Program Spotlight: Oklahoma Lawyers for Children

By Don R. Nicholson II, Esq. and Buddy Faye Foster, Executive Director

Oklahoma Lawyers for Children was co-founded in 1997 by D. Kent Meyers and Don R. Nicholson II, both of whom are attorneys in private practice in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Don was beginning to think about slowing down his practice of law and wanted to become active in some arena as a volunteer. He spoke with a good friend of his, Judge Alan Couch, about volunteer programs and Judge Couch recommended that Don become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to advocate for abused and neglected children in Oklahoma County. Don went through the training to become a CASA in 1995 and accepted his first case shortly thereafter. The first case involved terrible physical abuse but parental rights were terminated and fine parents adopted the young children. However the second and third cases were a different matter.

Don Nicholson remembers, “When the CASA office called to ask me about accepting these cases I had no idea where my involvement would lead me. The cases had opened in 1993 with eleven (11) children being placed in the State’s custody. I accepted the

New Study Explores Juveniles’ Competence to Stand Trial

By Hillary Gulden

In March 2001, a jury in Broward County, Florida convicted fourteen-year-old, Lionel Tate, of the first degree felony murder of six-year-old Tiffany Eunick. Lionel became the youngest person in this country sentenced to life without parole. This and other high-profile cases involving juvenile offenders have sparked several debates about our nation’s recent responses to juvenile crime. One of the more publicized issues is whether a child at a certain age has the capacity to formulate the criminal culpability which is a keystone in the criminal courts.

The accused’s right to a fair trial is one of the foundations in criminal law, and is predicated on the defendant’s competency to stand trial. The United States Supreme Court adopted the following standard for determination of competency in
To Our Readers:

Please accept this revised Summer 2003 edition of the Children’s Rights Litigation Committee newsletter with my sincere apologies. The original edition contained a printer error in the front-page article "New Study Explores Juveniles' Competence to Stand Trial" that resulted in spacing problems in the middle of the article and caused the end of the article and the bio of author Hillary Gulden to be cut off completely.

I apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

Catherine Krebs
Editor
Children’s Rights Litigation Committee Newsletter
Program Spotlight (continued from page 1)

Oklahoma County.

I learned that while the Public Defenders office was statutorily mandated to represent every deprived child in Oklahoma County, unless there was a conflict, there were only three (3) Public Defenders assigned to the juvenile court. That meant, in 1997, that each PD was trying to represent about 800 children. This was without legal assistants, secretaries, computers or even a copy machine. And they were in court usually four (4) days out of five (5). After learning all this, I began to understand why I could never reach the Public Defender assigned to the CASA case I was working on. During this time I was sharing my frustration with my good friend, D. Kent Meyers who is also an attorney. We both went on a Child Watch Tour organized by the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division in 1997. We toured several facilities, which provide services to children and families in need, including the Juvenile Justice Center. Kent and I then began to ask what we as attorneys could do to help the Public Defenders and ultimately the children. Kent suggested ‘that we do what we do best, which is practice law.’ At that time we created Oklahoma Lawyers for Children (OLFC).”

After several meetings with the Oklahoma County Public Defender, Robert Ravitz, Associate District Judge Nan Patton (Presiding Judge over the Juvenile Court), Assistant District Attorney, Wes Lane and representatives of the Department of Human Services, Don and Kent met with the Presiding Judge of Oklahoma County, Niles Jackson. Judge Jackson issued an Order in September of 1997 giving Oklahoma Lawyers for Children the authority to assist the Public Defenders in representing deprived children. Two additional Orders have since been signed expanding the role of OLFC volunteers to include involvement in the District Courts when requested to assist in adoptions, guardianships and other custody matters.

Don recollects, “After the first Order was signed in September of 1997, Kent and I began to talk to other attorneys to recruit volunteers who would commit to taking one case for OLFC. Kent’s firm, Crowe and Dunlevy, quickly became supportive of our efforts and has continued to be a major part of OLFC. In recruiting other attorneys, we approached the leaders of the larger firms in Oklahoma City, to encourage their partners and associates to become volunteers. OLFC took an unusual approach to recruitment; we recruited the older, more experienced attorneys rather than young new attorneys. One of the reasons for this was that when we ask an attorney to accept a case they do so with the understanding that any expense involved will be paid from either their pocket or their firm’s. So, in addition to giving away their time, they might also have to pay some out of pocket expenses, depending on the need in the case.

Kent and I were hopeful that we would be able to recruit at least 25 or 30 attorneys to help us shortly after the first Order was signed. We were pleasantly surprised to have 50 volunteers signed up within about the first month. We then realized that, while we had recruited some of the cream of the crop in the legal profession, most had very little knowledge of the juvenile system or the statutes governing its operation. So, we put together our first CLE seminar and began to train our volunteers in the area of representing deprived children. We continue to provide free or low cost CLEs at least twice a year to our volunteers.”

In addition to the attorneys who volunteered, other professionals in the legal profession began to hear about OLFC and contacted Don and Kent about how they could also become involved. These professionals included court reporters willing to donate their time for depositions, legal assistants who were willing to assist the attorneys in preparing the cases, and private investigators who volunteer their time to provide personal service such as locating missing witnesses or parents. Even copy companies came forward to donate copies and other printing services. Again all of those services were donated; no expense was ever passed on to OLFC. Currently, OLFC has over 350 volunteer attorneys, 11 court reporter firms, 18 private investigator firms, and 3 copy companies who donate their time, talent and resources to help children.

The program was also expanded over 2 years ago to include non-attorney volunteers, who are trained to interview children at the Pauline Mayer Children’s Shelter shortly after they are taken into custody in order to provide information to the attor-
represent them at the Show Cause hearing. We currently have about 70 volunteers who are available to go to the shelter everyday, seven (7) days a week, holidays included, to talk with and comfort these children. The volunteers do not interview the child about the reason the child is in custody, but instead learn of relatives or close friends who could possibly be a placement for the child. That information is passed on to the show cause attorney and the Child Welfare worker so that an Initial Kinship Assessment (home study) can be done. In addition, OLFC provides a volunteer attorney at the Show Cause hearing, which is something that had not been provided before.

OLFC learned that it often took 30 to 90 days to complete a Kinship Assessment home study before the child could be placed, and that it cost the State $300 per Assessment. We felt that was unacceptable so OLFC approached the Director of Child Welfare about training some of our non-attorney volunteers to perform these assessments for free and provide the information to the Department in a more timely manner. OLFC now has about 55 trained volunteers available to do home studies. Both the Department and OLFC train these volunteers. The average time for one of our volunteers to complete a home study is four (4) days. This greatly reduces the time that a child spends in the shelter or in a regular foster home. Since starting the program in September of 2000 OLFC has completed 694 home studies, which involved 1187 children. This has saved the State over $208,000.”

When OLFC first started, Don and Kent took turns assigning cases to volunteers and their office staff kept track of the information. Later a part time person was hired at Don’s office to coordinate all the cases and volunteers. As the program grew, it became evident that a full time employee would be needed to keep up with the volunteers and the cases assigned. This meant that funding to provide an office and a full time salary would be needed. One of the first donors was the Bank of Oklahoma/Kaiser Foundation, which conditioned its donation by requiring OLFC to start a similar program in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Kent and Don, along with many members of the Board of Directors, worked with Tulsa attorneys and that program in now a reality. Tulsa Lawyers for Children is a separate entity, but OLFC continues to provide assistance when requested. Additional help was also received from the American Bar Association in the form of donated computers and software, speakers at our seminars and introductions to other programs across the county. OLFC has one major fundraiser each year, which is a dinner and awards program held at the Governor’s mansion. An outstanding volunteer attorney is honored each year at this event. Because OLFC is a 501 (c) 3 organization, donations are received from a variety of sources, and the program is also funded through grants. Currently OLFC has two (2) full time employees. The annual budget is approximately $70,000 of which salaries and benefits account for the bulk. OLFC recently became part of a three (3) year grant involving seven (7) other pro bono programs across the United States. This group is known as the National Children’s Law Network. One of the goals of the group is to establish a procedure to help other areas establish pro bono programs to assist in the representation of children.

Don reflects, “The more involved I become in children’s issues, the more I realize the overwhelming need for better representation for children in so many areas of their lives all across the country. This representation benefits the volunteer lawyers as well. As one of our volunteers said after completing a very difficult case, ‘This case helped me remember why I decided to become a lawyer’. Another volunteer stated that he realized while working on his case that this was probably the first time he had a client that he knew without a doubt was not guilty. Since OLFC was started in 1997 our volunteer attorneys have made in-kind donations of over $5,000,000 had the attorneys been charging for their time and expenses. Kent and I are reminded every day of the wonderful commitment the legal profession in Oklahoma County has made to OLFC and to the children whose lives we touch.”

Don R. Nicholson II has practiced law in Oklahoma for over 40 years. In addition to his JD he is also a CPA.

Buddy Faye Foster has been a child advocate for over 15 years. She and Don went through CASA training 9 years ago, which is how they met. Af-
New Study Explores Juveniles’ Competence to Stand Trial (continued from page 1)

Dusky v. United States, 80 S.Ct. 788, 789:

[W]hether [the accused] has the sufficient present ability to consult with his lawyer with a reasonable degree of rational understanding – and whether he has a rational as well as factual understanding of the proceedings against him.

Essentially, a defendant must have an understanding both of the charges against him and the potential consequences of his decisions within the process (such as the choice between a plea or a trial), and the ability to assist his attorney in his own defense.

The majority of adult defendants found incompetent to stand trial have been diagnosed with either mental illness or disability. The influx of children and adolescents into the adult criminal system challenges the traditional format for applying the competency standard. Many young offenders, as a result of their age alone, lack the ability to properly comprehend the judicial process itself and the nature of the charges against them. Competency to stand trial relies on numerous variables such as intelligence, age, and education. Because the addition of children and adolescents into the adult criminal system is relatively recent, the law and standard procedures for determining competency do not adequately address their needs. Judges often struggle with the legislature’s strong lien towards prosecuting children as adults, the ambiguous competency standards, and defense attorneys’ assertions regarding the competency (or lack thereof) of their client. This struggle seems to result in a leaning against rulings of incompetency based on age and maturity leaving younger defendants in jeopardy of being denied their right to a fair trial.

A recent study compares the capacities of juveniles and adults as trial defendants, and explores the relevance of psychosocial maturity as a contributing factor in a juvenile offender’s ability to stand trial. The idea that psychosocial maturity affects a juvenile’s fundamental ability to comprehend and rationalize the scope of their criminal prosecution is revolutionary. This study confirms what many trial practitioners already know and confront on a regular basis. Funded by the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice, “Juveniles’ Competence to Stand Trial: A Comparison of Adolescents’ and Adults’ Capacities as Trial Defendants” was published in March, 2003 by the journal of Law and Human Behavior, http://www.mac-adoldev-juvjustice.org/ The study was designed to address three questions: Do adolescents differ from young adults in abilities to participate in their trials?; If so, what types of youths manifest significant differences from young adults?; and What kinds of deficits in abilities are salient for law, policy, and practice in this area? Id. at 8.

A team of nine researchers studied approximately 1,400 males and females at four sites – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles, California, Northern and Eastern Virginia, and Northern Florida. Id. at 10. Half of the study participants were in jail or juvenile detention centers at the time of the study, while the other half were residing in the community. Id. at 8-9. Of the 1,400 participants, 927 were between the ages of 11 and 17 (“youths”) and 466 were between the ages of 18 and 24 (“young adults”). Id. at 9. The cross section of participants was designed to achieve a high level of diversity amongst the participants to minimize error. Id. at 10.

Researchers submitted two batteries of standardized tests to the study participants once or twice a week over a period of eleven months. Id. at 15. The results of the evaluations were used to determine the capacities of the participants’ relevant to the legal standards for competency. (More information about these tools can be found on pages 7-8, 12-14 of the study.)

The first assessment, known as the MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool-Criminal Adjudication (MacCAT-CA), addresses a criminal defendant’s functional abilities to participate in a trial and assist in his or her defense by analyzing three basic areas: understanding, reasoning, and appreciation. Id. at 12. The MacCAT-CA is divided into twenty-two (22) items organized according to the three evaluated areas. Id. The Understanding and Reasoning items provide the subject with a single hypothetical fact pattern in which an individual is arrested. Id. at 13. After hearing the vignette, the child is interviewed about the individual’s experiences and choices following the arrest. Id. The Appreciation items are based upon the examinee’s own legal situation and not a hypothetical scenario. The responses are evaluated to determine the subject’s fundamental capacities and abilities.

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New Study Explores Juveniles’ Competence to Stand Trial

The second evaluation, known as the MacArthur Judgment Evaluation (MacJEN), also uses vignettes, however they all involve a fictional third person. Id. The researchers ask the examinee to give advice to the fictional suspect regarding three common legal decisions in the criminal system, specifically: responding to police, disclosing information during consultation with a defense attorney, and responding to a plea agreement for reduced consequences in exchange for a guilty plea and testimony against other defendants. Id. Based on an analysis of the examinee’s responses a determination is made as to their psychosocial maturity. Id.

At the end of eleven months, researchers’ findings concluded that one third (1/3) of 11 to 13-year-olds and one fifth (1/5) of those aged 14 to 15 lack the requisite abilities to understand and participate in the trial process Id. at 29. In other words, these juveniles are similarly impaired in their comprehension and analysis of the criminal justice system as are adults with serious mental illnesses who would likely be found incompetent to stand trial. Youths ages 15 and younger revealed a significant impairment in their ability to serve as competent defendants when compared to older adolescents and young adults. Id. The competency levels of adolescents at 16 and 17 years of age, however, did not differ significantly from those of young adults ages 18 to 24. Id.

The conclusions of the study will not surprise juvenile advocates. Unfortunately, determining the competency of a child in the juvenile and adult criminal systems cannot be decided over an eleven month period. Rather, most defendants (adults and juveniles) are likely to see one or two psychologists for a total of two hours. In those two hours, the mental health professional makes a conclusion as to the defendant’s capacity to understand, reason, and appreciate the criminal process. These opinions are then weighed heavily by the court in making its ruling. Since the bases for determining an individual’s competency cannot be metrically calculated, this short time period in which mental health professionals must evaluate an individual’s competency leaves room for grave error. Thomas Grisso, director of the study and a Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, stated “This study confronts policy makers and courts with an uncomfortable reality. There’s a U.S. Constitutional requirement recognizing that trials are unfair if defendants don’t have a certain level of capacity for meaningful understanding and decision-making. Our findings suggest that states need to take a closer look at current policies and practices that don’t recognize immaturity as a possible reason for incompetence to stand trial.” Temple Times, March 6, 2003, Vol 33, Number 21, Barbara Baals, www.temple.edu/temple_times/3-6-03/juvjustice.html

The study recommends changes in policy and legislation that would provide safeguards to protect the younger age groups that are less likely to be competent to stand trial. Some procedures advocated in the study include a minimum age for the trial of youths in adult court and mandatory competency evaluations prior to transferring a juvenile into adult court, as is the practice in the State of Virginia. “Juveniles’ Competence to Stand Trial: A Comparison of Adolescents’ and Adults’ Capacities as Trial Defendants,” supra at 33, citation omitted. Dr. Laurence Steinberg, a director of the study and a professor at Temple University, said, “This study does not provide a definitive answer about the age at which juveniles might be tried as adults, because that is a determination that involves many considerations, and competence to stand trial is just one of them.” Baals, supra. Steinberg added that the MacArthur Network is currently researching other relevant issues, including the age at which a youth develops the psychological ability to be culpable for their criminal conduct. Id.

The conclusions and implications of this study may bring policymakers, legislators, and judges one step closer to relinquishing the harsh standards of competency and punishment for juvenile offenders. The media attention that has surrounded this study will hopefully work to bring an in depth view to the realities faced by juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system. Certainly the list of children facing the death penalty and serving serious prison sentences is growing every year. This study is a step on a long road to achieving true justice for children in the criminal justice system.
Announcements

♦ The ABA Section of Litigation is seeking applicants for a consultant to direct its Litigation Assistance Partnership Project (LAPP). LAPP is designed to match pro bono resources with major public interest cases that could not be handled without substantial pro bono assistance. Applicants should have had previous experience in a public interest or pro bono practice. Additional information about this position can be found at the Sections website, http://www.abanet.org/litigation/public/project.html. Resumes should be submitted to Burt Blanchard, ABA Section of Litigation, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611. The American Bar Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

♦ The Working Group of the Children’s Rights Litigation Committee continues to assist lawyers who are working to begin children’s law projects. The group consists of experts who have begun projects of their own and who can act as mentors for those just starting out. The expertise of the group includes how to start a nonprofit center, how to incorporate a pro bono project into an already existing program, how to start a law school clinic and how to begin a pro bono program within a law firm. Working group members can also assist with training pro bono volunteers. Please call our committee director, Catherine Krebs (202-547-3060) if you would like information on how working group members can assist you or if you would like a copy of the recently produced memo, Starting a Children’s Law Project at Your Law Firm.

♦ The ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty and the Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children has published "Educating Children Without Housing: A Primer on Legal Requirements and Implementation Strategies for Educators, Advocates and Policy-makers." The book highlights the recently reauthorized McKinney Act and its new laws concerning the education rights of homeless children and youth. The commission and the steering committee have sponsored a few training sessions on the book, and plan to present another training at this year’s ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. To order the book go on-line to www.abanet.org/homeless.

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American Bar Association 2003 Annual Meeting
San Francisco, CA, August 7—12, 2003

There are several programs focused on children’s at this year’s Conference

Friday, August 8

- 9:30am to 11:30am Representing the Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youth: Federal Law and Legal Strategies

Saturday, August 9

- 9:30am ABA Children’s Breakfast hosted by the Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children
- 3:30pm to 5:30 pm Interviewing and Examining the Child Witness

Sunday, August 10

- 11am to 1pm Second-Parent Adoption: A Pathway to Family Equality
- 2:30pm to 5:00pm The Uniform Parentage Act
- 2pm to 5pm Making Juvenile Justice a Priority

For Updated Program Information go to www.abanet.org/annual/2003/home.html
**Announcements**

♦ The 14th annual KIDS COUNT Data Book released on June 11, 2003 reports that while national trends in child well-being have been positive over the past decade, there is still wide variation among states along several critical indicators. Despite the positive trends of the last decade, the report makes it clear that this progress is fragile, threatened by what the Casey Foundation terms "the high cost of being poor." Although more than 2.5 million parents have transitioned from welfare to work in the last decade, these and other low-income working families have to pay more for basic goods such as housing, food and transportation, hindering their efforts to build financial security for their children. View the 2003 KIDS COUNT Data Book today at http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/databook/.

♦ On May 21, New York Governor George E. Pataki, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye announced a new plan, called “Adoption Now,” that aims to hasten adoption of 5,000 children whose biological parents’ parental rights have been terminated. Children’s advocacy organizations praised the plan, noting that in New York some children have lived with foster parents for up to seven years after parental rights were terminated. The plan grew out of a series of meetings that Judge Kaye held last year with the New York Office of Children and Family Services and the New York City Administration for Children’s Services to identify ways to streamline the adoption process. Participants determined that such factors as a lack of lawyers willing to participate as assigned counsel in adoption cases due to low pay rates, a lack of trial transcripts, and lengthy waits for court appearances have stalled adoptions. The State has agreed to make more trial transcripts available, and Judge Kaye says that newly legislated higher rates for assigned counsel will attract more lawyers to participate in adoption cases. Jim Dwyer, Plan to Speed Adoptions Stuck in Limbo Will Affect “Legal Orphans,” The New York Times, May 21, 2003, page reference unavailable. This information is taken from the Brennan Center E-Lert for the week of May 23, 2003, authored by Jennie Rabinowitz and edited by Laura Abel and David Udell. For more information about the Brennan Center visit http://www.brennancenter.org

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**Wanted:**

**Content for the Children’s Rights Litigation Committee Newsletter**

Topics for articles can include:

- Unique or innovative children’s law projects or clinics
- The experience of children’s *pro bono* attorneys
- Information of interest to children’s lawyers or *pro bono* attorneys

Please contact our editor, Catherine Krebs at 202-547-3060 or catherinekrebs@prodigy.net if you have an idea for an article, or if you would like to write an article, but do not have a topic in mind.
From the Chairs

Recently, the Criminal Justice Section Juvenile Justice Center of the ABA proposed new ABA policy that considers the question: Are African-Americans and Latinos disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system? Many of us would have guessed that the answer was “yes”. The proposed Recommendations and Report make a persuasive case that in almost every state, children of color are over-represented in the juvenile justice system.

What do we mean by saying that children of color are over-represented? If you compare the percentages of African-American and Hispanic children in a community with the percentage of such children in the juvenile justice system, you will find that such children are vastly over-represented in the juvenile justice system. In fact, they are over-represented at every stage of the system from arrest, court referral, clerk’s hearings, chargings, detentions, adjudications, transfers to criminal court, disposition, and sentencing to group homes or residential placements. As an example, in 1996 youth of color comprised about one third of the juvenile population, yet accounted for two thirds of the detained and committed population.

Not only are children of color over-represented in the system, they receive harsher treatment in the juvenile justice system. Even if the offense is the same, African-Americans are far more likely than whites to be charged in juvenile court. The same is true for Latino youths. For example, in 1993 Latino youths charged with drug offenses were admitted to public facilities at 13 times the rate for white youths, and for violent offenses, the admissions rate was five times the rate for white youths. The Report of the Criminal Justice Section establishes beyond doubt that race affects the processing of youth at all stages of the juvenile justice system.

What explains the differences in the way Black and Latino youths are treated? Some argue that Black and Latino youth commit more crimes, and are therefore prosecuted and confined more often than are whites. However, research suggests that other dynamics may be at play—including differential police policies and practices (e.g. targeting patrols in low-income neighborhoods), location of offenses (e.g. youth of color selling and using drugs on street corners, and white youth selling and using drugs in homes) or racial bias within the justice system. It is correct that more Black and Latino children are subject to risk factors associated with crime such as living in communities characterized by poverty and social disorganization. This does not, however, appear to explain all the differences. It has been reported that white youths report using drugs at six to seven times the rate of African-Americans, but African-American youths are arrested at much higher rates than are whites for drug crimes. For a discussion of these factors, see And Justice for Some, Yamagata & Jones, 2001.

Is there anything that can be done to improve this situation? It appears that there is hope. In 1992, the Annie E. Casey Foundation developed the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (“JDAI”) to help local jurisdictions establish better justice systems. Information about JDAI can be found at http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/jdai.

Counties that have adopted JDAI strategies have made progress toward the goal of eliminating the disproportionate representation and disparate treatment of youths of color. For example in 1994, youths of color in Multnomah County, Oregon (Portland) were 31% more likely to be detained than whites. By 2000, after the work with JDAI to reform its juvenile justice system, both youths of color and whites were detained at the identical and lower rate of 22%. Similar success stories can be found in Santa Cruz, California and other cities.

What can lawyers and local bar associations do to improve the way in which local juvenile justice systems handle cases? As an initial matter, they can learn about the issue. The JDAI web cite mentioned above and the proposed ABA policy Recommendation and Report of the Criminal Justice Section of the ABA [Juvenile Justice Center, Criminal Justice Section, American Bar Association, Proposed Policy Report and Recommendation re: Disparate Treatment of Racial and Ethnic Minority Youth in the Justice System, (2003) (on file with the Juvenile Justice Center, 740 15th Street Washington, DC 20005) (approved to be found at www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvejus)] are excellent places to start. After learning about the issue, they can work with judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police, probation officers and other officials to discuss ways to raise awareness about racial disparities and to develop strategies that have been shown in other communities to reduce and eventually eliminate such disparities.

Fortunately, a lawyer or bar association who wants to do something is not starting from scratch. Thanks to the work done in other communities and the reports mentioned above, we know what strategies have been shown to produce results. If you want a project that has an excellent chance of being successful and that will make a real difference in the lives of children, disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system is your project. We urge you to get involved and we offer the services of our Committee to help.

Geoffrey Vitt is a partner at Vitt & Rattigan, PLC, in Norwich, VT. Marguerite Gualtieri is a staff attorney at the Support Center for Child Advocates in Philadelphia, PA.
MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS LITIGATION COMMITTEE

To receive information on membership, please send this completed form to the address below

NAME: ________________________________
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Please send me information regarding membership and the Committee

Please send me information on how to start a children’s law center in my area

Are you a member of the ABA? ______ yes ______ no
Are you a member of the Section of Litigation? ______ yes ______ no
If you are a member of the Section of Litigation do you wish to be enrolled as a member? ______ yes ______ not at this time

For Members Only:

Join a Subcommittee

NAME: ________________________________
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I wish to join the following subcommittee:

__________ Immigration
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__________ Child Welfare
__________ Juvenile Justice
__________ Communications (e.g. newsletter and website)

Upon completion, please return form to:
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