INTRODUCTION

Best Interests of Children in the Courts and Seeking the Wisdom of Solomon
By Judge Stephanie Domitrovich

Where do judges seek guidance when handling cases involving children? A best interest standard has evolved over time from a subjective “broad brush” tool to a more consistent, fact-based approach. Authors in this issue share valuable insight in their interpretations of the best interest concept.

FEATURES

WAYMAKER

A Champion for Children: Judge Maurice B. Cohill Jr.
By Judge Stephanie Domitrovich

Judge Cohill became vitally interested in the well-being of children when working at the Termon Avenue Home for Children. This experience led to his great appreciation for juvenile courts and the impact he could have as a judge. He tells readers part of the complexity in dealing with children is appreciating their individual problems and helping them through their unique circumstances.

Best Interest of the Child: A Tribal Judge’s Perspective
By Judge Lisa L. Atkinson

Judge Atkinson writes about the best interest of the child from a tribal court perspective, filtered through a cultural and historical lens of tribal history, custom and tradition, and emerging law. She emphasizes the importance of well-adjusted and culturally grounded children as a connection of past to present, particularly in tribal communities.

Ten Tips for How Judges Can More Effectively Communicate with Children in Court
By Judge Samuel A. Thumma and Chloe Braddock

Communication errors with children in court are widespread and can often be attributed to lacking questioning techniques, the use of confusing language, and misunderstanding. Making children comfortable, using simple language, and speaking literally and directly are a few ways to ensure clear and accurate dialogue with children.

Grandparents Shouldering the Burden: Kinship Placements in Ohio
By W. Milton Nuzum III and Kyana D. Pierson

Many elderly grandparents are now caring for children, particularly when one or both parents suffer from drug addiction, and often have limited income and health issues of their own. Judges must be aware of the full circumstances and do what is best for children in each individual case.

#BestInterest
By Judge Linda Marquis and Yasnai C. Rodriguez-Zaman

A surge of technology now surrounds the lives of children. With an increase in the use of social media as evidence in family law matters, there are evidentiary issues that family judges face in admitting such evidence.
26  What Judges Need to Know About Supported Decision-Making, and Why
By Kristen Booth Glen
Guardianships have come under recent scrutiny due to the fact that people with guardians are often stripped of their legal and civil rights. The ABA House of Delegates helped promote supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianships when it passed a resolution in 2017, with the goal of helping vulnerable adults be protected less restrictively.

STANDING COLUMNS

PROFILE IN JUDICIAL COURAGE

33  Judge Thomas Tang
By John W. Rogers
Judge Thomas Tang made an unpopular decision in 1968 when he chose correction over imprisonment and sentenced two minors to probation who were on trial for murder. Judge Tang stood his ground and ended up losing his seat on the bench due to his ruling.

TECHNOLOGY

36  The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Gauging the Risk of Recidivism
By Judge Noel L. Hillman
Guest columnist Judge Hillman warns against the use of employing artificial intelligence in sentencing for several reasons and concludes that wisdom, critical inquiry, experience, and intuition are better for predicting a future of crime, for now at least.

JUDICIAL ETHICS

40  The Role of the Judge in Children’s Matters
By Marla N. Greenstein
When dealing with matters involving children, a judge’s impartial decision-making requires a disciplined evaluation of the facts while acknowledging the emotional realities. Ultimately, the judge must determine what actions are in the best interest of the child and communicate these findings with directness and sensitivity.

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