

Professor Linda Elrod



Children & Family Law Center

The Washburn Children and Family Law Center offered law students a variety of opportunities to learn about and become involved in family law activities throughout the Fall semester. In addition to several family law specialty courses and clinic, students were encouraged to become involved in watching court cases, attending continuing education programs, and meeting with alumni and family law practitioners.

This fall, the Kansas Supreme Court heard several appeals in family law cases. Students read the cases from the Court of Appeals, had access to the briefs, and the chance to hear the oral arguments in the Kansas Supreme Court. Following one set of arguments, Lynn Ward '90, Partner in the Wichita firm of Morris, Laing, talked to students about her case and offered insights into the appeal of family law cases generally.

In early September, Kelly McDonald, on behalf of the Children and Family Law Center, attended the 27th Annual Children's Law Conference of the National Association of Counsel for Children in Las Vegas, Nevada. Kelly will be speaking to members of the Family Law Student Society about her experiences this spring. She notes:

"The conference provided an excellent opportunity to meet experienced family law attorneys and judges from across the nation with a significant number of conference attendees practice in Colorado and California. In my opinion, conference highlights included presentations by young members of an organization called "Voices of Youth" describing recommended best practices for attorneys that work with juveniles from the perspective of young adults who have been through the system, and the closing presentation by John Myers discussing recent changes in children's legal practice after the Crawford v. Washington decision."

Continuing the tradition started last year of inviting alumni and other distinguished guests to make presentations, Larry Rute '73, Associates in Dispute Resolution, explored ways to incorporate mediation in a family law practice. He also gave an overview of arbitration, collaborative law and case management. Several students followed up on questions at lunch.

Kelly McDonald '05



In September, the Family Law Student Society hosted two speakers. Linda Pease, of the Topeka CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program, spoke about the upcoming opportunities for law students to get involved with CASA training. Several Washburn Law students currently serve as CASA's in Shawnee County. The Center is working with CASA to provide training for Spring 2006. The Honorable Dan Mitchell '73 spoke about the importance of the juvenile court and the roles of the judges, lawyers and CASA's in helping children in need of care and juvenile offenders.

The Washburn Law Clinic continues to offer 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. In addition, more than fifteen students served as staff for the *Family Law Quarterly*, a publication of the American Bar Association Family Law Section, which is edited at Washburn.



Lynn Ward '90

The Children and Family Law Center co-sponsored several continuing legal education programs that students had the opportunity to attend. Students participated with over fifty attorneys in the 17th Annual Family Law Institute on October 15th in Topeka. The "Show Me the Money" program covered some of the current problem areas in dealing with the financial aspects of divorce. Lisa Keys, a Kansas City attorney, provided a comprehensive overview of the tax consequences of

property settlement agreements in divorce. Jim Rankin '76, Partner at Foulston Siefkin, spoke about employee benefit plans and Qualified Domestic Relations Orders. Brad Short, Short & Borth, of Overland Park spoke about the types of business entities most lawyers were likely to encounter in divorce cases, with particular emphasis on Subchapter S corporations and valuation issues. Lori Justice, of Crow, Clothier & Bates of Leavenworth, provided the framework for understanding the myriad of issues involved in military divorces, from pay to pensions. Professor Sheila Reynolds finished the program with a discussion of malpractice liability for failure to discover and handle financial issues.

Distinguished Professor Linda Elrod made several presentations on behalf of the Center on various family law issues. At the Women Attorney's Annual Conference in Lindsborg, Kansas, in July, she teamed with nationally known psychologist Dr. Janet Johnston whose pioneering research with high conflict couples has provided the framework for court reforms and mediation programs nationwide. Dr. Johnston discussed therapies that work with high conflict couples and profiles of parents likely to abduct their own children. Elrod outlined the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and explained the reasoning behind some of the current cases. At the Council of Appellate Staff Attorneys in Park City, Utah, Elrod engaged in a debate with Brigham Young University Professor on the "The Future of Marriage after *Goodridge v. Massachusetts*." She also discussed current developments under the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

The spring semester brings more activities for the Family Law Student Society and the Center as it sponsors a program on Juvenile Law Issues with the Kansas Counsel for Children in early March. There are increasing opportunities for alumni, faculty and student interactions.

To learn more about the Center, or to volunteer, contact Director, Professor Linda Elrod at 785-231-1010 ext. 1838 or linda.elrod@washburn.edu