

Volume 3 | Issue 4 | March 17, 2026

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



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Happy St. Patrick's Day from the Fourth Circuit Court! Unfortunately, Special Master Ballinger did not get the memo to wear green this year. Oh wait—she did, she just forgot. Typical.

Family Law Practitioner Madness

March Madness is finally here. Any college basketball aficionado has been waiting for this season the second last year's ended. Everyone else has been subject to endless discussions about brackets and tournaments. We couldn't miss this opportunity to contribute to the conversation, but we have something for everyone—the basketball enthused and otherwise.

Check out our version of a March Madness bracket, tailored perfectly to the family law practitioner. Each region highlights a different kind of family law attorney, from the workaholic to the opposite. The purpose of the bracket is not to shame, but to be fun. There will always be times when we let things slip through the cracks or find ourselves a little too involved in our work. This is a challenging career path, remember to give yourself and others grace.

Happy March Madness—may the best bracket win!



The Final Four

From the Scattered/Disorganized Region, we have “Risk dismissal by ignoring case.” With the recent implementation of the Case Dismissal Docket, this is a very real possibility. Don’t let your case sit on the back burner until it’s too late to salvage. “Risk dismissal” is the final boss of this region but is taken out right at the end, losing to the 2026 Bracket Champion.

The Wild Card Region boasts a strong player but ultimately, “Playing hooky from work” is just not sustainable. Better luck next year.

From the Workaholic Region, we see “Work nonstop until you reach burnout” win face-off after face-off. This is a very real problem in family law. Handling big emotions and personalities in high-stakes cases builds pressure. That pressure doesn’t just go away by working late into the night. Instead it multiplies, ultimately leading to long-term burnout. “Burnout” leaves it all on the court but doesn’t have what it takes to win this year’s championship title.



Finally, hailing from the Work-Life Balance Region is the champion, “Maintain healthy boundaries with work and clients.” Easier said than done, though. This requires self-restraint and holding yourself accountable. Boundaries aren’t about controlling another person, they are about controlling your own behavior in response to another’s. It takes a lot of strength to keep that up, no wonder this won!

“The Big Dance” of Co-Parent Communication



A late night call. A passive aggressive text. Dozens of voicemails. Edited or deleted messages. Endless mixed signals and no clear narrative. This is the all too familiar “big dance” of co-parent communication. Exhaustion, hostility, and confusion are common. Attorneys and litigants come to court with the concrete evidence of text receipts, only to find the other side has a different record of events. Even worse, communicating over necessary issues like coordinating parenting time exchanges can become petty or even hostile, snowballing preexisting tension points in the relationship into bigger (and more expensive) conflicts. This is when coparent communication apps can be a lifeline.

There are many apps that exist now to mitigate the conflicts that arise while communicating with a coparent. Programs such as AppClose,

OurFamilyWizard, and Talking Parents provide similar services. The main features include a contained, un-editable messaging system, combined calendar, payment methods, and more that can be shared with attorneys and the Court. And, as technology and trauma awareness continue to improve, many of these apps have features that support survivors of domestic violence or offer fee waivers or reduced pricing options.

If you or your client are pulling hairs trying to communicate with a co-parent, these apps may be a good solution. And, if you would like to learn more about the offerings of these kinds of apps, view the flyer at the end of this newsletter for information on an a FREE opportunity to earn CLE credit and learn more about OurFamilyWizard **THIS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH FROM 12 TO 1.**



Addresses on Certificates of Service

On all certificates of service, please be diligent about including the correct mailing address, absent of errors, that matches the last known address of all attorneys and litigants, ***especially if litigants are self represented.***

Places to find the last known address of a *pro se* litigant include, but are not limited to:

- Pleadings by the *pro se* litigant where they list their mailing address
- The certificate of service in a former attorney's motion/order to withdraw
- The last known address where former service was issued

Common errors to look out for when listing an address on the certificate of service include, but are not limited to:

- Transposing numbers in the address
- Not including zip codes
- Not including apartment numbers, or including the wrong apartment number



When an incorrect address is included on the certificate of service (even if it is just due to a small typographical error), the Court may be forced to find that proper service was not made. Subsequently, motions may have to be refiled and delays may occur.



Calendar

March

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				5		
		17	18	19		
				26		

3/5: Special Master Menke's Case Management Docket at 9 a.m. via Zoom

3/17 – 3/19: Irreconcilable Differences Divorce Docket via Appearance Waiver ONLY

3/26: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

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

April

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				2	3	
				16		

4/2: Irreconcilable Differences Divorce Docket via Appearance Waiver ONLY

4/3: Office Closed for Good Friday

4/16: 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](#)

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who may be of interest. You may also email RebekahLHaralson@jnsnashville.gov to be added to the mailing list!

Additionally, you may view this and all previous newsletters on our website by clicking this link: [Updates and Announcements](#) or by scanning the QR code:





Virtual "Lunch" and Learn

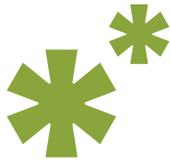
Moderated by Judge Stephanie J. Williams

Pack a lunch and join OurFamilyWizard for a FREE one-hour REMOTE CLE

March 18, 2026

12 - 1 p.m. via Zoom

Learn the ins and outs of OurFamilyWizard and how it can be used to simplify co-parenting communication, prevent coercive control, and streamline the work of practitioners.



All are welcome to attend including:

- Attorneys*
- Legal staff
- Litigants

*Attorneys seeking CLE credit must indicate such on their registration.

Learn more and register by clicking [HERE](#) or by scanning the QR code:



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