

Family Law Section Seminar

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

by order of presentation

Jennifer Creech

Law Office of Jennifer M. Creech, LLC

Rock Hill, SC

(Course Planner)

Since 1983, when my family moved to Rock Hill just before I started high school, I have called the York County area home. While attending Davidson College, working for South Carolina Department of Social Services Child Support Division, studying at the University of South Carolina School of Law, and serving in the United States Marine Corps, York County is where I returned when I came home. It is where I knew I would finally settle and where I am fortunate to practice law today.

I am many things to many people: a wife, a mother, an attorney, and a former Marine. Each role has better prepared me to help others navigate the legal process and the emotional rollercoaster of divorce and family law litigation.

As a wife, I want all marriages to succeed. However, I also know there are many reasons for which a marriage cannot be sustained. Divorce is not always the necessary solution. I can present all options and, together, we can decide what is in the best interest of you and your family.

As a mother, there is nothing more important to me than the children impacted by separation or divorce. I am always mindful of the welfare of children in family court cases and I strive to ensure both parties do the same.

As a divorce and family law attorney and member in good standing of the South Carolina Bar since 1998, I have the knowledge and the experience to help guide you through the daunting experience of family court litigation. Focused almost exclusively on family law since 2006, I have served as former counsel for York County Department of Social Services, and former counsel for the York County Volunteer Guardian *ad Litem* Program while maintaining a private practice. Whether you are faced with divorce, change of custody, issues of support, or a Department of Social Services investigation, there are many options that impact your best interests. It is my sole responsibility to make you aware of all options so your decisions are informed, well-reasoned, and most beneficial. As a former Marine, I know a military divorce involves unique issues and considerations not found in “civilian” divorce. What might seem insignificant can have major implications to future benefits and rights, whether financial or custodial. If you or your spouse is an active or retired member of the armed forces, then I can help to protect your rights and your interests.

While the dissolution of a marriage or a battle over family issues is never easy, I am privileged to be able to advise, guide, and assist my clients to a resolution that optimizes their future security and transition to life after litigation.

Leigh Sellers

Touchstone Family Law

Charlotte, NC

(Course Planner)

It seems that I have been a student of divorce my entire life. I experienced divorce as a child and later watched as high school friends endured their parents' divorces. As an adult, I have listened to my adult friends and some close family members as they endured separations and divorces. I understand how the process of separation and divorce can eat away at the lives of the participants. I also know that the decisions made by parents during their divorce have a tremendous effect on the children – decisions that can shape relationships with their parents for the rest of their lives.

Before founding Touchstone Family Law, I was a partner in a law firm for 14 years. Although I worked as a staff attorney with the South Carolina Supreme Court following Law School, I have been a family law attorney since 1993, when I entered private practice in Columbia, South Carolina. I moved to Charlotte in 1995, and after passing the North Carolina Bar, I began my practice in North Carolina and continued my practice in South Carolina. I am licensed to practice in North Carolina and South Carolina to assist families in both States. I currently serve on the Family Law Council of the North Carolina and South Carolina State Bar. In addition, I am active in the local bars in multiple jurisdictions where I appear on behalf of clients.

I am passionate about assisting people through family conflict in a manner that leaves them intact as a person. I am a trained mediator. I have been a Mecklenburg Collaborative Law Practice Group member since 2003. My priority is helping my clients determine the best method of resolving the specific issues relevant to their situations. Because court proceedings and hearings before a Judge are undesirable in most circumstances, I recommend avoiding litigation whenever possible; if litigation in a court of law is the best answer for you, I have been trained and seasoned in courtrooms throughout the years. And while no attorney can guarantee a particular result (since each case is as individual as the parties involved), we at Touchstone Family Law promise to listen to you, keep your interests at heart, and respect you during this challenging time.

Why did I name my firm Touchstone Family Law instead of Sellers Law? Because this firm is about so much more than me. This place is about you. At Touchstone, we want to be excellent. We want to be excellent lawyers, paralegals, and legal assistants; excellent members of our profession; excellent members of our community; an excellent wealth of resources; and most of all, excellent people. We are committed to excellence for you.

When I am not focused on the law, family, or friends, I immerse myself in books, movies, and live theater. If I had any acting or musical talent at all, I would have moved to NYC and tried my hand in the theater – but I have enough sense to be in the audience and invest my professional life in my true talent of advocacy.

Dr. Yvonne Parnell

Family Bridges Institute

Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Parnell's education and training is extensive. She is a clinical neuropsychologist, clinical psychologist, and adult psychoanalyst in private practice. She trained with Bruce Perry and completed The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics Training Certification through Phase 1 level. She is a trained Family Bridges workshop leader.

She transitioned to Acting Head of Building Family Bridges in January 2023 when Dr. Rand went on sabbatical. In September 2024, she became the Founder of that agency, now called Family Bridges Institute, based out of Toronto, Canada. Dr. Parnell developed the Family Bridges Aftercare Protocol for alienating parents, now the standardized protocol used in all Family Bridges cases.

She also trains professionals from around the world wishing to learn the Family Bridges methodology and presents at conferences on severe alienation and Family Bridges. She conducts outcome research on her work with Family Bridges cases.

Dr. Parnell has published in the fields of neuropsychology and psychoanalysis. She has two manuscripts related to her work in preparation for publication: Family Bridges: 18 Years of Data (with Amanda Sharples) and An autoethnographic analysis of 'waking up' from the horror of international parental child abduction and severe parental alienation: the lived experience of a young girl and her mother (with Hannah Flowerday).

We are excited Dr. Parnell agreed to join us at the 2026 South Carolina Bar Convention and offer her incredible insight into and experience with the cases that so often leave practitioners, courts, parties, and children feeling torn, if not frustrated, from the start.

Leslie Armstrong

Armstrong Family Law, LLC

Charleston, SC

Leslie Armstrong holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Furman University (2007), a Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina School of Law (2011), and a Master of Arts in clinical mental health counseling from Wake Forest University (2016). Based in Charleston, South Carolina, Ms. Armstrong is a licensed attorney in South Carolina and North Carolina, practicing almost exclusively in the South Carolina Family Court.

She is also a South Carolina licensed mental health counselor and National Certified Counselor, having served as co-parenting counselor and Court appointed counselor for children and families involved in the Family Court system since 2017. She is also a Certified Family Court Mediator. In connection with her mental health practice, Ms. Armstrong has served as a qualified expert witness in the Ninth Judicial Circuit, and today, Ms. Armstrong dedicates a large portion of her legal practice to serving as a Family Court Guardian ad Litem.

She is a member of multiple interdisciplinary professional organizations from which she has received training in the area of parental alienation, including the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and the Parental Alienation Study Group. She is trained in the Family Bridges protocol for the treatment of severely alienated children and their parents.

Ms. Armstrong is grateful for the opportunity to present today, and strives to facilitate continued cooperation and collaboration between the legal and mental health fields on behalf of the children and families they serve.

The Honorable Mindy Zimmerman

*S.C. Family Court
Newberry, SC*

The Honorable Mindy W. Zimmerman, who is originally from Spartanburg County, South Carolina, graduated from Chesnee High School and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree, with a major in English, from Wofford College. While at Wofford, she was a member of Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society and the Pre-Law Fraternity. She received her Master of Business Administration from Gardner-Webb University and her Juris Doctor from the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, located at Campbell University.

Judge Zimmerman handled a wide array of cases in both General Sessions and Family Court. In 2009, she opened the Law Firm of Zimmerman and Shealy, LLC. During her time in private practice, she focused on Family Court. She was a certified Guardian ad Litem and a certified Family Court Mediator.

While in Spartanburg, Judge Zimmerman served as a Board Member for the Spartanburg Downtown Association, from which she received the Jill Plemmons Downtown Pride Award. After moving to Newberry, South Carolina, Judge Zimmerman joined the Newberry Jaycees and was recognized by receipt of the Outstanding First Timer Award and Outstanding Young Business Leader Award. She served as a member of the Board of the Newberry Business Alliance and as the Fund-Raising Coordinator for the Newberry County 100th Anniversary Girl Scout Celebration Committee. She has also been a member of the Chambers of Commerce in both Spartanburg and Newberry Counties.

Judge Zimmerman was elected on February 1, 2017, to fill the unexpired term created by the retirement of The Honorable John M. Rucker.

Judge Zimmerman and her husband enjoy traveling, reading, and spending time with friends and family.

Representative Bruce Bannister

*Bannister, Wyatt, & Stalvey
Greenville, SC*

Representative Bannister is a partner of Bannister, Wyatt, & Stalvey, LLC, where family law is one of his many areas of practice. He has represented his home county of Greenville as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives since 2005.

Rep. Bannister graduated from Davidson College in 1995 and earned his law degree from the University of South Carolina in 1998. Admitted to the practice of law in South Carolina in 1998, he was elected as the South Carolina House District 24 Representative in 2005, and currently serves as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Bannister was elected by his peers to serve as the Majority Leader for the South Carolina House Republican Caucus from 2012-2016. He also serves as the Chairman of the South Carolina Bar Lawyer Legislator task force.

Representative David Martin

*David W. Martin Law Group, LLC
Fort Mill, SC*

Representative Martin was elected to represent his home county of York in the South Carolina House of Representatives in November 2024. He attended Coastal Carolina University, where he graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. in Political Science and received his Juris Doctorate from the Charlotte School of Law. Upon graduation, he joined McKinney, Tucker & Lemel in Rock Hill, South Carolina where he expanded his skills in family law, personal injury law, and civil litigation. In 2018, he established the David W. Martin Law Group in Fort Mill, South Carolina, which has since grown to several offices across the state.

He currently serves on the House Judiciary Committee and the Regulations, Administrative Procedures, Artificial Intelligence, and Cybersecurity Committee.