackson was first elected Superior Court Judge of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit in 2018 and was reelected without opposition in 2022. In both 2021 and 2022, Judge Jackson was selected to serve by designation as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia on two separate cases. Her service in 2022 was historic in that it was the first time the Supreme Court had an all-woman bench preside over oral arguments. After just nine months in office, Judge Jackson began serving as a Presiding Judge over one of the Circuit's Drug Court. After a year of service, Judge Jackson was unanimously elected to serve as the Presiding Judge for the Circuit's four Accountability Courts. In 2022, Judge Jackson was elected to serve as the Chief Judge of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit as well as the Administrative Judge for the Fourth Judicial Administrative District which is comprised of DeKalb and Rockdale Circuits.



Immediately before her election, Judge Jackson was a Senior Associate at Thomas Kennedy Sampson & Tompkins, LLP ("TKST"). There, she defended corporate and governmental clients in medical malpractice, wrongful death, premises liability, and insurance matters. She also represented individuals in personal injury and wrongful death matters. Prior to joining TKST, Judge Jackson served as a full-time judge in the DeKalb County Records Court and sat by designation in both the Superior and State Courts of DeKalb County. For over a decade, Judge Jackson served as a judge in local courts.

In 2008, she made history by becoming both the first female and youngest judge to ever serve as a Municipal Court Judge in the City of Stone Mountain and in 2012, she again made history by becoming the first female Chief Municipal Court Judge in the City of Lithonia. Prior to becoming a member of the judiciary, Judge Jackson was a solo practitioner handling juvenile and family law matters as well as criminal defense. Judge Jackson also served as an Assistant Solicitor General in DeKalb County. Judge Jackson earned her Juris Doctorate from Georgia State University and her undergraduate degree from the prestigious Spelman College. A native of Los Angeles, California, Judge Jackson is active in numerous professional organizations.

For the past eight years she has served on the Georgia-Statewide Access to Justice Committee, where she continually works to ensure that there is unfettered access to the courts by litigants and the public as they navigate the judicial system. Judge Jackson also chairs the complementing committee for the Superior Courts of Georgia. Judge Jackson is an active member of several bar organizations including without limitation - the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Georgia Association for Women Lawyers, the Atlanta, DeKalb and Gate City Bar Associations and DeKalb Lawyers Association where she served an unprecedented two-year term as President and currently serves as the Judicial Section and Review Committee Chair. Judge Jackson is the Immediate Past Chair of the State Bar of Georgia's Judicial Section after serving as Chair for three years. She is also a Past President of the Georgia Council of Municipal Court Judges and a current member of the State's Judicial Council. In her community, Judge Jackson has served on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Center for Children and is a 2006 graduate of Leadership DeKalb, where she currently served as a Board of Director and on the Selection Committee, a committee she's chaired for over a decade.

Judge Jackson currently serves as a DeKalb County Board Member for Boys and Girls Club Metro Atlanta and is a proud twenty-six-year active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Judge Jackson has traveled throughout both the Southeastern United States and State of Georgia presenting on various judicial and legal issues with a passion for professionalism and access to justice. She also speaks at various schools throughout the metro-Atlanta area. As a continued investment to the youth, Judge Jackson created a three-year program in the DeKalb County Public School System entitled I. L.E.A.D. (Interactive Law and Education Development) Program, a program that focused on educating high school students on the law while strengthening their comprehension and writing skills. Judge Jackson not only works and serves DeKalb County, but she also resides there calling it home with her husband Gari Jackson. She is a member of Ray of Hope Christian Church.

As a testament to her accomplishments, she has received several honors, been featured in several newspapers and magazines as well as her sorority's international magazine. She has also been honored by her sorority, several county and city associations and elected leaders including receiving the Council for Municipal Court Judges President's Award for her commitment to access and fairness in Georgia courts. In all that she does and has accomplished thus far, Judge Jackson remains humbled, inspired, and motivated to continue to seek justice because there are still so many lives left to be touched.

Hon. Kevin M. Farmer



The Honorable Kevin M. Farmer, Judge of the Superior Court of Fulton County, has served on the bench since 2018. He is presently presiding as one of the judges in the Family Court Division.

Judge Farmer began his legal career in 1996 after graduating from Mercer University Law School. He served in the Fulton County Public Defender's office from 1997 to 2001. In 2002, Judge Farmer went into private practice where he practiced, among other things, family law. He also served as a Guardian ad Litem representing the best interests of children in custody disputes. Thereafter, Judge Farmer returned to public service as the Senior Attorney for the Metro Conflict Defender's Office (Division of the Georgia Public Defenders Council), and then as the Senior Assistant District Attorney in the Clayton County Judicial Circuit.

Hon. Alice Benton

As the Superior Court of Fulton County's most recent addition to the Bench, the Honorable Alice Benton brings with her a wealth of family law knowledge and experience. Prior to her appointment to the Bench on January 10, 2024, Judge Benton had a thriving family law practice handling divorces and serving as a Guardian ad Litem. Judge Benton also has extensive criminal law experience as a former Senior Assistant District Attorney in Fulton County, and as an Assistant Solicitor in Cobb and Forsyth Counties. As a member of the Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett and Forsyth County Bar Associations, Judge Benton has always been actively involved, having served on the State Bar Family Law Legislative Committee, as Treasurer for the Cobb Bar Association, and as President of the Cobb Bar Family Law Section. She is a member and the current President of the Charles L. Weltner Inn of Court, and a member of the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers. Judge Benton also enjoys serving her community. She is affiliated with the Cherokee Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and has been a Board Member for the Cathedral of St. Philip Cathedral Preschool for seven years. In addition to other community activities, Judge Benton volunteers for the Lovett School Linebackers, is a Sustaining Member of the Atlanta Junior League, and a Patroness of the National Charity League.



M. Debra "Debbie" Gold



M. Debra Gold (Debbie) started her legal career in 1989 under the tutelage of Jack P. Turner, one of the great pioneers of Family Law in Georgia. Family law has always been her calling. Since 2004, Debbie's practice has focused primarily on serving as a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem. In 2018, she opened the doors to *mdg* Custody Litigation Consulting, putting her years of experience to work consulting with, and doing contract work for other attorneys involved in high conflict custody cases.

Debbie is involved in the family law Bar in several capacities. She was a founding Board member of the DeKalb Bar Association Family Law Section and served on the Board for six years. As Chair, she spearheaded, organized and lectured for the annual *Not Your Everyday Custody Case* continuing legal education series. Debbie also established the Section's charitable partnership with Nia's Place, Supervised Visitation and Exchange Center. In addition, she represented the Family Law Section as a Board Member of the DeKalb Bar Association from 2013 – 2015.

Early in her career, Debbie also served as the Associate Editor for the State Bar of Georgia Family Law Section newsletter (now The Family Law Review) and she has been a regular contributor to the publication since. Debbie also volunteers with DeKalb Pro Bono, and formerly with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, and she has organized and lectured at Guardian ad Litem trainings for both organizations. She is a founding Board Member of Georgia Guardians ad Litem Inc., and coordinated and lectured at Georgia's first statewide basic and advanced Guardian ad Litem training. She also enjoys mentoring Guardians ad Litem through some of their more difficult cases. Debbie has also been a Board Member of the Center For Navigating Family Change since 2018.

In 2000, Debbie took advantage of an opportunity to live in Barcelona, Spain. She started a thriving tour business giving private, small group tours of Barcelona and surrounding Catalunya. Being born and raised an Atlanta girl, however, she came home in late 2003. But, she maintained her friendships and professional connections in Barcelona, and in 2019, she began working with the Il·lustre Col·legi de l'Advocacia de Barcelona (ICAB), the Barcelona Bar Association, to create a partnership with Georgia attorneys. Together, Debbie and the

attorneys and administration at ICAB produced the first **Joint Family Law Conference and Networking Exchange** in Barcelona in 2022. She is proud that the program is now in its third year.

Debbie lives in Decatur, Georgia. When she is not working or traveling to Barcelona (and elsewhere), she loves spending time with family and friends, and she has a passion for doing crossword and jigsaw puzzles.

Steven P. Shewmaker



Steven P. Shewmaker (Steve) is the founding partner of Shewmaker & Lewis in Atlanta, Georgia. Steve is a native of the Southeast, growing up in Texas and Alabama. He attended the University of Alabama on cross country and Army ROTC scholarships and graduated from the University of Alabama in 1990. Steve was commissioned as an Army Officer in 1990. Steve served as an Infantry Officer in the 25th Infantry Division and later served in Military Intelligence assignments at Fort Hood, Texas and in the Middle East. Steve served his last eleven years in the Army as a Judge Advocate, deploying twice. He retired from the Army in 2018.

In 2005, Steve earned his law degree from the Georgia State University College of Law where he graduated with honors. Steve and his wife, Patty, formed Shewmaker & Shewmaker in 2009, where they represent clients in domestic, criminal and military justice matters. In 2019, Shewmaker & Shewmaker was renamed Shewmaker & Lewis.

Steve is admitted to practice with the State Bar of Georgia, the Georgia Court of Appeals, the Georgia Supreme Court, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, and the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, and he is admitted to practice in the military trial courts (worldwide) as well as the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals.

Steve and Patty have been married for 23 years. They have one daughter, Molly, who is now 14, and already an accomplished equestrian, and two dogs, Elsa a black lab and Cookie a German Shorthaired Pointer.

Louis J. Tesser

Louis Tesser has practiced family law since 1996, and since 2018, solely as a neutral for Tesser Mediation LLC. His experience as a litigator spanned numerous cases, both jury and bench, involving every aspect of family law, including contentious custody issues and financial disputes over a broad range of incomes. He has participated in hundreds of mediations both as a litigator and as mediator.

Louis graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude with a degree in Government from Clark University, Massachusetts, he holds a Master's Degree from University of Georgia in Political Science, and his Juris Doctor is from the College of William and Mary. He is a former chair of both the Atlanta Bar Association Family Division and the DeKalb County Bar Association Family Division. He is AV rated, and is rated a Super Lawyer by Thompson-Reuters. Louis is a frequent speaker on dispute resolution including arbitration, and mediation. He teaches mediation to aspiring mediators. He is also a registered member of the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution and certified to handle all domestic cases, including family violence situations.



Erica McCurdy



Erica McCurdy is absolutely passionate about the potential of people. An Atlanta native, she started her career as an executive in technology but found her passion in helping children and veterans learn to communicate better, develop healthy relationships, and manage conflict.

Throughout the years, Erica has earned a reputation for being one of the best coaches in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Her expertise has made her a recognized international expert with insights appearing in over 200 major publications, such as US News, Forbes, Entrepreneur.com, AARP, Recruiter.com, Business News Daily, and more. She has been a guest speaker at numerous corporate events, including the SunTrust Thought Leaders' Summit, Kettering, Vesta's Women Empowerment Day, and the Georgia Association of Paralegals Annual Leadership Event.

In 2006, Erica began volunteering at the Foster Care Support Foundation, a state-wide nonprofit committed to helping foster children. She has served on the Board, and as the Director of Development and CFO. Erica is also a staff member in the Care Department at North Point Community Church where she leads the Oasis Divorced and Separated Groups.

Erica has her ICF Credential and several specialty coaching certifications, including the unique niche credential of Youth, Parent and Family Coach. She teaches ICF Core Competencies and mentors aspiring coaches. She has also been a member of the Forbes Coaches Council for many years.

Erica received her Parenting Coordination training through the Cooperative Parenting Institute and The Center for Navigating Family Change. Atlanta Divorce and Parent is also a member of the American Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC).

Erica attended the Westminster Schools, the University of Georgia, Mercer University, and Columbia Southern University. She holds a BBA and MBA with concentrations in technology and operational management. She is currently working on her Doctorate in Organizational Performance. In addition, Erica holds an ICF-PCC certification, CMC (Master Coach), CBC (Business Coach), and YPF (Youth Parent and Family Coach). She occasionally teaches the coaching core competencies to new coaches looking to build their practice.

Erica is committed to the community. She gives at least 100 hours of service annually to support underserved communities. She currently serves as the Chairwoman of the Gwinnett Library Foundation board. She is a Rotarian, a Paul Harris Fellow, and she is on the National Nominating Committee for the National Charity League, Inc., our nation's oldest mother-daughter service organization.

Erica's husband, Phil, is an attorney who has been practicing in the area for over 30 years. They have three wonderful children, one working as a commercial pilot, one in medical school, and the third attending law school. When not working or playing tennis, Erica is working on her goal of reading the entire list of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Novels – She is about halfway through.

Donald S. Horace



Donald Horace is the Owner and Managing Attorney of the Law Office of Donald S. Horace, representing clients in a wide variety of Family Law and Elder Law matters in Superior, Juvenile and Probate Court. Donald serves as a Guardian ad Litem in both Superior and Probate Courts, and has been a featured panelist for the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation Guardian ad Litem training since 2021. He had a primary role in establishing the DeKalb County Family Law Workshop and the Rockdale County Family Law Information Center, and he assisted in creating similar workshops in Henry and Fayette Counties. Donald's legal career includes working with Atlanta Legal Aid as a Senior Attorney for the Senior Legal Hotline and Senior Citizens Law Project. He also has extensive experience providing legal services for the Georgia Department of Community Health and the Grady Health Care System.

In addition, he served as an Administrative Law Judge in Fulton County for two years, presiding over administrative license suspension hearings.

Donald is graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. He has been recognized and featured as a legal expert on the *Layman's Lawyer* and on *Legally Speaking*, as well as in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Donald currently serves on the Decatur YMCA Board of Directors, and is a former Board Member of the Decatur Education Foundation, the City of Decatur Lifelong Living program, Senior Connections, Avondale Arts Alliance and Caregivers' Hope. In addition, he served on the School Leadership Team for Renfroe Middle School in Decatur, and on the Charter Review Committee for the City of Avondale Estates, Georgia.

In his free time, Donald enjoys tennis, travelling, acoustic and electric guitar, book groups, running and exercising.

Lori Surmay

Lori Surmay works as a solo practitioner in The Law Office of Lori M. Surmay which she opened in September 2013. For over 26 years, Lori has concentrated her law practice in the areas of adoption and assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), including surrogacy and gamete donation. She has been named a Super Lawyer annually since 2019.

A sought-after speaker in these areas of law, for many years Lori has presented to a wide variety of audiences, including judges, lawyers, medical professionals, and the community at large, at local and national levels. Since 1998, she has served as a faculty member of the "Adoption Law and Practice" seminars sponsored by the Institute of Continuing Legal Education in Georgia. Lori speaks often with the University of Georgia Foundation Fellows on ARTS and adoption law and practice, ethical issues in fertility treatment.

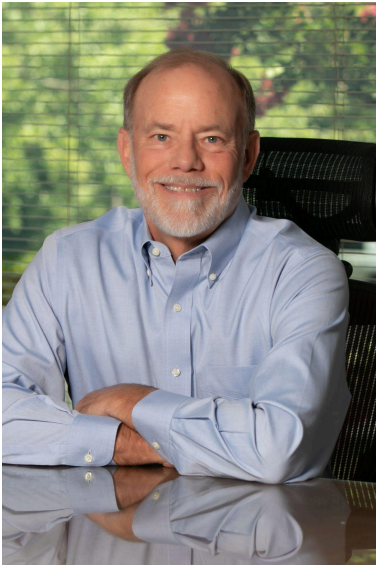
Lori taught two courses on Human Sexuality and the Law as an adjunct professor at her alma mater, the University of Georgia Law School, and routinely speaks as a guest lecturer in that course at law schools throughout the state of Georgia. She often conducts mock interviews with students at the University of Georgia for the Rhodes and other major scholarships.

She served on the board of the Stonewall Bar Association for a decade, and as its President from 2005-2006. The Stonewall Bar awarded her an Outstanding Service to the Stonewall Community award in 2016 for co-writing a brief to the United State Supreme Court which ultimately upheld a Georgia adoption within by a same-gender couple.



In 2001, the Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys elected Lori to Fellowship. In 2007, The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute named Lori an Angel in Adoption. She is a founding member of the Georgia Council of Adoption Lawyers.

W. Phillip McCurdy



An Atlanta native, Phil attended The Westminster Schools and Furman University before receiving his law degree from Emory University, where he clerked at the Georgia Court of Appeals for Justice George H. Carley. Phil has practiced law for 37 years and has been lead counsel in well over 1,000 family law cases in counties throughout the State of Georgia and the Southeast. He brings a wealth of practical experience as well as a deep understanding of the myriad issues that family law presents.

Phil lives in Peachtree Corners, Georgia with his wife, Erica. The couple is deeply engaged in community service with a focus on causes that support families and veterans. Erica is a certified parent coordinator who maintains an active PC practice as the founder of Atlanta Divorce and Parent, LLC. She is also an executive and professional coach who is frequently published and cited in national journals as a recognized expert. They have three adult children, three rescue dogs, and a rescue cockatiel. They are both avid readers and love playing golf and tennis.

Joaquim de Miquel Sagnier



Joaquim DE MIQUEL SAGNIER
Secretary-Council Member
Responsible for International Relations
Barcelona Bar Association

Joaquim de Miquel Sagnier, graduated in Law at the University of Barcelona, and holds a Master's degree in Economics. He has been a practicing Lawyer since 1983, and has more than 40 years of experience in Civil and Family Law. He is a member of the Family Law Section of the Bar since 1999. He has held various positions at the Barcelona Bar Association, including vice-president and secretary, as well as being president of several committees, such as Professional Deontology, Education, and Responsible for the Legal Regulation Commission. He is founding partner of the "Plataforma Familia y Derecho", a multidisciplinary Association of Lawyers specialized in Family procedures. He has been a speaker at multiple legal national and international conferences. He was honored with the Distinguished Cross of the Second Class of the Order of Sant Raimon de Penyafort, awarded by the Minister of Justice of Spain.

Rosa I. Peña Sastre

- Council Member of the Barcelona Bar Association, Responsible for the International Relations.
- Co-Director of the Collective Members' Committee of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA).
- President of the Public Law Commission of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE)
- Chair of the Environmental Law Committee of the Inter-Pacific Bar Association (IPBA).

She has been practicing law for 30 years, specializing in Public Law. She also teaches at the university and is the author of various articles and a co-author of a book, all focused on Public Law.



Cristina Diaz-Malnero



Cristina has been a family lawyer and mediator for nearly 20 years. She has extensive experience in all procedures relating to family, juvenile, disability and inheritance law. This includes processes related to separation, divorce, civil partnership dissolution, filiation, adoption, surrogate maternity, measure amendments, voluntary jurisdiction, gender-based violence, international child abduction and relocation, among others. She has experience dealing with all these matters in circumstances of both litigious and mutual agreement, encompassing national territory.

Cristina is the current President of the Family Law Section of the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB). She is also a Member of the Spanish Association of Family Lawyers (AEAFA), the Association of Professionals Against Child Abduction in Spain (ASIME) and the Council to the Archbishop of Barcelona. Cristina is also the author of several publications and has participated as attendee and speaker at various seminars and conferences in the field of family law, at both the national and international level.

Cristina received her LLB at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), and a postgraduate diploma in International Law and LLM in Family Law at the University of Barcelona. She is also trained and experienced as a mediator, and in Canon Law.

Carmen Varela Álvarez



Carmen is the managing partner of Carmen Varela, Family Lawyers, specializing in custody, national and international divorces, dissolution of common-law couples, child abduction, transfer of minors to other countries, filiation, prenuptial agreements, exequatur, sentence modifications, claim for compensatory pensions and economic compensation, disabilities and minors. Carmen is also a trained and experienced mediator, collaborative lawyer, and a Lawyer of the Ecclesiastical Court of Barcelona. She is a graduate of the University of Barcelona Law School.

Carmen is the Vice-President of the Family Law Section of the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB). She is also a Professor at the University of Barcelona where she teaches Family and Childhood Law. Carmen is also a regular speaker on national and international family law, having lectured in Algeciras, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Mexico, Madrid and Montevideo. She is a founding Member and the Treasurer of the Association of Professionals Against International Child Abduction (ASIME), as well as a founding Member of the International Association of Family Law Jurists (AIJUDEFJA). Carmen is also recognized by Reunite International.

Carmen is also recognized as an expert and consultant for the Spanish press, radio and television. She created and administers "Derecho de Familia," ("Family Law"), a LinkedIn group to which over 12,000 attorneys, judges and family law professionals from all over the world currently belong. Carmen also authored the first family law blog in Catalunya. She has been selected as one of the most influential family lawyers on social networks.

Judge Marta Sánchez-Ocaña Fernández

Judge Marta Sánchez-Ocaña has extensive experience as a Judge, currently serving since April 2016 as a magistrate supporting the President of the High Court of Justice of Catalonia. Previously, she held key positions as a Judge in civil, family, and civil registry matters across various courts in Barcelona and nearby areas. Her career began in 1994, specializing in criminal law in Madrid before joining the judicial career in 2000.

In addition to her judicial duties, she has contributed significantly to legal education. She was an Associate Professor at the Judicial School from 2011 to 2016, where she developed a "Virtual Court" teaching method, recognized by the European Union for its innovative approach. She has also delivered numerous courses and seminars on family law, civil execution, and judicial procedures at various institutions, including the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB) and universities like the University of Barcelona and the International University of Catalonia.

Academically, she holds a law degree from the Complutense University of Madrid and pursued doctoral studies in procedural law at the University of Barcelona. She also holds a Master's in Labor Relations and has authored several legal publications on procedural reforms and financial contract disputes.



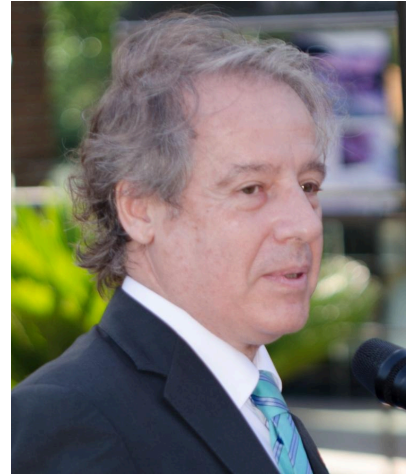
Marta Ruffilanchas Guirado



Marta has been a practicing attorney since 1992. She is a partner in the law firm of IUS GEMAP and the current Secretary of the Family Law Section of ICAB. Marta also serves as a judge on the Barcelona Arbitration Court, and the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce. She is a member of the Spanish Society of Family Lawyers (AEFA), the Catalan Society of Family Lawyers (SCAF) and the Family and Childhood Law Section of ICAB.

Juan Bernalte Benazet

Juan is an attorney with Bufete Garcia-Coca in Barcelona. He has been practicing law since 1983, after graduating from the University of Barcelona Law School. Since 2018, Juan has served on the Board of Directors of the Family Law Section of the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB). He is also an active member of the Spanish Association of Family Lawyers (AEAFA), the International Association of Family Law Jurists (AIJUDEFA), the Association for Law and Family Platform, and the Association of "Therapeutic Justice." Juan also served on the ICAB Deontology Commission until 2016. Juan lectures at legal seminars and conferences, and he has published numerous articles in the area of family law.



Rodrigo Prellas de Prada



Rodrigo is an associate attorney with Carmen Varela Family Lawyers. He is a Law graduate from Pompeu Fabra University, and he holds a Master's degree in Law, specializing in Civil Law. Rodrigo has also earned a postgraduate specialization in Inheritance Law and he has taken several highly specialized courses in Civil Procedure Law. His law practice focuses on the civil branch of law, with an emphasis on family and inheritance law.

Javier Wilhelm Wainsztein

Javier Wilhelm Wainsztein, Ph.D. is an accomplished psychologist in Barcelona. He is also one of Barcelona's premier family and organizational mediators. In addition to his practice as a professional mediator in family and work place matters, Javier has developed mediation programs, and he trains other mediators throughout Europe and South America. He is also instrumental in designing and implementing public policies on co-existence and mediation in public and private entities. Moreover, he is known as a consultant, and he teaches at the UPF Barcelona School of Management. Javier serves on the Boards of numerous organizations. He received the First Prize for Innovation and Excellence in Public Management, as well as the Medal of Professional Merit for promoting mediation in Spain. He is also the author of several articles and books on mediation and alternative dispute resolution.



Eva Susana Fernández García



Eva Susana specializes in family and organizational conflict resolution, with more than 25 years of professional experience in conflict management in the private and public spheres. She is a graduate in Law from the University of Barcelona, she holds a Masters degree in Alternative Conflict Resolution, and she has a Postgraduate in Communication Management. Eva Susana is also a practicing attorney in the private sector. She is the founder and Director of esRESOLUTION. In addition, Eva Susana has accreditation as a Parenting Coordinator with the National Association of Parenting Coordination (ANCOPA), and she serves as the current President of the organization. Eva Susana is also a member of the Mediation Center of the Department of Justice, where she is part of a group of experts in family and intrajudicial mediation. Moreover, she is the co-founder of the first private mediation center approved by the Generalitat de Catalunya. In 2022, Eva Susana was awarded the Medal of Professional Merit by the Spanish School of Mediation and Conflict Resolution, for her contribution to

promoting mediation, the culture of peace, alternative resolution and dialogue.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Contact Information



Main Conference Venue

📍 Il·lustre Col·legi de l'Advocacia de Barcelona
c/ de Mallorca 283
08037 Barcelona Spain

Organizer

Barcelona Connections LLC
P. O. Box 33294
Decatur, Georgia 30033

