

**MINUTES - MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION FAMILY LAW SECTION
COUNCIL MEETING FOR MARCH 8, 2006**

Place - Middleton's Tavern, Annapolis, Maryland

Members Attending: Barbara Trader, Cindy Callahan, Vince Wills, Dorothy Lennig, Stacy Siegel, Mary Sanders, Barry Dalnekoff, Erin Gable, Dodie Fait, Ron Bergman, Chris Van Roden, Jolie Weinberg.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair, Barbara Trader.

Stacy Siegel reported that the annual meeting program to take place in Ocean City on June 17th is underway. The Court of Special Appeals Judges Adkins, James Eyler, Woodward, and Krauser have been confirmed. The Honorable Albert Matricciani from Baltimore City has agreed to be the moderator. The fun part of the event will include bingo and an auction. Stacy asked that all involved gather auction items for this event. Bingo cards also need to be worked on. We will also need prizes.

Regarding the Beverly Ann Groner award, publicity has gone out, seeking nominations for the award. Nominations close on April 22nd. Two individuals have been nominated so far. The Family Law Newsletter has been distributed to about 1000 people and in the newsletter requests have been made for nominations. The Groner family is also supposed to fund a Beverly Ann Groner scholarship. Follow-up will be made with the family, to determine the parameters of the scholarship award.

Mary reported that the MICPEL Program regarding the trial of family law cases is underway. The MICPEL classes will take place in Baltimore at the University of Maryland Law School commencing April 6th for a six week period until the end of May. The MICPEL Office will be sending all participants instructions for written materials. The divorce tax workshop sponsored by MICPEL has been postponed, to take place on May 23rd.

Regarding legislation, the following report was made:

1. Concerning the GAL Bill, Cindy Callahan reported that many letters are needed in support of the GAL legislation and the Family Law Section Council needs to be more involved. We need to get clients/children to send out letters. The opposition side is well organized. The Bill, as it exists, no longer provides for attorney immunity; but is rather enabling legislation to allow a Court to appoint a "best interests" attorney. There was a meeting the previous Monday night, to discuss the Maryland Trial Lawyers Association and their position on the Bill, as well as Gregory Jacob and his opposition to the Bill. The opposition has been attacking Kathleen Dumais and it is important for us to keep the pressure up.

2. Regarding the Property Transfer Bill, as it is now amended, the Bill provides for relief to a lienholder and applies to the family home transfer only. The House will vote on the Bill

tomorrow.

3. Regarding the “below the line” Health Insurance Bill, it had not been voted on as of yet.

4. General discussion was had on the proposal to enact a “task force” on custody and general approaches to that concept.

5. The Domestic Violence Bills extending relief for two years and changing the burden of proof to preponderance of the evidence both passed second reader in the Senate and will now transfer to the House side.

6. It was generally discussed that the Maryland State Bar Association is becoming more active in legislation and that the Family Law Section Council should work with the Committee on laws within the MSBA. We need to put an agenda together early and work with a contact on the Committee on laws to assure smooth functioning.

It was reported that the Guardian Ad Litem Standards and Public Records Subcommittee of the Rules Committee would be meeting on March 10th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 PM.