

# NOVEMBER 14–15, 2024 | SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE, NOVI

# 23RD ANNUAL

# Family Law Institute

# The Place to Connect in Michigan Family Law

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# The **Place to Connect** in Michigan Family Law

Join 500+ members of Michigan's family law community, all under one roof! Get diverse insights from top practitioners, Friends of the Court, and judges—including Hon. Janice K. Cunningham, who returns with her perennially popular caselaw update and touches on topics like surrogacy and the Revocation of Parentage Act.

See how AI can assist with drafting settlement agreements, witness prep, and more. Get tips for handling upcoming changes to the Michigan Child Support Formula (MCSF). Hear the latest thinking on hot topics like ERPOs. Take a deep dive into a mock divorce case and take away best practices on everything from the initial client meeting to trial or mediation. There's something for everyone, whether you're newer to family law or a veteran practitioner.

# **Rub Elbows, Reap Benefits**

Take away expert solutions. Talk shop with peers. From in-depth sessions to networking breaks to freewheeling Q&As, you won't find a better place to connect— all while getting multiple perspectives.

- Michigan judges talk everything from contracts to how they award alimony
- A vocational expert helps you prepare for and litigate an imputation case
- Valuation and tax pros share tips for winning arguments, challenging reports, and more
- FOCs give their insights on Michigan Child Support Formula changes and tricky support issues
- The State Appellate Defender Office shares CPS options that may avoid removal of the child
- A practitioner breaks down the differences between UIFSA and UCCJEA

# Get Your Questions Answered by Judges



Hon Kent D. Engle 20th Circuit Court

What factors do judges rely on when granting alimony versus spousal support? Judge Engle joins a panel of speakers who break down how to level the playing field for the lower-earning spouse.



Hon. Kathleen A. Feeney Michigan Court of Appeals

What do you need to know now to effectively navigate the UCCJEA? Judge Feeney and practitioner Matthew S. DeLange share recent caselaw and tips for handling tricky proceedings and more.



Hon. Jon A. Van Allsburg 20th Circuit Court

What factors can render certain agreements voidable or void? Judge Van Allsburg and practitioner Elizabeth K. Bransdorfer take you back to your first-year contracts course with a focus on family law.



Hon. Carla G. Testani 3rd Circuit Court



Hon. Tina M. Yost Johnson 37th Circuit Court

How can you ensure that extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) are used appropriately? Judges Testani and Yost Johnson give you best practices straight from the bench. Protect at-risk clients and understand each step of the process.

# **Can't-Miss Caselaw Update**

Hon. Janice K. Cunningham, 56th Circuit Court

See why Judge Cunningham's caselaw update gets rave reviews every year. And get her insights on hot topics like surrogacy and the Revocation of Parentage Act.

"Judge Cunningham's session is worth the price of admission."



# Stay Up to Date Hottest Issues Covered by Experts

# **Generative AI in Family Law**

National speaker and AI expert Joshua Weaver helps demystify tools like ChatGPT. Examine how it could be used for everything from drafting settlement agreements to helping with witness preparation. Plus, be prepared for handling ethical risks. It's sure to be a lively discussion!

See Exploring the Power (and Perils) of Generative Al and Beyond on page 8.



Featured Speaker Joshua Weaver Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator, *Austin, TX* 

Joshua is director of the company, which helps lawyers build sustainable practices that meet the needs of low-income residents. With a background in law and technology, he speaks nationally on topics related to emerging tech, access to justice, cybersecurity, and more.

# **Contract Law Principles**

It's an ongoing discussion in the listserv—now is your chance to take a deeper dive. Learn to identify contract issues that may be easily overlooked in any family law practice. Grasp the how and when of an enforceable agreement. Determine what factors may render contracts like pre- and postnuptial agreements voidable or void.

See Contract Law Principles in Family Law on page 10.



Featured Speaker Elizabeth K. Bransdorfer Mika Meyers PLC, *Grand Rapids* 

Liz has nearly 40 years of experience and is a past president of the SBM's Family Law Section. She is also a recipient of ICLE's Blaine B. Johnson, Jr., Award recognizing outstanding contributions to continuing legal education. She focuses her practice on collaborative practice, appeals, and more.

# **Uniform Interstate Family Support Act**

What happens to a custody agreement when people move? How do you determine which state's laws apply? Know what to do when another state—or country—is involved. Matthew S. DeLange, who is known as an expert on this tricky topic, walks you through everything from UIFSA's filing requirements to jurisdictional rules.

See Don't Forget About UIFSA on page 10.



Featured Speaker Matthew S. DeLange MI Family Law Center, *Grand Rapids* 

Matt is known for his expertise on UIFSA, having successfully obtained reversals from the Michigan Court of Appeals on cases dealing with enforcement of an out-of-state divorce judgment and personal protection orders. He has been practicing primarily in family law for 16 years.

# Substance Use

Does an addiction mean someone is a bad parent? As you run into these types of questions more and more, how can you prevent or minimize the ramifications for families? Get your questions answered in an all-new Addiction Track. Explore everything from gambling and how to subpoen casinos to how to identify addiction in your clients and find resources for treatment.

See Kick the Habit of Ignoring Substance Use and Gambling Addictions: Casinos, Subpoenas, and Reporting on page 10.



Featured Speaker Shon A. Cook Tabono Law, *Muskegon* 

Shon has 30 years of experience in family law, with a focus on divorce, custody, premarital agreements, abuse/neglect, and more. She serves as both CEO and senior lawyer in the firm. She is a litigator, civil and family law mediator, and is trained in collaborative law practice.



Featured Speaker Andrea L. Hansen Honigman LLP, *Lansing* 

Andrea is a litigator with a focus on gaming, election, and appellate law. She represents and counsels public and privately held casino operators, platform providers, and suppliers, with extensive experience in licensing, compliance, and regulatory proceedings before the Michigan Gaming Control Board.

# Michigan Child Support Formula

There are critical changes every family law practitioner needs to know. Hear from an MCSF committee member on what's coming in 2025, from clarification of deviation factors to reduced or deferred income. Explore not just what's new, but also the "why" behind each change. Plus, get a refresher on calculating support and more.

See Child Support: What's New, Relevant, and Maybe Forgotten on page 8.



Featured Speaker Anthony J. McDowell Genesee County Friend of the Court, *Flint* 

Tony is director of the Genesee County Friend of the Court. He serves as the administrator responsible for all FOC operations, with a focus on improving access and education related to custody, parenting time, support, paternity, and other family law matters. He was previously in private practice.

# **Extreme Risk Protection Orders**

ERPOs (also known as "red flag laws") are relatively new and aim to prevent firearm-related violence. What's the latest? Get up-to-the-minute perspectives from Judges Tina M. Yost Johnson and Carla G. Testani, who help you understand what they consider when evaluating risks while also balancing due process rights. Ensure that you are employing best practices.

See PPO or ERPO? The New Extreme Risk Protection Order Act on page 10.





# New to Family Law? See and Be Seen at This Event

Nothing beats the in-person networking at the *Family Law Institute*, where you can connect with 500+ of your peers. It's the perfect place to establish yourself and forge lasting relationships. In addition to newer Michigan lawyers like yourself, you can rub elbows with judges, experienced practitioners, FOC referees, and more.

It's all under one roof—and well worth two days out of the office.



Don't Miss This Four-Part Core Concepts Track

Walk through a mock divorce case—from the initial client meeting to dispute resolution—with advice from Michigan experts, including a retired judge who specializes in mediation and arbitration. For more on the *Anatomy of a Divorce Case sessions, see page 8.* 

Agenda

CLE: 8.75 LEVEL: Basic/Intermediate/Advanced



#### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024

- 8:00am Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Vendor Showcase
- 9:00am Welcome, Introductions, and Section Update
- 9:25am Domestic Relations Caselaw and Statutory Update with Analysis
- 10:45am Networking Break
- 11:00am Exploring the Power (and Perils) of Generative AI and Beyond
- 11:50am Networking Lunch

	– Core Concepts Track	Intermediate/Advanced Track	Bench and Bar Track	
1:05pm	Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Initial Client Consultation	Preparing Your Financial Expert for Trial, Arbitration, and Deposition	PPO or ERPO? The New Extreme Risk Protection Order Act	
2:05pm	Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Discovery	Handling Common (and Not- So-Common) Evidentiary Issues in Trials	Contract Law Principles in Family Law	
2:55pm	Networking Break			
3:10pm	Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Asset Assessment	Winning Arguments: Using Numbers Persuasively	Don't Forget About UIFSA	
4:10pm	Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Dispute Resolution	Tax Tips for Practitioners	Navigating the UCCJEA	

- 5:00pm Family Law Town Hall
- 5:30pm Networking Reception

#### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2024

- 8:00am Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Vendor Showcase
- 9:00am Child Support: What's New, Relevant, and Maybe Forgotten

	– Support Track*	Addiction Track*	Intersection of Abuse/ ¬ Neglect & Family Law Track*
10:25am	Alimony and the Use of Experts to Level the Playing Field	Kick the Habit of Ignoring Substance Use	Alternatives to CPS Petitions
11:15am	Networking Break		
11:30am	Imputation of Income	Gambling Addictions: Casinos, Subpoenas, and Reporting	Navigating a CPS Case When There Is an Existing Domestic Relations Case

Tracks

# **Plenary Sessions**

### 8:00am/Thursday & Friday Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Vendor Showcase

#### 9:00am/Thursday Welcome, Introductions, and Section Update

Hear from the chair-elect of the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

Liisa R. Speaker, Speaker Law Firm PLLC, Lansing

#### 9:25am/Thursday Domestic Relations Caselaw and Statutory Update with Analysis

The Hon. Janice K. Cunningham returns with her expert analysis of recent court decisions and legislative enactments, including the recent surrogacy legislation and amendments to the Revocation of Parentage Act.

Hon. Janice K. Cunningham, 56th Circuit Court, Charlotte

#### 11:00am/Thursday Exploring the Power (and Perils) of Generative AI and Beyond

Will AI ever draft your settlement agreements? Join us as we demystify AI and its implications in the legal field. Explore how tools like ChatGPT operate, their practical applications in the practice of law, and the ethical risks they pose. Expect an accessible discussion, a live demo, and a peek into the transformative potential of AI in family law. Joshua Weaver, Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator, *Austin, TX* 

#### 5:00pm/Thursday Family Law Town Hall

Select faculty members lead an interactive discussion of new developments, statewide and local trends, and up-tothe-minute practice strategies in this freewheeling session. Get in on the discussion and get your questions answered. Sahera G. Housey, Oakland County Friend of the Court, *Pontiac;* Ryan M. Kelly, Kelly & Kelly PC, *Northville;* Hon. Tina M. Yost Johnson, 37th Circuit Court, *Battle Creek* 

### 5:30pm/Thursday Networking Reception

Relax and join faculty, exhibitors, and fellow registrants for light hors d'oeuvres and cocktails.

#### 9:00am/Friday

# Child Support: What's New, Relevant, and Maybe Forgotten

Learn about the 2025 Michigan Child Support Formula (MCSF) changes. Get detailed background information on the why of changes, including: clarification of deviation

factors, reduced or deferred income, depreciation, changes to apportionment of expenses, ordinary medical, incarceration issues, and other economic changes. Plus, get a refresher on tricky issues related to calculating support, preparing Uniform Support Orders, and more.

Paul M. Gehm, State Court Administrative Office Friend of the Court Bureau, *Lansing*; Anthony J. McDowell, Genesee County Friend of the Court, *Flint* 

# **Core Concepts Track**

## 1:05pm/Thursday Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Initial Client Consultation

Using a mock family law case, examine the components of an initial client consultation and essential steps to build an effective lawyer/client relationship. Determine key facts of the case, necessary additional information, and whether urgent action is necessary. Discuss appropriate dispute resolution techniques, next steps, and client retention practices. Courtney Sierra, Thacker Sleight, *Grand Rapids* 

### 2:05pm/Thursday

# Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Discovery

Using the same mock family law case, create and execute a discovery plan that ensures timely receipt of critical missing information. From verified financial statements to well-worded and appropriately served subpoenas and discovery requests and effective depositions, determine what critical information is necessary and the best technique to acquire it. Ryan M. Kelly, Kelly & Kelly PC, *Northville* 

3:10pm/Thursday

# Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Asset Assessment

Continuing with the fact pattern, it's time to evaluate your case. Is there real estate, a business, pensions, stocks/ bonds, restricted stock, stock options, or claims of separate property? Learn techniques used to evaluate these assets, how to hire appropriate experts and review/challenge their reports, and what steps are necessary to have valuations admitted into evidence.

Benjamin I.S. Bershad, Bershad Valuation Consulting LLC, *Troy;* Karen S. Sendelbach, Nichols Sacks Slank Sendelbach Buiteweg & Solomon PC, *Ann Arbor* 

4:10pm/Thursday

# Anatomy of a Divorce Case: Dispute Resolution

Using the same fact pattern, you've prepped your case, but what about your client? Explore best practices for educating your client on dispute resolution options (mediation, arbitration, and litigation) from both the judicial and lawyer perspective. Reduce the potential impact of pressure during live negotiations and understand how an informed party can enhance your persuasive techniques.

Roberts A. Kengis, Lennon Miller Taylor & Bartosiewicz PLC, *Kalamazoo;* Saraphoena B. Koffron, Austin+Koffron, *Kalamazoo* 

# Intermediate/Advanced Track

#### 1:05pm/Thursday Preparing Your Financial Expert for Trial, Arbitration, and Deposition

Delve into direct examination strategies and techniques that highlight your expert's findings and sustain their opinions under the rigors of cross-examination. Get tips for anticipating and mitigating challenges from your opposing party such as hostile questioning and attempts to undermine expertise or methodologies. Plus, understand the best methods for testifying during trials, arbitrations, and depositions too.

Jason W. LeRoy, Doeren Mayhew, *Troy;* Keri Middleditch, Middleditch Law Firm PLLC, *Birmingham* 

#### 2:05pm/Thursday Handling Common (and Not-So-Common) Evidentiary Issues in Trials

Gain skills in navigating common and less common evidentiary issues at trial. Using short hypotheticals, understand foundational rules for admitting evidence, how to object and overcome objections, authenticate documents, introduce texts and emails, and admit social media posts too. David S. Mendelson, The Mendelson Law Firm, *Birmingham* 

#### 3:10pm/Thursday

# Winning Arguments: Using Numbers Persuasively

Business valuations, forensic accounting, and taxes, oh my! So many numbers, and so mind-numbing when your ultimate mission is persuasion. Get techniques and strategies you can use today to make winning arguments tomorrow. Move from expert worksheets and reports to the core meaning and impact that matter in the end. Use the principles of persuasion, including chunking; vivid examples; show-and-tell; and stories, analogies, and metaphors. Michelle F. Gallagher, Adamy Valuation, *Lansing;* David C. Sarnacki, The Sarnacki Law Firm PLC, *Grand Rapids* 

#### 4:10pm/Thursday Tax Tips for Practitioners

Get a roundup of the latest and greatest tax tips for lawyers who are NOT tax experts, including important updates and resolution strategies for 2025 tax filings and tax planning during divorce negotiations.

Venar Raad Ayar, Ayar Law, *Farmington Hills*; Jacob N. Simon, Law Office of Jacob N. Simon, *Birmingham* 

# Moderators



Bench and Bar Track Elizabeth K. Bransdorfer Mika Meyers PLC, *Grand Rapids* 



Support Track J. Matthew Catchick, Jr. Catchick Law PC, *Bloomfield Hills* 



Addiction Track Shon A. Cook Tabono Law, *Muskegon* 



Core Concepts Track Ryan M. Kelly Kelly & Kelly PC, *Northville* 



Intersection of Abuse/Neglect & Family Law Track Josh Pease State Appellate Defender Office—Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System, *Lansing* 



Intermediate/Advanced Track David C. Sarnacki The Sarnacki Law Firm PLC, *Grand Rapids* 



Plenary Session Liisa R. Speaker Speaker Law Firm PLLC, *Lansing* 

# Tracks

# Bench and Bar Track

#### 1:05pm/Thursday

## PPO or ERPO? The New Extreme Risk Protection Order Act

Get best practice guidance on whether your client needs a personal protection order versus an extreme risk protection order (also known as a "red flag law"). Understand the steps for obtaining and contesting orders and identify the factors judges consider in evaluating risks while also balancing due process rights. Identify options for clients after an ERPO has been issued and take away strategies to avoid misuse and ensure that ERPOs are used appropriately.

Hon. Tina M. Yost Johnson, 37th Circuit Court, *Battle Creek;* Hon. Carla G. Testani, 3rd Circuit Court, *Detroit* 

#### 2:05pm/Thursday

### Contract Law Principles in Family Law

Revisit your 1L contracts course with a focus on family law cases. From offer and acceptance to mistake, duress, and unconscionability—determine the how and when of an enforceable agreement. Plus, understand what factors may render contracts like settlement agreements and preand postnuptial agreements voidable or void.

Elizabeth K. Bransdorfer, Mika Meyers PLC, *Grand Rapids;* Hon. Jon A. Van Allsburg, 20th Circuit Court, *Grand Haven* 

## 3:10pm/Thursday Don't Forget About UIFSA

Learn how jurisdiction to modify child support under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) differs from the UCCJEA. Grasp UIFSA's unique jurisdictional rules, filing requirements, and forms. Plus, learn to manage tricky interstate child support case issues like determining what state law applies and personal jurisdiction.

Matthew S. DeLange, MI Family Law Center, *Grand Rapids;* Jillian D. Fitzgerald, Wayne County Friend of the Court, *Detroit* 

## 4:10pm/Thursday Navigating the UCCJEA

Delve into the complexities of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA). Understand its critical application in custody and parenting time disputes across state and international lines. Explore jurisdictional nuances, initial custody determinations, emergency jurisdiction, modifications, and the handling of simultaneous proceedings. Take away detailed flowcharts offering a visual road map through key provisions and gain invaluable insights from recent appellate cases. Matthew S. DeLange, MI Family Law Center, *Grand Rapids*; Hon. Kathleen A. Feeney, Michigan Court of Appeals, *Grand Rapids* 

# Support Track

### 10:25am/Friday Alimony and the Use of Experts to Level the Playing Field

Take part in a mock oral argument that examines the factors judges rely on in granting alimony versus spousal support. From property division to income projections, understand how persuasive use of financial experts can help level the playing field for the lower-learning spouse. Brian M. Bakker, Stout, *Grand Rapids;* Hon. Kent D. Engle, 20th Circuit Court, *Grand Haven;* Richard A. Roane, Warner Norcross + Judd LLP, *Grand Rapids;* Jamie C. Slotsema, Warner Norcross + Judd LLP, *Grand Rapids* 

#### 11:30am/Friday Imputation of Income

What should you know when handling a case where your client or the other side is underemployed or voluntarily unemployed? Learn how to properly prepare for and litigate an imputation case, including how and when to use a vocational expert. Understand how the Michigan Child Support Formula (MCSF) addresses the "must-know" factors for these cases and what evidence a court wants to see before imputing income.

J. Matthew Catchick, Jr., Catchick Law PC, *Bloomfield Hills;* Guy Hostetler, Hostetler Fontaine & Associates, *Farmington Hills;* Sahera G. Housey, Oakland County Friend of the Court, *Pontiac* 

# **Addiction Track**

10:25am/Friday

# Kick the Habit of Ignoring Substance Use

Take a hard look at how to detect unhealthy substance use with both your own client and your opposing party and get tips for how to minimize or maximize the exposure of this issue. Glean insights into discovery, negotiation, and trial, as well as options for recovery and counseling. Don't miss this interplay between the world of treatment and legal advocacy. Shon A. Cook, Tabono Law, *Muskegon* 

#### 11:30am/Friday

# Gambling Addictions: Casinos, Subpoenas, and Reporting

With Michigan ranking number one in online gamblers, gambling issues are bound to be part of your family law cases. But navigating the challenges of collecting information from brick-and-mortar or online casinos can be tricky. Learn who to subpoena; what the subpoena should include; what the online entities will acknowledge; whether the casino will adhere to injunctions; and more. Plus, learn how to read casino statements and get tools for ensuring clients are compliant with casino bans.

Randall J. Chioini, Chioini Group PLLC, *Mount Clemens;* Andrea L. Hansen, Honigman LLP, *Lansing* 

# Intersection of Abuse/Neglect & Family Law Track

10:25am/Friday Alternatives to CPS Petitions

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Once CPS has decided that a parent has abused or neglected their child, there are options for the parent to try to avoid the case escalating to CPS filing a petition to remove the child. Whether it is safety planning, participating in services, or even exploring custody changes or guardianship, lawyers should know how to help their client avoid an investigation turning into a petition.

Josh Pease, State Appellate Defender Office—Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System, *Lansing* 

#### 11:30am/Friday

# Navigating a CPS Case When There Is an Existing Domestic Relations Case

Navigating Child Protective Services (CPS) cases in Michigan, especially when intertwined with ongoing domestic relations issues, can be challenging. Gain insight into the nuances of CPS defense work, understand key evidentiary issues, and walk through the procedural steps in a CPS case.

Brandy J. Thompson, The Kronzek Firm PLC, Lansing



It's an opportunity to all be in the same room. To be leveling a playing field that maybe we don't get in a courtroom. And to hear real-world experiences from both the bench and the bar.

-Hon. Megan K. Cavanagh, Michigan Supreme Court, Lansing

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Prices guaranteed until 11/14/24. Cannot combine discounts. <sup>1</sup>Please attach additional sheet listing registrants attending. All registrations must be submitted and paid for at the same time. <sup>2</sup>Current sitting state court judges (limit 40) attend in person for free and must call ICLE or submit order form to register. <sup>3</sup>Limited to five registrations from any one office and must call ICLE or submit order form to register. <sup>4</sup>Limit one print handbook purchase per registrant. Print handbooks are nonrefundable after the event cancellation date. **Complete Seminar Policies:** www.icle.org/info/seminarpolicies. **Cancellation Policy:** For a full refund, notify ICLE by 10/31/24. Registrants who cancel after that date will be charged a \$60 cancellation fee. No refunds will be issued after 11/07/24. **Walk-in Registrations:** Permitted on a space-available basis or if registrants fail to claim their seat in the first 15 minutes of the seminar. **Persons with Disabilities or Dietary Restrictions:** For special arrangements please contact ICLE no later than seven days before the seminar.

Accommodations: A discounted block of rooms has been reserved at Hyatt Place in Novi under group code G-ICLA. Visit www.icle.org/family/hotel or call 800-233-1234 to reserve a room. Reservations must be made by 10/13/24. Registrants are responsible for their own hotel expenses.