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The “Rainbows and Sunshine” Issue

Good Morning, Sunshine!



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Did you miss it? The Fourth Circuit Court was on the news! The News Channel 5 team graciously welcomed our staff and a few friends into their studio for the opportunity to meet their team, see what the news station is like behind the scenes, and even make an appearance on Good Morning Sunshine! View the clip by clicking below or scanning the QR code.



Scan here:



Speaking of sunshine, be sure to spend some time outside this summer! Recent studies have shown the importance of time observing and participating in nature. From a hike at Radnor to standing on a street corner, “just 15 minutes of exposure to urban nature reliably brought down anxiety, depression, stress, anger, and fatigue, while increasing vitality, vigor, positive mood, and restorative effect” ([Time Magazine, 2026](#)).



Happy Pride Month!



“A found family is every bit as beautiful as a born family. Even more so, perhaps. Stories are about choices, after all, and to choose to be family is as wonderful a story as can be told.”

— Dan Gemeinhart, *The Midnight Children*



Since the uprising at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan on June 28, 1969, and the subsequent inaugural Pride Parade exactly one year later, June has nearly become synonymous with the LGBTQ+ community. The first parade, held in remembrance of the 1969 uprising, exemplified the pride, solidarity, and beauty of the queer community and brought attention to their ongoing struggles for safety and acceptance. Today, Pride is celebrated every June all around the country and globe, echoing the same messages as the maiden parade.



Activists Marsha P. Johnson and Silvia Rivera at the first Pride Parade on June 28, 1970.



Celebrations after gay marriage is legalized across the U.S. on June 26, 2015.

Of those messages, the right to family is cornerstone. Many members of the LGBTQ+ community lose connection to blood family after coming out. As such, the concept of “chosen family” was born. There is a strong history of this community choosing to live and spend holidays together and support each other as if they were related. Therefore, the ability to create families that are granted the same rights and privileges as non-LGBTQ+ families, especially through marriage and adoption, is crucial.

As the only court in Davidson County to hear adoption cases, we are proud to play a role in the creation of these families. The necessity for permanency for children in loving and stable homes guides the work we do as a court. On adoption days, many of the cases we hear are adoptions for same-sex couples, including confirmatory adoption hearings. These adoptions solidify parental rights across state lines and safeguard permanency for children. We are grateful for the thousands of same-sex couples across Davidson County who are committed to providing safety for children, and we are proud to play a small role in that permanency.

Happy Pride Month!

Meet our Interns!

We are excited to welcome *FOUR* interns to the Fourth Circuit Staff this summer! Three interns are joining us through the MAC PowerYouth internship program and one, Sydney Lee, is a rising 2L at Belmont University College of Law. Get to know them below!



Sydney Lee

My name is Sydney Lee, a rising 2L at Belmont University College of Law. I sought to intern with Judge Williams to not only learn professionalism in the courtroom, but also to learn how to support and advocate for others through my legal career. I believe learning more about the impacts of the divorce process and resources available to the community are essential to understanding Nashville, and how to best serve people not only in the courtroom but also impacting their life positively outside the courtroom. I am excited to learn how to best support people through such an important process in their life and provide the best service I can!

Sterling Barrett

My name is Sterling Barrett, and I am a rising high school junior. I previously attended Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet School and will be transferring to Whites Creek High School for the upcoming school year. For the past four years, I have been involved in the Southern Movement Committee Youth Internship Program, and I also participate in Model United Nations. Through these experiences, I developed a strong interest in public policy, civic engagement, and the legal system, which inspired me to pursue a career as a court reporter. I chose to intern with the courts to gain firsthand experience in a courtroom setting, learn more about the judicial process, and explore my future career goals.



Micah Dixon

My name is Micah Dixon, and I am a rising freshman at Tennessee State University and a recent graduate of KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School. I chose to intern with the Davidson County Trial Courts because I am passionate about law, justice, and public service, and I aspire to become an attorney. In addition to my internship, I serve as the Middle Tennessee Vice President for the NAACP Youth & College Division and was recently elected Director of Minority Affairs for the Tennessee College Democrats. Through my advocacy and leadership, I am committed to empowering young people and creating lasting change in my community.

Nyla Smith

Hi everyone, I am Nyla Smith, a 2026 graduate of McGavock High School who will be attending Tennessee State University this fall to study Political Science on the pre-law track. I chose to intern with the Fourth Circuit Court because I wanted to explore a new area of law after gaining internship experience in the criminal and juvenile courts. This internship has helped broaden my knowledge and allowed me to learn more about different legal fields. So far, it has been an exciting experience, and I encourage anyone who is eligible to apply.



GUEST COLUMN:

The Social Support Vacuum: Why Men Usually Get Sucked In



The following article was written by one of our interns, Sydney Lee, a rising 2L at Belmont University College of Law.

In addition to June being Pride Month, it is also Men's Health and Men's Mental Health Awareness Month and the month of Father's Day. We sure hope you had your calendars marked for all of these occasions. Ms. Lee has familiarized herself with the following topic which is especially relevant given what this month represents. Enjoy!

the social support vacuum



Common phrases used to describe couples include “attached at the hip” and “stuck together like glue.” During a marriage, partners naturally become each other’s primary confidants—the people they turn to for support with work struggles, family drama, and day-to-day wins. But when a relationship ends, as it does in divorce, that support system is lost. While both women and men can struggle with this loss, men in heterosexual relationships are statistically the most affected by a phenomenon known as the “social support vacuum.”



The social support vacuum is when your network fails to provide essential needs like emotional empathy, practical help, or companionship. Stereotypically, women are much more likely to maintain relationships built on deep emotional vulnerability outside of the marriage, while men tend to rely solely on their wives as their emotional anchors ([UW Medicine](#), 2026). Both partners lose a major emotional safety net when a marriage ends, but statistically, men are left feeling the most isolated.

Men's developmental socialization encourages self-reliance, bravado, and suppression ([Annie Wright, LMFT, 2026](#)). Cultural norms and upbringing can hinder emotional expression, leaving men unsure of how to process emotional turmoil, such as that which occurs during the divorce process, with others. Men have traditionally been taught to be stoic and keep problems to themselves. As John Gray stated in *Men are From Mars Women are from Venus*, "When men feel stress, they tend to withdraw to look inward, whereas women tend to seek emotional involvement and connection." However, marriage often acts as the one safe zone where they can communicate freely. When couples are together, they explore places together and typically have a similar group of friends. Divorce does not just end a marriage, but it reshuffles an entire social ecosystem. When invitations stop coming or the emotional anchor is lost, men are forced to create a new social circle. Rather than succumbing to the social support vacuum, this can be an opportunity to grow individualized, genuine, and fulfilling friendships. Here are a few suggestions on how to break that cycle:



- **Normalize Vulnerability with Male Peers:** Move past the "sports and weather" conversations. Even a conversation starting with, "Let me bounce something off you. What do you think of this situation?" can help build a village.
- **Join Activity Based Groups:** Male relationships tend to be built on a common activity rather than speaking on a particular topic.
- **Do not let one person be your entire support system.**
- **Do not be afraid to sit in your emotions.**

Interested in learning more about this topic? Check out the resources below:

- ["Who Is Hurt More by Divorce, Men or Women?"](#) Bublely & Bublely Law.
- ["How Men Can Find Healing and Growth after Divorce."](#) UW Medicine, 2026.
- ["Why Is Divorce More Difficult for Men than Women?"](#) Collins Family Law Group, 2023.
- ["The Boy Code and Emotional Amputation."](#) Annie Wright, LMFT, 2026.
- ["The Post-Divorce Social Re-Sort."](#) Annie Wright, LMFT, 2026.

Practice Tip: Is Your Client Owed Child Support?



Photo taken from the DHS website.

If a parent is owed child support and is not receiving it, they have a right to take action. Raising children without the support of the other parent is incredibly difficult and causes stress to the parent bearing the weight of childcare responsibilities. The services provided by the Child Support Office are free of charge for the petitioning party and do not require the party to receive state aid to qualify.

If a parent is having difficulty obtaining child support for their child(ren) or wish to establish the paternity of their child(ren), the Department of Human Services can help. The Child Support Program provides services that promote parental responsibility to meet the financial needs of children and their families. The following services are available through the Child Support Program:

- Location of a child's parent(s) for the purpose of obtaining support or establishing paternity,
- Establishment of paternity,
- Establishment and enforcement of child support orders,
- Establishment and enforcement of medical support,
- Collection and distribution of payments,
- Modification of child support orders, and
- Enforcement of spousal support orders, if child support is involved.



If a litigant would like to have child support enforced, they may personally go to the Davidson County Child Support Office located at *1321 Murfreesboro Pike 8th Floor, Nashville, TN 37217* and apply for services. Additionally, you may view their website by clicking [HERE](#) or scanning the QR code:



Please note: The Child Support Office no longer accepts application for support submitted through the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Calendar

June

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		9	10	11		
				18	19	
21	22			25		

6/9 – 6/11: ID Divorces by Waiver ONLY

6/18: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Judge Williams' Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

6/19: Office Closed for Juneteenth Holiday

Juneteenth is celebrated each year on June 19th to commemorate the day that the last enslaved African Americans were informed of their freedom in Galveston Bay, Texas, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. On this day we remember our country's

history and continue to fight for freedom for all.

6/21: Father's Day

Happy Father's Day to the wonderful fathers and father figures in our lives. Your support, humor, and example make each of us better. To the fathers who have lost a child, and to the children who have lost a father, we see you especially on this day. We hope you can honor the ones you have lost today and every day.

6/22: Lunch and Learn with Custody X Change

6/25: New Attorney Orientation

July

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					3	
			15	16	17	
				23		

7/3: Office Closed for Independence Day

7/15 & 7/16: ID Divorces by Waiver ONLY

7/17: Office Open, No Motion Docket

7/23: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Judge Williams' Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

For a complete view of our regularly scheduled dockets and available Court dates, please see the calendar page on our website by clicking here: [Website Calendar](#) or by scanning the QR code:



Share!



@JudgeStephanieJWilliams



Judge Stephanie J. Williams

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