The time has come for a shift in the practice of law.
The new holistic models of law and justice are making a difference. A difference not only in the personal lives of legal professionals, but also in society. This shift is permeating all aspects of law: criminal, civil, and corporate; elevating lawyers out of vilification and into a position of healer. Lawyers are skilled problem-solvers and ought to be working on solutions that make a difference!

“I want to transform how law is practiced, to bring the human values of empathy, compassion and (dare I say it?) LOVE to the practice of law. I want to empower lawyers to become agents of transformation with their clients and in the world.” - J. Kim Wright J.D.

topic overview: about the movement
J. Kim Wright dares to ask the question: “What if lawyers were peacemakers, problem-solvers, and healers of conflicts?” Since 1999 J. Kim Wright has been spearheading, documenting, encouraging and connecting the holistic law movement and the professionals within it. These new models are based upon cooperation, collaboration, and interconnectedness. They seek resolution, healing and restoration. Today a powerful movement exists that is known by many identifiers.
• Collaborative Law
• Restorative Justice
• Problem-Solving Courts
• Therapeutic Jurisprudence
• Community Lawyering
• Humanizing Legal Education
• Transformative Mediation, and
• Preventive Law
• Holistic Law

It is the combination of these models that is creating the transformative momentum of cutting edge law. And while these modalities are improving the working environments of lawyers, it is the client who is reaping the largest benefit. In contrast to the win/lose and punishment paradigms, these new models create peace. This is a welcome shift to all consumers: from the victim who wishes restorative justice, not just punishment for the perpetrator; the neighbor who wants resolution to a dispute, not just a decision which perpetuates ill feelings; the corporation that wants meaningful results, not just edicts; to the divorcing parent who wants their family’s situation to be mindfully resolved so that everyone can move forward. This is the cutting edge law that is transforming the way law is perceived and practiced.

[Q&A talking points available upon request.]
Lawyers as Peacemakers: Practicing Holistic, Problem-Solving Law
J. Kim Wright J.D., Author

It is highly unusual for a book to hit the best seller list before it is released but that is exactly what has happened at the American Bar Association and it has since been named one of the 50 “Flagship” publications. Lawyers as Peacemakers is a 528 page resource for lawyers and judges who are making the shift towards holistic, problem solving law.

As lawyers, judges, academics, and law students declare, the time for this paradigm shift in law is upon us and the ABA recognized that J. Kim Wright is an important visionary who is anchoring this movement.

“In Lawyers as Peacemakers, Kim has produced a meaty and readable resource on how an ethic of care can become a canon of legal practice…the end result should be a bench and bar that better serves society and a legal profession composed of counselors, leaders and peacemakers.”
David B. Wexler, Prof of Law & Director, Intern'l Network on Therapeutic Jurisprudence, University of Puerto Rico

The book finds ways of successfully practicing while also providing balance and well-being to a lawyer’s clients and to themselves. It is written to teach lawyers new ways of finding satisfaction in their job and providing comprehensive, solution-focused services to their clients; sometimes it’s not about winning, it’s about finding the best possible answer for everyone involved.

The book illustrates how these transformed practices focus on a more holistic, humanistic, solution-based approach to resolving legal problems, an approach that many clients want and need. Among the subjects covered in the book are:

• Collaborative Law
• Restorative Justice
• Problem-Solving Courts
• Therapeutic Jurisprudence
• Community Lawyering
• Humanizing Legal Education
• Transformative Mediation
• Preventive Law
• Holistic Law

Lawyers as Peacemakers provides the reader with a complete overview of these approaches and how they’re being applied right now, as well as instruction on ways, big and small, any lawyer can incorporate them into their work.

To contact the ABA regarding the book, contact: Neal Cox, 312-988-6058, coxn@staff.abanet.org
More praise for Lawyers as Peacemakers

Lawyers as Peacemakers: Practicing Holistic, Problem-Solving Law
J. Kim Wright J.D., Author

“In this emerging jurisprudence, as the overarching purpose of our professional work shifts from winning legal victories to providing meaningful conflict resolution services for our clients, what kind of person the lawyer is matters equally as much as the power of the lawyer’s intellect. When legal historians and sociologists begin writing the story of how this transformation of a profession was wrought, the publication by the American Bar Association of J. Kim Wright’s remarkable book will surely be seen as a defining event.”

-Pauline H. Tesler, co-founder of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, was co-recipient (with Stu Webb) of the first American Bar Association “Lawyer as Problem Solver” award

“Wright’s passion for high professional ideals shines on every page. If you teach law and want a book for law students, jam-packed with resources and uplifting stories, put it on your syllabus. If you are a practicing lawyer and have only 30 minutes a day to do something for you, then this book might just save your life.”

-Cheryl Conner, Founder, New Prospects Collaborative, former law professor and Asst. U.S. Attorney

“Lawyers as Peacemakers articulates a new vision of law. Wright draws us into a conversation about the foundational thinking that birthed our legal system and asks us to consider a more holistic and integrative approach to the practice of law, an approach that will ultimately transform the American legal system into one that is more human and life-affirming.”

-MaryLynn Schiavi, Writer, Associate Producer, Host, and Narrator of the Emmy Award-winning “Master and Beyond” television series

“Many of us became lawyers to help others and do good works. Few of us reach those goals as effectively as J. Kim Wright does in The Lawyer as Peacemaker. In this beautifully written and assembled work, Kim shows all readers how to stay in the practice of law in a satisfying and rewarding way, thus helping others and doing good works exponentially.”

-Diane Diel, past President, State Bar of Wisconsin, President-Elect, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals

“Lawyers as Peacemakers follows the ABA’s tradition of publishing cutting-edge books that meld the goals of helping lawyers develop practices that provide competent, profitable, client-centered services and increasing the public’s access to justice. Building on the new paradigm shift of increasing a consumer-oriented, nonadversarial approach as pioneered by mediation, unbundling, and Collaborative Law, J. Kim Wright challenges lawyers to encourage peace, healing, conciliation, and sustainable human relationships within heartfelt client connections and needed new service products.”

-Forrest (Woody) Mosten, preeminent mediator, author & recipient of ABA “Lawyer as Problem-Solver” & ABA Lifetime Legal Access Award

“Kim Wright has compiled a treasure trove of ideas and wisdom for lawyers who want to use their heads and hearts to help clients in humanistic ways. This book not only provides guidance for serving clients but, equally as important, also in helping lawyers make their own true paths in life.”

-John Lande, Isidor Loeb Professor and Director, LL.M. Program in Dispute Resolution, University of Missouri School of Law

“What would you like to know to enhance the ability of a lawyer to become a peacemaker? Well, Kim Wright, in Lawyers as Peacemakers, provides the answers, resources and inspiration to achieve that result. Kim brings her first-hand knowledge of the subject from her extensive travels and her sharing of collaborative dialogues with those with special expertise. Kim’s approach is directed both to the external tools and the internal ones required to reach creative solutions. It is a joy to experience this rich book.”


“Wright’s book is a beautiful and palpable illustration that will bring a more dignified and effective approach to American jurisprudence. Reading this book will benefit us all and is a must read for lawyers, judges, clients and the general community, as reading this book enhances our humanity.”

-Sunny Schwartz, Esq, Program Administrator, San Francisco Sheriff’s Department and author of Dreams from the Monster Factory: A Tale of Prison, Redemption, and One Woman’s Fight to Restore Justice to All

J. Kim Wright • JKimWright@CuttingEdgeLaw.com • (682)-4-NEW-LAW • www.CuttingEdgeLaw.com
media inquiries: media-request@CuttingEdgeLaw.com
CuttingEdgeLaw.com
J. Kim Wright J.D., Publisher and Managing Editor, Cutting Edge Law

Cutting Edge Law is an internet-based community and comprehensive resource for what's happening and what's possible in the legal profession, especially in the following area:

- alternative dispute resolution
- comprehensive law
- humanizing legal education
- peacemaking
- healing and problem-solving approaches to law
- lawyer well-being and transforming practices.

“A Movement.
There is a movement in the legal system and new models have arisen with different names but similar values. Collaborative law, restorative justice, transformative mediation, preventive law, holistic law, creative problem-solving, community lawyering and other approaches have in common a broader, more conscious view of what law is and the role of lawyers in serving their communities.

We’re here to support the explorations and promote the most workable and inspiring options. We promote this movement in media and encourage its growth by shining a light on the best practices and pioneers. We help lawyers stay on the cutting edge of the latest trends and tools for designing law practices and lives.

“A Community.
Changemakers often feel they are alone as they try new ideas. Cutting Edge Law offers opportunities for connections between lawyers and for clients to find lawyers who are practicing in these cutting edge approaches. Law affects everyone. Cutting Edge Law invites all to join in transforming the legal profession.

“What if Lawyers were Peacemakers, Problem-Solvers, and Healers of Conflicts?”

J. Kim Wright • JKimWright@CuttingEdgeLaw.com • (682)-4-NEW-LAW • www.CuttingEdgeLaw.com • media inquiries: media-request@CuttingEdgeLaw.com
J. Kim Wright J.D.

Kim’s life has been about collaboration, going outside the box and finding new ways for more nurturing outcomes to happen. For example, while she gave birth to two children, she ended up parenting 16. Runaways, throwaways and kids who needed mothering found their way to her doorstep. And when they needed legal advocacy, Kim became a lawyer.

She entered law school with seven children at home in January, 1987 and graduated two and a half years later. Discouraged by the adversarial nature of law school, she worked in nonprofits and did not practice law at first, although she did pass the Florida and Georgia bar exams. In 1993, Kim met a lawyer who inspired her: Forrest Bayard from Chicago told her that his divorce clients were friendly at the end of proceedings and that he practiced law while granting dignity to everyone in the process. She immediately applied for, took and passed the North Carolina bar exam, her place of residence. Over the next several years, she experimented with many holistic, collaborative approaches in her law practice. She created a holistic Divorce and Family Law Center with counseling, legal services, mediation and a social worker-case manager.

Throughout the 1990’s, Kim participated in transformational programs and applied what she learned to her law practice. In 1999, she was in a course called “Power and Contribution” and the assignment was to create a project that was so big it was impossible, then to create a plan and promise to achieve it. Kim made an “impossible promise” to transform the legal profession. “I was determined to have a different experience and to use the legal profession to change the world.” Knowing she couldn’t do it alone, she began to network and connect with other peacemaking lawyers. She wrote an informational web site (www.renaissancelawyer.com) which received over 100,000 visitors in the first year. A network of paradigm-shifting lawyers emerged. In 2001, she founded the international organization of peace-making, healing and problem-solving lawyers, The Renaissance Lawyer Society.

Applying her study of transformational technology, social change, conflict resolution, socially responsible business, human dynamics, neuroscience and learning theory, Kim began coaching lawyers who wanted to practice law in a more holistic way. She has been on the planning committees (or lead planner) of dozens of conferences. She has talked with thousands of lawyers and encouraged them to work together; while also celebrating and promoting their work whenever possible.

Over the years, Kim has intermittently practiced law, applying the ideas she talks about, using her practice as a laboratory. She has practiced collaborative law. She has worked in restorative justice, preparing the families of murder victims to face the killers and the killers to take responsibility for their crimes to the family members. She has helped entrepreneurs start businesses and create agreements for operating. She has trained hundreds of lawyers and others in new approaches and has coached dozens in incorporating the principles into their own law practices.

"If you ever doubted that a new paradigm of consciousness is emerging, read this book! Laws and the practice of law are at the core of our way of life. In an engaging narrative that will touch the hearts of professionals and lay readers alike, Kim Wright documents the transformation of the legal profession where lawyers and judges across the country are actively ‘harmonizing polarities’ and bringing a new level of humanity to conflict resolution and civil discourse.”

Gayatri Erlandson, PhD, is a psychologist, teacher and advocate for new paradigm living; livingnewstories.com

As a coach, Kim helps lawyers find their authentic voices and tell the whole truth about who they are, what they’re doing and why they’re doing it. She develops and leads continuing legal education programs. She is involved in several think-tanks and support circles and is consulting on a documentary series featuring new models of law. Kim also has been an adjunct professor at three colleges, including her alma mater, Warren Wilson College, in Asheville, NC where she majored in Business Management and International Studies.

In the fall of 2009, the American Bar Association contacted Kim to author the first comprehensive book detailing this new paradigm in law. Her book, Lawyers as Peacemakers: Practicing Holistic, Problem-Solving Law, was released in April 2010 and within a week reached best-seller status on the ABA site. Besides her book and approximately 1,000 documents on CuttingEdgeLaw.com, she has published many articles and chapters in magazines and other books.

Kim acknowledges the life challenges that have helped her grow, including divorces, domestic violence, financial hardships and single parenting. Her title has since expanded to include “grandma.”

To her colleagues, Kim is an inspiration, motivator and catalyst for a new model of law.

[curriculum-vitae available upon request]
It started out as a two-month road trip. Now, more than a year and a half later, Asheville, N.C., attorney J. Kim Wright is finally resting (temporarily) from crisscrossing the country and producing hundreds of video clips while she chronicles the collaborative law and restorative justice movements in the United States.

Wright, 51, is the creator of Cutting Edge Law, a documentary website that features video interview segments, blog entries, podcasts and articles from legal professionals committed to a holistic approach to the practice of law.

"It's an evolution of the legal profession so that lawyers are peacemakers, problem-solvers and healers of conflict," explains Wright, a family-law solo practitioner.

The arguments, analyses and precedents of the adversarial legal system civilized the jousts and duels of earlier times. Now, Wright says, is the moment for lawyers to enter the next stage of legal problem-solving.

"The adversarial system is about polarizing people," she says. "There's been a lot of work done psychologically and socially showing that the adversarial system isn't healthy for anybody."

Wright doesn't think lawyers should completely abandon the current system: "I'm glad Rosa Parks wasn't collaborating," she jokes—but more than 110 judges, law professors and practicing lawyers are featured on the website to discuss collaborative paradigms of law practice and problem-solving innovation in the courts.

"This [collaborative] movement is expressed in a lot of different ways depending on what area of law it's being applied to," Wright says.

For Wright, traditional legal practice appeared to be a miserable existence, one she put off for nearly three years after graduating from law school. "I decided I didn't want to be one of those jerks who was doing the adversarial thing," Wright says. "Not only was I not a lawyer, I was adamantly not a lawyer."

Wright performed a variety of nonlegal jobs for the next couple years, including operating a domestic violence program and recruiting volunteers for the American Heart Association. While in Atlanta for a program, she met the late Forrest Bayard, who described a different way of practicing family law. The Chicago-based lawyer told her that his divorce clients were friendly at the end of proceedings, and that he practiced law with dignity.

"It was like what you see on TV," Wright laughs. "The sky opens, birds fly and butterflies appear. I thought, 'I could do that.'"

Wright immediately took the bar and hung out her shingle. She soon realized, however, that while she could control her relationship with her client, the system wasn't designed to work that way with the other side.

"I did my first custody case: I won and my client was miserable," Wright says. "I said, 'There's got to be something better than this. I did everything they taught me in law school. I won, but she's miserable.'"

When another client who'd won custody told Wright she'd rather give up her children than endure another court battle, Wright reached out to Bayard and began to research other lawyers, including collaborative law pioneer Stuart Webb of Minneapolis, who had successfully incorporated these models into their practice.

As she continued her practice and research, Wright discovered even more alternatives, including ways to
transform juvenile justice into a more balanced and restorative justice system. (In addition to raising her own two children, Wright was mother to 14 other kids—stepchildren, foster children and runaways—from 1977 to 2003.)

One year after attending an International Alliance of Holistic Lawyers conference in 1999, Wright launched her website, Renaissance Lawyer, a 400-page online book she had written on transforming the practice of law.

“I was so painfully shy that I didn’t want anybody to look at it,” Wright says. “But it actually went off like a rocket. A lot of people started calling me, and the site had 100,000 unique visitors each for the first couple of years.” She held a Renaissance Lawyer teleconference in January 2001 that led to formation of an organization under the same name later that year.

The rapid growth of the Web finally caught up to Wright’s ambitions. In 2008 she taught herself Drupal, an open-source content management system, and in March of this year she launched the online platform described on one page as “Cutting Edge Law: A movement. A magazine. A community. A documentary.”

And she did this while on the road. Inspired by the stories of lawyers she’d met at a 2007 restorative justice conference, Wright began to capture her interviews on film.

“I knew we were reaching a tipping point,” Wright says of the growth and support she witnessed at different alternative-practice conferences that year, “and I was ready to do something different.”

Wright closed her law office in early 2008 and, together with freelance videographer and photographer Michael Matthews, traveled to the IAHL conference in Florida as a trial filmmaking run. Matthews edited the hourlong interviews into 10-minute segments, and Wright posted them to the Web.

As the duo collected more and more footage, they quickly realized the interviews not only honored people changing the legal profession but also provided valuable insight and role models for other attorneys.

“Each couple of weeks, we would say: ‘Let’s go to the next place,’” Wright says of the project, which has taken them to 27 states from Texas to Wisconsin and on both coasts. “There was never a plan; it evolved as we went along.”

Today, Matthews is in New Mexico steadfastly editing clips for the website, which receives thousands of unique visitors each month, and compiling tape for several planned documentaries as well as 3-minute mini-versions of each interview.

Wright is back in North Carolina as she completes a new book for ABA Publishing on lawyers as peacemakers. Then she will be off to Key West, Fla., to prepare the next stage of her business plan, which includes harnessing the estimated $1 million worth of content she and Matthews have created.

“My life’s work is about transforming how law is practiced in any way I can,” she says. “Lawyers need to know that they are not alone, that there is a movement in the law that is healthier for them and society—and they can participate in it.”

J. Kim Wright • JKIMWRIGHT@CuttingEdgeLaw.com • (682)-4-NEW-LAW • www.CuttingEdgeLaw.com

media inquiries: media-request@CuttingEdgeLaw.com