



2017 FAMILY LAW LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Kimberly Surratt, Esq.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the 79th (2017) Legislative Session behind us, it is time to reflect that it was a great year for family law. The Family Law Section pursued a venue bill from beginning to end this session, and as usual the Nevada Justice Association did great things for the practice of domestic law. Without the Nevada Justice Association, there would have been many bills that would have survived when they should not have. If you have not become a member of the Nevada Justice Association to support their domestic lobbying efforts it is time for you to do so. They literally save the practice of family law every session.

The following is a summary of the bills that were passed and signed by the governor, along with their effective dates. If you want to learn more about the substance of any of these bills there will be a Legislative Update put on by the Nevada Justice Association during early August. You can read the actual text of each bill by clicking on the bill number below or going to www.leg.state.nv.us. Click on the word “Nelis” in the top right hand corner of the page

and then click on “Bills” from that page. Make sure that you are reading the most recent version of the bill as it was enrolled to the Governor.

- **[AB 95](#) – Child Support:** Prohibits debts for support of a child from being incurred by a parent or other person receiving certain public assistance for the benefit of a dependent child under certain circumstances. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 99](#) – Services for children:** Requires social services to treat a child as having the gender with which the child identifies and requires LGBT training for certain persons; requires protocols for LGBT children by DHSS; and other matters. Effective for adoption of regulations on April 11, 2017 and all other purposes on October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 102](#) – Venue in civil actions:** This was the Family Law Section’s bill that allows procedures for a change of venue in post-divorce proceedings. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 150](#) – Private professional guardians:** Product of the guardianship commission work and Assemblyman Sprinkle and Senator Harris. There are a mass number of changes to guardianships within this bill and the other guardianship bill. Make sure you read the new guardianship bills if you do this work. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 173](#) – Name Changes:** Requires an applicant for a name change to submit a statement signed under penalty of perjury; revising the requirement for publication of notice; and providing other matters. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 177](#) – Domestic violence:** Authorizing a court to set a second or third hearing on an extended order for protection under certain

IN THIS ISSUE:

2017 FAMILY LAW LEGISLATIVE
UPDATE, PAGE 1

BISHOP FAMILY LAW CONVENTION
PAGE 2

DETERMINING A CHILD’S BEST
INTEREST WITHOUT THE CHILD?
PAGE 5

(cont’d. on page 3)

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LETTER FROM THE FAMILY LAW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



Dear Section Members,

We hope that you all enjoyed the 2017 Family Law Conference held in Bishop, California at the Tri-County Fairgrounds. The Family Law Section hosted more attendees and judicial officers than in the history of the conference.

The post-conference Family Law Section survey provided positive feedback with respect to quality of the speakers, relevance of topics, quality of food, hotel accommodations, and the Tri-County Fairgrounds. Based on the Family Law Section's feedback, the council has unanimously voted to hold the 2018 Family Law Conference in Bishop, California.

The 2018 conference will be held on March 1 and 2, 2018. Please mark your calendars and make your reservations.

Thank you to all who provided us with your valuable feedback.

The Family Law Executive Committee



circumstances; requiring the service of certain documents related to an application for an extended order of protection; extending the time that a temporary order for protection remains in effect under certain circumstances; and providing other matters properly relating thereto. Effective May 26, 2017.

- **[AB 191](#) – Assisted reproduction parentage:** This bill gender neutralizes voluntary acknowledgment of paternity to include “parentage” to cover assisted reproductive technology. In addition, it provides that Petitioners to an adoption do not have to reside in the State of Nevada to adopt in the State of Nevada and that a hearing can take place after birth as soon as service is complete, instead of waiting six months. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 227](#) – Domestic partnerships from other jurisdictions:** Couples who are registered as domestic partners in other states are no longer required to re-register in the State of Nevada to have their domestic partnership recognized. Plus, the community property date does not reset. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 228](#) – Termination of parental rights:** Revising provisions governing the required service regarding a proceeding for the termination of parental rights; revising the time for a hearing to terminate parental rights; making certain hearings, files and records of the court relating to a proceeding for the termination of parental rights confidential in certain circumstances; authorizing the termination of parental rights in certain circumstances involving a sexual assault; and providing other matters properly relating thereto. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 229](#) – Gender neutralization:** All of the Nevada Revised Statutes were gender neutralized with this bill, including the marriage chapter to reflect marriage equality. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 232](#) – Changing name of a minor:** Changes the procedures for changing the name of a minor. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 247](#) – Termination of rental agreement for harassment:** Allows early termination of certain rental agreements by victims of harassment, sexual assault or stalking. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 278](#) – Committee to review child support guidelines:** Pursuant to the outcome of the Nevada Supreme Court Child Support Commission, a permanent commission through the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. Effective June 4, 2017, changes to child support will be effective on the effective date of the regulations when adopted.
- **[AB 314](#) – Property exempt from a writ of execution:** This was a bill sponsored by the Probate and Trust Section of the State Bar of Nevada. This bill is provided in the list because Section 4 discusses community and separate property in a trust. Effective October 1, 2017.
- **[AB 319](#) – Guardianship of minors:** This was another bill that was the result of the guardianship commission. This bill is specific to guardianships of minors and has significant changes to how we practice guardianship law right now. This bill is 132

(cont'd. on page 4)

Legislative Update

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- pages long and makes clear the needs for minor guardianships versus adult guardianships. Effective July 1, 2017.
- **[AB 413](#) – Remote Notarization and Electronic Documents & Signatures:** This bill allows for remote notarization by video conferencing. In addition, it made changes to our electronic will and trusts sections to allow them to be usable for the tech industries. Effective immediately for regulations to be passed by the Secretary of State on remote notaries, Remote Notarization is effective July 1, 2018, the electronic wills and trusts provisions are effective July 1, 2017.
 - **[AB 459](#) – Paternity Testing Re: Child in Need of Protection:** Authorizes the court to order genetic testing in a 432B case. Effective July 1, 2017.
 - **[SB 2](#) – Surrender of Newborn Child:** This bill makes changes to the requirements for voluntary surrender of a newborn child to a provider of emergency services. Effective October 1, 2017.
 - **[SB 40](#) – Child custody support orders outside Nevada:** This bill makes changes to the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act for procedures surrounding serving notice of the registration of a child in another state. This change was required by the Federal Government tied to our enforcement funding. Effective July 1, 2017.
 - **[SB 110](#) – Process for change of name:** This bill made changes to the procedures for a name change for transgender clients. Effective May 23, 2017.
 - **[SB 133](#) – Uniform Deployed Parents Custody/ Visitation Act:** This bill revises the Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act to apply to civilian employees of the United States Department of Defense. Effective July 1, 2017.
 - **[SB 201](#) – Conversion therapies:** This law prohibits professionals from providing conversion therapy for LGBT youth. Effective for regulations on May 17, 2017 and to be implemented on January 1, 2018.
 - **[SB 229](#) – Nominate person for guardianship:** This is another law that was the result of the Supreme Court Guardianship Commission. This bill is focused on nominations of guardianship through estate planning. Effective June 15, 2017 for regulations and actually effective on January 1, 2018.
 - **[SB 432](#) – Changes to Termination of Parental Rights:** This law allows a motion for termination of parental rights in a 432B abuse and neglect case, and it expands venue for termination of parental rights cases. Effective January 1, 2018.
 - **[SB 433](#) – Representation of adult ward:** Another law that was the product of the Supreme Court Guardianship Commission. This bill contains the bulk of the changes for adult protected persons. Effective July 1, 2017.



Kimberly M. Surratt has a family law and estate planning law firm with three other amazing attorneys. She started her career in insurance defense and then moved into family law after only one year. Ms. Surratt originally developed a non-profit called Collaborative Professionals of Nevada and later moved into Assisted Reproductive Law. She is a fellow with the American Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproductive Attorneys, she sits on the Family Law Executive Council of the State Bar of Nevada, and she is the Secretary of the Nevada Justice Association. She has lobbied since the 2005 Nevada Legislative Session and she was responsible for many of the laws passed in her article.

DETERMINING A CHILD'S BEST INTEREST WITHOUT THE CHILD?

By Audrey J. Beeson

This article addresses the involvement, or lack thereof, of children in judgments pertaining to custodial arrangements. In order to understand why children should or should not play a role in custodial determinations, I first address the need to understand the limitations on memory and the differences between children and adults. Next, I discuss children's testimony, how other countries give the child a right to testify in custody determinations, and the most used alternative to testimony. Finally, I discuss the psychological impact that testifying, interviewing and participation in mediation can have on children.

A. Memory

Every law student, attorney, and judge should be educated on the psychology of memory. Based on the weight that judges give to the credibility of a party or witness testifying, it is incomprehensible that judges make determinations with regard to credibility based solely on the ability of a witness to be consistent recalling facts and events as well as the judge's own perception while listening to and watching a witness testify. Important concepts to be learned are the different types of memory, how incoming information is processed, the way memory works, how a memory is stored, if at all, and the ability or inability to recall a memory. An in-depth analysis of each of these concepts is beyond the scope of this article; however, some of these concepts are generally referenced herein below.

Incoming information is not always stored in memory. If the information is not relevant to the person at the time that it is introduced, then it is not processed and held in what is called "working memory."ⁱ If the information is perceived to be important, then the person will transfer the information to either their short-term or long-term memory. Most people do not have the foresight to realize what may become important at a later date;

therefore, if the information has not been stored in detail, then no matter how important it becomes later, a person is not going to be able to recall it with the same clarity as something they witnessed which they knew to be important at that time.

Once stored, memory is not impenetrable even in adults. In fact, memory is subject to distortion based on a plethora of factors that can be categorized into two groups: internal influences and external influences. Internal influences include misattribution, desire or fantasy-thinking, effect of post-event experiences, and the mood and mindset of the person at the moment of retrieval and relation.ⁱⁱ External influences include the power of suggestion, contact with outside informationⁱⁱⁱ and the form and content of questions asked prior to the retrieval of the information. Therefore, no matter how confident the person is, there is a distinct possibility that the memory altered or is a false memory entirely.^{iv} Family law judges and practitioners need to take this a step further by understanding the differences between adults and children.

1. Children's Storage of Information

While the development, storage and retrieval of memory is similar in children, there are differences between an adult's ability to recall a memory and a child's. Several factors affect the way that children store information including: the level of knowledge of a child; the amount of life experience of a child; the child's stage of cognitive development; the child's ability to reason and reach inferences; and the way in which any particular child handles stress.^v Obviously, children have extremely limited amounts of knowledge and life experience when compared to adults.

If a child and adult witness the same event, the difference in the ability of the child to comprehend

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what they saw versus what an adult comprehends may vary significantly. The level of comprehension affects whether a child can apply the information to their own experience or knowledge base, thereby explaining why an adult will store particular information that a child would most certainly not. Additionally, children have a higher reliance on context when storing a memory.^{vi} While adults don't necessarily need to remember the scene or atmosphere of a particular event in order to store a particular memory, children tend to encompass the scene and atmosphere as part of the memory itself.^{vii}

2. Children's Memory Recall

Children age six and older seem to give "nearly as accurate and complete an account of what they observed as adults who saw the same event."^{viii} The majority of research reports show that the abilities of children younger than six are different than children older than six years of age.^{ix} The cut-off age of six is not universally accepted, as some researchers found that children as young as ages three and four are also able to "recall negative past events with considerable accuracy and some detail,"^{xi} while other studies suggest that children ages eight and nine are more capable of recalling information.^{xii}

Both adults and older children use more complex retrieval mechanisms than younger children.^{xiii} These more intricate retrieval mechanisms lead to the recall of more information. Therefore, younger children need prompts in order to recall the same information^{xiv} that an older child can recall on their own.^{xv}

3. Children's Communication of Memories

Children and adults differ in the way that they relay information. While adults can effectively relay events of a particular memory by narrating the same, a child's ability to narrate an event slowly develops with age.^{xvi} Children begin with very simplistic outlines that do not contain a great deal of detail, and their narrative abilities are limited to their own life experiences and perceptions of the world as they know it.^{xvii}

Prior to taking testimony of a child, a judge or attorney should take into consideration the way in which the child's testimony is acquired as well as the extent of any post-incident information exposure to the child. In order for children to provide precise and

comprehensive information, the environment in which information is solicited should be comfortable, familiar, low stress and when possible, familial support should be present.^{xviii} ^{xix} If the child is being questioned by strangers in an unfamiliar environment without support from someone that they trust present, the child is more likely to internalize, refuse to speak at all, or leave out pertinent information.^{xx} Questions posed to children should be crafted for that particular child's stage of language development.^{xxi} For example, legal terms should be avoided when possible, and questions should be short, to the point and structured as simplistic as possible.^{xxii}

Research indicates that while children exposed to post-event information may be more suggestible than adults are, this is not always the case depending upon the familiarity with the circumstances of the incident that occurred.^{xxiii} Additionally, children have an increased ability to recall accurate memories as well as to resist suggestive questioning when the interviewer is a friendly person with compassion and warmth.^{xxiv}

B. Testimony

Is a child's best interest^{xxv} hyperbole when the voice of the child is not actually heard? Most states have a statutory scheme that requires the court to determine a custodial arrangement that is in the child's best interest, however, it is simply one factor of many and often carries little to no weight with the court absent a highly persuasive correlating fact, such as alcoholism, allegations of child abuse, domestic violence or a history of drug use. Further, research shows that the amount of weight judges give a child's wishes is inextricably linked to the age of the child.^{xxvi} Maybe courts should be required to see the child as a person with their own interests and rights in the context of family litigation, and therefore particular methods should be implemented in order to include the child within the process.

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

While the United States is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is not a State party. In fact, the United States is the only country not a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.^{xxvii} The Convention is focused on basic rights

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that all children should have as well as the best interests and well-being of a child.

Article 12 of the Convention provides:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

While Article 12 appears to give State parties the choice of giving a child the opportunity to be heard directly or through a representative, the UN Committee is of the opinion that this is the child's choice.^{xxxviii} "The UN Committee recommended that, wherever possible, children be given the opportunity to be directly heard in the proceedings."^{xxxix} Of the 196 State party countries, it appears that as of 2014, only New Zealand^{xxx} and Scotland^{xxxi} give the child the explicit right to be heard in family law cases. ^{xxxii} Other countries such as Australia, England and Canada have legal systems wherein a child's view is to be considered, but through indirect means, such as a family report (Australia), a welfare report (England) or through legal representation (Canada). ^{xxxiii} The United States should take a hard look at the research and results in other countries and should ask itself, how can 196 other countries have it wrong, and only we have it right? The answer may very well be that the United States is the only country that has an incorrect view on the issue of whether a child should be heard before a judge makes a custody determination affecting that child.

2. The Focus of Child Testimony

Refocusing testimony of the child from a parent-centric ideology to a child-centric focus may give a judge the most beneficial information to consider when making a custody determination. If the child is

testifying about their own interests, activities, likes and dislikes, daily routine, school, homework, friends, and similar topics,^{xxxiv} then not only is there the potential for the collection of more information, but there is also the potential to gather information that is more pertinent with regard to the child's relationship with each parent in an indirect manner. The child's testimony can be directed in a way that the child does not feel that a choice must be made between parents that would result in diminishment or elimination of any guilt that the child may have felt otherwise. However, if given the opportunity to express anything in particular that the child may want the judge to know at the end of the child's testimony, the child may offer their ideas about a preferred schedule. If posed as an open-ended question, the child's response will more likely be genuine while still allowing for a mature and intelligent child to make their custodial preference known.

Children that are competent and mature should not have those qualities turned against them. Far too often, parents rely on the success of the child as a crutch to their argument of why they should maintain custody of a child, without giving deference to the child's wishes.^{xxxv} Therefore, children that are doing well, getting good grades, acting responsibly and staying out of trouble may feel that they are being penalized by not getting a choice of which parent they live with, while the "problem" children are switching from one parent to another.

3. Interviewing Children

Many jurisdictions allow judges to meet with children and interview them in order to determine their preference.^{xxxvi} Judges typically make the decision of whether or not to interview a child on a case-by-case basis.^{xxxvii} If a judge is not qualified to interview the child, then the interview can be outsourced to a professional with the proper skills and training, such as a social worker, psychologist, licensed marriage and family therapist, parenting coordinator, counselor, or child care worker. These professionals tend to have extensive training in understanding child development making them more qualified to interview a child.

In order to have a successful interview with a child, there should be more than one meeting in order to build rapport with the child, to allow the child to

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become comfortable with the interviewer,^{xxxviii} and to give the interviewer more than just a single snapshot of the child. Too often an interviewer may rely on a short one-time meeting with the child and the child may be extremely stressed, angry at a particular parent that day, disconnected, or simply uninterested in the process. By conducting several interviews over a span of meetings, the interviewer will learn the child's character, personality and hopefully gain the trust of the child so that the child becomes more open with the interviewer as time progresses.

C. Psychological Effects of Participation in Custodial Determinations

This section discusses the psychological effects on children in different forms of participating in a custodial determination, including testifying in court, being interviewed and taking part in the form of participating in a custodial determination, including testifying in court, being interviewed and taking part in the mediation process itself.

1. Benefits to a Child Witness

The first thought that occurs to most people is how detrimental testifying may be to a child's psychological and mental well-being. However, there are benefits to child participation in custodial determinations that should not be overlooked. Psychological studies show that giving a child the ability to participate and to make decisions pertaining to their lives can aid in the child's development of maturity in their decision-making abilities.^{xxxix xl}

Many children want the opportunity to have their voice heard, and not just be dismissed in the litigation process. In sexual abuse cases, psychologists and legal scholars "recognize that children deserve to verbalize their experiences,"^{xli} as the process may be therapeutic. Likewise, there may be therapeutic benefits for a child to either testify or to have their voice heard in an alternative manner during their parents' divorce or custody case. In particular, children who witness domestic violence between their parents may benefit from being able to express their feelings at having witnessed the same. Those who are witnesses to alcohol or drug abuse may likewise benefit from being able to express the fear and anxiety that they feel when

a parent is under the influence and unable to properly care for the child. Children may feel helpless during the break-up of their family home thereby leading to increased stress, fear and confusion, and having their feelings and thoughts heard by the court may be the only way that a child does not feel completely invisible in the process.

If parents cannot cooperate and come to their own agreement, then the child has to rely on a judge to make a determination that will affect that child for the rest of his or her life. This causes many children to feel "confused, dislocated and disempowered."^{xlii} Involving the child in the process may give them feelings of empowerment and acknowledgment. Additionally, research shows that a parent's capacity to competently parent their child declines during the divorce process due to the rise in stress and the parent's increased concentration on their own problems and concerns rather than the child's needs and concerns.^{xliii} If, on the other hand, parents knew that their child would be heard and allowed to testify, this could have the effect of shifting the focus of the parents back to where it is needed most during a divorce – the well-being and care of their child.^{xliv}

Walk into almost any family court motion hearing and you have a very good chance of witnessing a judge tell litigants, "I suggest you two try and work this out, because I don't know your child, but you do." This in turn should lead us to the next logical question: How can any judge decide what is in a child's best interest when they know little to nothing about that child? We would not want a doctor diagnosing our child without having examined them in person, yet we are willing to place the fate of our child's life in the hands of a judge, sight unseen.

In my research, I came across a proposal for the "rule of children's choice" in custody decisions.^{xlv} The premise behind the proposal is that a parent who has in fact invested the time, attention, love and compassion to a child will be rewarded and recognized through the child's choice.^{xlvi} A judge should be cognizant of the fact that no matter how much testimony and argument they hear, or personal contact they have with the parents in a courtroom, the judge will never have the same knowledge as a child that lives with those parents and has seen the breakdown of the familial structure.^{xlvii} Therefore, the most important

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witness^{xlvi} may be ignored simply because that person is under the age of 18.

2. Detriments to a Child Witness

Testifying in court can produce a significant amount of anxiety in a child for several reasons.^{xlix} First, there is the anxiety of facing the unknown – most children have never been inside an actual courtroom, and their only context for the same is if they have seen it on a television program or in a movie. Second, a child may feel anxiety if they believe that they have to make a choice between their parents, or if they say something that may hurt their parents' feelings.^{li} Third, many children are not comfortable speaking in front of people, especially in front of people that they do not know and this may cause extreme anxiety and stress. Finally, allowing a child to be cross-examined by the parties' attorneys could harm the child's best interests, even if the examination is done in a carefully crafted manner.^{lii} It would be the responsibility of the court to put measures into place that would help decrease this anxiety for children. Family courts can look at the successful methods that criminal courts use in order to put child witnesses at ease, such as allowing a child to bring in an item (usually a toy) that brings them comfort, or teaching the child to visualize imagery of a place or person that helps them stay calm,^{liii} or allowing a service dog to be present in court while the child is testifying.^{liv}

3. Effects on Interviewed Children

There is no conclusive evidence that shows that children are traumatized by meeting with a judge.^{lv} This is not to say that parents do not engage in improper persuasion and communication with children prior to being interviewed and that act in and of itself can cause harm to a child.^{lvi} A judge properly trained in the skill of interviewing children can deduce when a child has been manipulated by a parent even when a child denies being coached.^{lvii} Children interviewed by judges tend to feel less isolated from the process.^{lviii} The judge should be careful, however, not to make the child feel like they are being used to give the judge harmful information on their parents,^{lix} as this could cause an immense amount of guilt and damage the child's relationship with their parent or parents.

4. Means of Non-Adversarial Participation

A productive and successful mediation process includes the participation of both parties as well as the exchange of all pertinent information. Therefore, it should follow that the portion of mediation dealing with the custody, timeshare and other child-related issues would include the information and viewpoint that the child or children has to offer.

Instead of focusing on the desires of the parents, the presence of the child can bring the focus back to what is most important – the needs of that particular child, which in turn can lead to the development of better parenting agreements.^{lx} Custody determinations are unique in that they look to the future and attempt to give parents a roadmap to use in the event of future disputes. Having the child participate may help the parties fashion much more creative solutions in their parenting plan that they may not otherwise consider.

“[P]articipation in mediation enhances a child's self-esteem, increases decision making ability, shortens the length and intensity of family disputes, and in its best form can reunify the family and emotionally heal the child.”^{lxi} If children are left out of the mediation process, then they may feel the same helplessness, “isolation, loneliness, anxiety, fear, sadness, confusion and anger”^{lxii} that children feel when their wishes are not considered in the context of litigation. Adolescents especially may be tremendously impacted by not having their point of view, thoughts and desires considered.^{lxiii}

Conclusion

As a family law attorney, it has been drilled into my mind that a child should be shielded from the litigation process and their parents' divorce at all costs.

However, family law attorneys never discuss the fact that one of those costs could be the child's best interest and well-being. We, of course, ask our clients whether they believe their child has a preference as to the custodial arrangement, but we do not and cannot know whether in fact that is how the child feels.

Judges that are forced to make custodial determinations take evidence pertaining to the best interest factors that the statutory scheme provides, but at the end of the day how can they be confident in their determination because they listen to testimony

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and review evidence while being subject to their own bias. Try as they might to set them aside, judges most certainly allow those biases influence how they perceive and interpret evidence. I was most surprised by the fact that the United States is the only country which has not adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Too often I hear judges make custody determinations that I strongly disagree with, and more often than not, those are the cases that return to court in the future for additional litigation. This leaves me wondering if and how decisions would be different if the judge knew more information and had the opportunity to know the child's perspective as well as the child's choices. As a family law practitioner that is also a mediator, I further support the idea of children taking an active role in the formation of the parenting plan, thereby creating in its stead a "family plan" that would be constructed with the input of everyone affected by the agreement, not just the parents.

Audrey J. Beeson obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Nevada Las Vegas in 2004 and her Juris Doctor from the William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada Las Vegas in 2007. Her family law experience began in 2006 while serving as a law clerk for a local family law judge. Since obtaining her license in 2007, Audrey has focused her practice in Family Law and the wide spectrum of areas that Family Law entails. Audrey is committed to the Las Vegas community. In an effort to help the troubled youth of Las Vegas, Audrey began serving as a Truancy Diversion Program (TDP) Judge in January 2011, in order to help children focus on their education and engage in the learning process. In the Fall of 2011 Audrey agreed to serve as the first elementary school TDP Judge in North Las Vegas as part of a pilot program. Audrey joined The Law Offices of Frank J. Toti, Esquire in March 2012, as Of Counsel and is a valuable asset to the firm. Audrey is a Nevada Board Certified Family Law Specialist, a Mediator and a Parenting Coordinator. Audrey is also a member on several active committees. Audrey is currently attending the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine University School of Law in order to obtain her LLM in ADR with a focus in mediation.

