



Professor Linda Elrod



Children & Family Law Center

The Washburn University School of Law Children and Family Law Center gives law students a variety of opportunities to learn about and become involved in family law activities throughout the year. In addition to several family law specialty courses and the Washburn Law Clinic, students are encouraged to be involved in watching court cases, attending continuing education programs, and meeting with alumni and family law practitioners.

The Family Law Student Society, under the leadership of Kelly Driscoll '05 and Emily Smith '05, hosted several lunch speakers this spring. In February, Dr. Bud Dale, a clinical psychologist, discussed the use of child custody evaluations in contested custody cases and Sarah Sargent and Shirlon Douglas-Harris from Kansas Children's Service League spoke about interracial adoption, focusing on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act, amended in 1996 by the Interethnic Placement Act, and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

In March, Laura Shaneyfelt and Rachael Pirner spoke to students about the many issues that arise during a surrogacy relationship and contrasted the surrogacy process with adoption. Molly Wood, who teaches in the Elder Law Clinic at KU, spoke about elder law issues, including care, estate plan-

ning, long-term financing (Medicare, Medicaid, and division of assets), and guardianships and conservatorships. Adjunct Professor Bill Ebert, family law attorney and certified mediator, hosted Larry Rute '73, Lori Yockers '91, and judges Evelyn Wilson '85 and Jean Schmidt '82 who discussed the uses of mediation and family law practice.

Family law practitioners shared their "real" world experiences with students. Brad Short, Overland Park family lawyer, explained how to use the child support calculator he developed and provided students some practical tips on settling cases. Suzanne Dwyer '92, Wichita, informed students about the highs and lows of practicing family law and discussed fees and time commitments. Larry Rute '73, Associates in Dispute Resolution, spoke about ways to incorporate mediation in a family law practice, collaborative law and negotiating tough cases. He also gave an overview of arbitration, collaborative law and case management.

In April, Joanna Penn of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Shawnee County provided information for students who are interested in being trained as CASAs. Nearly 70,000 national CASA volunteers serve approximately 280,000 (of the 500,000) abused or neglected children. CASA



Top of Page L to R above: name & Name??

L to R: Larry Rute '73
Lori Yockers '91
and the Hon. Evelyn Wilson '85

gives children a voice in the court system. Several Washburn Law students currently serve as CASAs in Shawnee County. Dallas Bauer '06, co-director of the Family Law Student Center for 2005-2006, has been a CASA the last two years. She received the 2005 public interest externship and will be working with attorney Kevin Cook '99 assisting with child in need of care cases in Shawnee County.

Over twenty students entered the write-on competition for student staff positions on the *Family Law Quarterly*, a publication of the American Bar Association Family Law Section, which is edited at Washburn Law. The issues this year have included international law topics, parent alienation, domestic violence as well as the usual collection of the family law cases across the country in the "Law in 50 States" issue.

The Children and Family Law Center cosponsored several continuing legal education programs that students had the opportunity to attend. On March 4, 2005, the Center cosponsored a Juvenile Law Conference with the Kansas Association of Counsel for Children. On April 1, 2005, the Center sponsored a half day program on "Representing the Incapacitated Client." Professor Sheila Reynolds began with a discussion of the special ethical problems that can arise in representing persons without full capacity. Professor Aliza Organick spoke on capacity problems with child clients in the juvenile courts. Adjunct Professor Kirk Lowry '87 spoke about representing the disabled client. On April 15, family law students had the opportunity to participate in a Case Management Seminar in Lawrence.



Molly Wood

This spring the Washburn Law Clinic offered twenty students "hands on" experience with family law cases and live clients. Professors Aliza Organick, Lynette Petty and Sheila Reynolds each supervised several interns working on family law cases.

The Family Law Seminar class taught by Professor Nancy Maxwell included a session on "Marriage in Other Cultures" with Professors Robert Rhee and Alex Glashausser speaking about marriage in Korea and Japan, respectively. "Prohibited Marriages" included Law Library Director John Christensen and Professor Ali Khan providing information about polygamy in the Church of the Latter Day Saints and under Islamic law and Professors Ronald Griffin and Aliza Organick discussing the history of and their personal experiences with interracial marriage.

One of the major goals for next year will be to offer more child advocacy training to prepare lawyers to be effective advocates for children generally and to provide high quality legal representation of child clients. In addition, the Children and Family Law Center hopes to start a Child Advocacy Fellows Program to attract students interested in child and family advocacy.

To learn more about the Center or to volunteer to mentor students with a focus in the family law area of practice, please contact Director, Professor Linda Elrod, at linda.elrod@washburn.edu.