

≡ welcome to ≡

CHILDREN IN THE CROSSFIRE

DO I MATTER?

DO THEY LOVE ME?

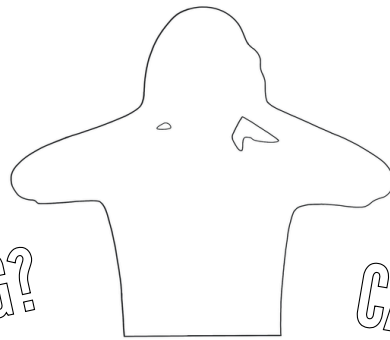
IS THIS MY FAULT?

AM I SAFE?

ARE THEY MAD AT ME?

WHAT DID I DO WRONG?

CAN THEY STOP YELLING?



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025

8:30 A.M. TO 3:30 P.M.



FAMILY MATTERS

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT FUND



The Fourth Circuit Court is honored to partner with the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to create the **Family Matters Community Enrichment Fund ("FMCEF")**. The FMCEF provides long-term funding that supports the Fourth Circuit Court in providing legal professionals, organizations, businesses, and individuals involved in family law with access to educational programs, collaborative initiatives, and civic engagement opportunities.

Thank you to the Community Foundation for supporting the fund.



Scan the QR code to learn more:



WELCOME



Welcome to Children in the Crossfire! This interdisciplinary symposium is made possible by the partnership of Trevecca Nazarene University's Graduate Counseling Program, Collaborative Divorce Nashville, and the Family Matters Community Enrichment Fund.

We are sounding the alarm about the detrimental impacts of high conflict divorce and custody cases on our children. These types of cases are taking a toll on this population. Residual effects experienced by children include school absences, depression, isolation, outbursts, self-harm, PTSD, substance abuse, and deep emotional pain. They are made the victims of their parents' conflict. We recognize that these challenges extend beyond the courtroom. The help, support, and insight of mental health professionals is essential because true progress requires collaboration across disciplines. We hope this event sparks a paradigm shift and fosters new conversations about how to better protect children caught in their parents' conflict while, at the same time, informing and educating parents accordingly.

Thank you for being here. We believe that by combining our knowledge and working together, we can become the shield these "Children in the Crossfire" so desperately need.

Lastly, we want to thank the team who worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life—the very process of planning this event is proof that working together truly makes us stronger. Let us honor our duty to protect children!

Children in **THE RUN**

• 8:30 AM •

BREAKFAST AND MINGLE

Fruit platter, muffins, bagels, coffee, hot tea, water

• 9:00 AM •

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Dr. Susan Lahey, Program Director Graduate Counseling Program at Trevecca

Dr. Donald Jackson, Associate Professor of Graduate Counseling at Trevecca

Stephanie J. Williams, Judge of the 4th Circuit Court of Davidson County

• 9:15 AM •

“KIDS IN THE CROSSFIRE” VIDEO PRESENTATION

Produced by: Texas Young Lawyer’s Association

• 9:40 AM •

CHILDREN OF HIGH CONFLICT CASES

PERSPECTIVES OF ADULTS WHO EXPERIENCED THEIR PARENTS’ DIVORCE OR CUSTODY CASE AS A CHILD

Moderated by Judge Stephanie J. Williams and Dr. Donald Jackson

• 10:55 AM •

MORNING SNACK

Whole fruit, granola bars, coffee, hot and iced tea, soda, water

• 11:15 AM •

PARENTS OF HIGH CONFLICT CASES

HINDSIGHT PERSPECTIVES OF LITIGANTS PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN HIGH CONFLICT CASES

Moderated by Judge Robbie Beal and Dr. Donald Jackson

the Crossfire OF SHOW

• 12:30 PM •

LUNCH BREAK

Sandwiches, wraps, sliders, salad, chips, apples, dessert bars, coffee, hot and iced tea, soda, orange blossom punch, water

• 12:55 •

GREETINGS FROM DR. DAN BOONE, PRESIDENT OF TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

• 1:00 PM •

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BENCH, BAR AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WITH PEER LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Judge Robbie Beal, Judge Stephanie J. Williams and Dr. Donald Harvey

• 2:30 PM •

AFTERNOON SNACK

Sweet treats

• 2:45 PM •

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WE'VE IDENTIFIED THE PROBLEM, HOW DO WE BECOME A PART OF THE SOLUTION?

Attorney April Nemer, Legal Professional with Collaborative Divorce Nashville

Kristen Menke, Special Master of the 4th Circuit Court of Davidson County

Dr. Donald Harvey, Professor of Graduate Counseling at Trevecca

• 3:25 PM •

CLOSING REMARKS

Judge Stephanie J. Williams

— SPEAKER INFORMATION —



Robbie Beal

Retired Circuit Court Judge of the 21st Judicial District of Tennessee

In 2014, Robbie Beal returned to private practice after serving a seven-year term as Juvenile Court Referee/Magistrate, followed by an eight-year term as Circuit Court Judge for the 21st Judicial District (Williamson, Hickman, Lewis and Perry counties). His current practice spans the range of cases that he handled as a judge, including criminal cases, divorce and post-divorce matters, contract disputes, personal injury cases, orders of protection, and Juvenile Court matters. Robbie is also a highly regarded mediator for Williamson County and the surrounding areas.



Dr. Donald Harvey

Professor, Graduate Counseling, Trevecca

Donald Harvey, Ph.D., LPC-MHSP is professor of graduate counseling. While at Trevecca, he established the master's degree program in Marriage and Family Therapy and co-created the CACREP Accredited Ph.D. program in clinical counseling, teaching and supervision. He has authored 10 books on counseling related topics, practiced as a therapist in multiple clinical settings, supervised developing therapists in agency, academic, and licensure seeking settings and spoken extensively in national conferences. With a specialization in couple's work,

Donald's doctorate is in marriage and family therapy from Virginia Tech and he is an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor. Along with wife, Jan, who is also a therapist, he has worked extensively with intensive psychotherapy experiences for clergy couples in crisis. Being a strong proponent of therapist self-care, Donald is an active fisherman and states, "alternative passions do not compete with a therapist's professional life but actually compliment it--alternative passions are necessary to bring balance and prevent burnout."



Dr. Donald Jackson

Associate Professor, Graduate Counseling, Trevecca

Donny Jackson, Ph.D., LMFT is an associate professor of Graduate Counseling. A two-time graduate of Trevecca, Donny brings 30+ years of experience in the music industry to his private practice, where he works primarily with individuals and couples from the music industry. Working with artists, songwriters, producers, and other music industry professionals, Donny offers his counseling clients an in-depth understanding of the unique challenges of their industry, which aids in the work toward healthy counseling outcomes. Donny has been published in the *Journal of Systemic*

Therapies and is a regular contributor and writer of the “A Note From My Therapist” column for The College Radio Foundation and their annual print publication, *The Vinylthon Zine*, where he discusses the intersection of psychology and popular music. When not on campus or at his practice, you’ll find Donny pursuing his own creative endeavors, spending time with family, actively involved in his church community, and supporting his favorite football team.



Dr. Susan Lahey

Program Director, Professor, Graduate Counseling, Trevecca

Susan Lahey, Ph.D. is the director of graduate counseling at Trevecca, where she has served as a full-time faculty member since 2007 and as director since 2017. She has provided leadership as the doctoral program coordinator since 2009 and as CACREP liaison during the accreditation process. She is also the co-faculty sponsor for Theta Nu Upsilon, the program’s Chi Sigma Iota honor society. Dr. Lahey previously served as secretary and Middle Tennessee representative of the

Tennessee Marriage and Family Therapy Association for six years. She has also trained supervisors for many years through the TLPCA and AAMFT organizations, and is a licensed marital and family therapist with a private practice. Her focus at Trevecca is on the mentoring and development of counselors, supervisors, and educators, and her desire to serve her students’ pursuits of counselor identity has deepened through her work as dissertation chair over the past 15 years. Dr. Lahey’s research interests involve, but are not limited to, clinical supervision, counselor educator training, marital crisis, family cohesion and leadership skills. Outside of work, she exercises self-care through tennis, family and friends.



Kristen Menke

Special Master of the 4th Circuit Court of Davidson County

Kristen Menke serves as Special Master for the Fourth Circuit Court for Davidson County, Tennessee. Special Master Menke has served in this capacity since her appointment by Judge Stanley A. Kweiler in April 2023. She received her undergraduate degree from The University of Tennessee in 1999 and her Juris Doctor from The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 2005. After graduating law school, she clerked for Judge Thomas T. Woodall, Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. In 2007, she was hired by District Attorney General Victor S. Johnson, III, 20th Judicial District, and served as an Assistant District Attorney prosecuting crimes against children until entering private practice in 2014. Special Master Menke's private practice included family law and criminal defense.



April Nemer

Partner, Nemer Family Law

April Nemer is Tennessee licensed family law attorney dedicated to guiding clients through divorce processes with compassion, dignity, and respect. April practices with an emphasis on collaborative divorce and mediation, helping families find solutions outside of the courtroom that prioritize long-term stability. Believing that family law matters are deeply personal, April takes a holistic approach to client care, addressing both the emotional, mental health, financial and practical needs of clients. Deeply invested in her community, April is an active member of Collaborative Divorce Nashville and serves on the board of directors of various organizations focused on children, women and community. April is known for her ability to listen with empathy, explain complex legal processes clearly, and empower her clients to make informed decisions. Above all, April is committed to fostering resolution and resilience for the individuals and families she serves.



Stephanie J. Williams

Judge of the 4th Circuit Court of Davidson County

Stephanie J. Williams, originally from Louisville, Kentucky, has called Nashville home for more than thirty years. She earned her B.A. in Management and Human Relations from Trevecca Nazarene University and her law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law, later completing graduate coursework in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Her legal career began at Manson, Jones & Associates, where she practiced in a variety of areas before focusing on family law. In 2006, she founded the Family Justice Center, providing reduced-fee family law services to low-income families. She later launched her own practice, SJW Family Law, continuing her mission of making quality representation accessible. In 2014, she was appointed Special Master of the Fourth Circuit Court, a position she held until 2022. In September 2024, Judge Williams began her elected term as Judge of the Fourth Circuit Court, which hears family law matters exclusively. Beyond the bench, she teaches at the Nashville School of Law, mentors future lawyers, and is active in numerous civic and professional organizations, reflecting her deep commitment to both the legal community and the families she serves.

CASE STUDY

Diane has sought help after confiding in a friend who recommended your services.

Diane (35yo) has been married to Jack (37yo) for 13 years, and they have two children together, Jan (9yo) and Greg (6yo). In your introductory meeting with Diane, you discover that she is seeking your help as she and Jack are headed for divorce. Jack moved out of the family home five months ago and is renting an apartment nearby so he can remain involved in the children's lives. Financially, Jack has been the primary earner, while Diane has worked part-time jobs so she can prioritize her schedule around the children's school and social activities. Diane reported that at first, she and Jack tried amicably to work out the divorce details. The couple's inability to come to agreement with respect to the division of assets and debts, spousal support going forward, and co-parenting has left Diane weary. Diane communicated that the tension between her and Jack has become unmanageable and often boils over into emotion-packed conflict, often occurring when the children are present. She confided that she's noticed that Greg is more withdrawn and often has an emotional outburst just prior to when Jack picks him up to take him to soccer practice. Diane also shared that Jack recently said to her that, "when I try to talk to Jan, it's like I'm talking to a younger version of you." Diane acknowledged that sometimes Jan sees her crying after an argument with Jack.

Through the course of the conversation, you confirm there are no concerns about extra-marital affairs, addictions or disorders, or secret-keeping, financial or otherwise.

Please respond to the following:

1. From your discipline's perspective (attorney or counselor), share what you identify as the critical details in the case study.
2. From an attorney's perspective, share with the counselor(s) when you might consider referring your client to seek counseling. Solicit feedback on the timing from the counselor's perspective.
3. From a counselor's perspective, share with the attorney(s) when you might consider referring your client to seek legal counsel. Solicit feedback on the timing from the attorney's perspective.
4. Working together as attorneys and counselors both tasked with operating in the best interests of your client, develop recommendations on how to best support your client and operate in the best interests of the child(ren).

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN 607?

Upcoming Events in the Fourth Circuit Court

The Fourth Circuit Court is proud to offer educational opportunities that directly support Davidson County attorneys and families. Below are all upcoming events through 2025.

Adoption 101 with the Fourth Circuit

Tuesday & Wednesday, November 18 & 19, 2025



This two-day event will educate attorneys on the fundamental process and best practices for handling adoptions in Davidson County and across Tennessee. CLE approval pending. More information coming soon.

Home for the Holidays

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Directly following Adoption 101, Judge Williams is proud to announce a day celebrating adoptions and the hard work of attorneys who take court appointed cases in Nashville. Families and attorneys are invited to join us as we honor this joyful process—some adoptions may even be finalized during the event, just in time for the holiday season!



High-Functioning Depression and Attorneys

December 2025

Stay tuned for more details on a two-hour CLE focused on high-functioning depression and its impact on legal professionals. In the high-demand, high-emotion field of family law, it is very common for attorneys to experience mental health challenges. This session will offer tools for recognizing and addressing these issues for yourself and your colleagues. Remember, you never know what someone else is going through.

Collaborative Divorce

NASHVILLE



The Collaborative Divorce Difference

The Collaborative Divorce process begins with education and understanding that collaborative divorce is a solution based alternative to traditional divorce.



CONFIDENTIAL



**CLIENT, CHILD &
FAMILY CENTERED**



**CREATIVE &
CUSTOMIZED**



Collaborative Divorce brings together a team of professionals including lawyers, coaches, child specialists, and financial advisors who work with you to create a healthier, more constructive process. Our goal is to support you and your family with expertise, care, and solutions that make a real difference.

COLLABORATIVEDIVORCENASHVILLE.COM





TREVECCA

NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Trevecca Nazarene University has maintained a rich history of leadership and service since 1901. Uniquely placed in the heart of Nashville, TN, the University's interdisciplinary programs are based on Christian values that not only promote scholarship and critical thinking but also competence, responsibility and compassion.

Trevecca's esteemed faculty prepares and trains students for success, combining academic excellence and real-world experience. At Trevecca, each student is guided to clarify his/her life calling. With a strong focus on research and practical application of knowledge and skills, Trevecca students graduate with confidence and expertise to live successful personal and professional lives.

GRADUATE COUNSELING PROGRAM

www.trevecca.edu/academics/departments/graduate-counseling

Trevecca's Graduate Counseling program began more than 30 years ago and has since established longstanding relationships throughout middle Tennessee's mental health community. With an emphasis on its development of a professional counselor identity, the Graduate Counseling program offers degrees in clinical mental health counseling, marriage and family counseling, and doctoral education and supervision. Programs are accredited by The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Education Programs (CACREP).





RESOURCES FOR HIGH CONFLICT CASES

☀️ **If you are involved in a high conflict divorce
or custody case, you are not alone.** ☀️

Scan the QR code below to access resources for
navigating high conflict cases:



This page will be updated
regularly as new
information is found!

**This is for everyone! Parents, attorneys,
mental health professionals, and anyone who
has a concern for children in high conflict
cases may benefit from these resources.**

Find more resources on the Fourth Circuit's Website:



trialcourts.nashville.gov/judge-stephanie-williams/

IT'S NOT
perfection
THAT MAKES
OUR
CHILDREN
feel loved,
IT'S
OUR TRYING