



The Connecticut Council  
*for* Non-Adversarial Divorce

## CCND CONNECTION

### *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

Jennifer Luise Champagne, MA, LPC

My dear CCND members,

When I began my term two years ago, I entered this position with so many thoughts and feelings. I was so incredibly grateful that I was given the opportunity to serve as president of this amazing organization. I also began my term while we as a country, and as professionals were still figuring out how to manage our lives in the height of the pandemic. I began surrounded by an amazing, committed board and countless volunteers on our various committees who were dedicated to moving the mission of CCND forward despite our tumultuous times.

Moving forward we did. Zoom became our best friend. Our training institute for mediation and collaborative trainings quickly pivoted to a virtual format. The caliber of trainers and content could now be accessed by everyone, regardless of which part of the state they resided. In fact, our trainings were taken by individuals who were not just CT residents. Our professional development committee sprung into action and although we no longer had dinner meetings, our lunch and learn series became a huge success. We were able to continue to give our members valuable and relevant workshops through this endeavor. We realized that we also needed an opportunity to bring our members together for conversation, networking and peer interaction. Thankful Thursday, along with collaborate and connect joined our mediator meet up series. By scheduling these events on a regular basis, there was always an event for members to participate and engage with one another. Connections among the practice groups were also something that was important, and the Collaborative Network facilitated these discussions.

Educating the public about non-adversarial divorce and leading them to our highly trained members has always been part of our mission. The changes in access to the court system punctuated the need for our organization to look at the ways we were addressing this component. We had been experiencing perpetual challenges and problems with our website, and fortunately we finally managed to revamp the system and now have a fully functional product.

Divorce with Respect week was the result of a yearlong planning effort. I am so incredibly proud of this endeavor. It started with a discussion about our public education responsibilities and evolved into an amazing week of offerings. It gave all of our members and our practice groups an opportunity to be involved. Susan Guthrie and Lisa Wexler gave us the platform to talk about non-adversarial divorce, and we had two comcast programs through the community forum. In addition there were webinars and zoom events and complimentary consultations with so many of our members. Wow!!

So here we are, two years later. We are fortunate to now have Amy Stone as our Executive Director/Administrator and I hope you all will get the opportunity to meet her soon. She is excited to join our organization and help to continue to move us forward. Words inadequately express my admiration and gratitude for my board. They have worked as a team, and put in countless hours on all of the projects and tasks that are associated with CCND. They have been here to support me, and to pick up additional responsibilities when I have needed them. These board members have truly made this experience so wonderful.

In a few weeks, Mike Conway will be stepping into the role of President. As the leaves turn, so does the leadership. He has been preparing for months, and will "hit the ground running" for sure! Thank you Mike for being a wonderful vp! I look forward to seeing what the next two years bring for CCND! For me, I still remain grateful that I was given the opportunity of this Presidency. I am thrilled with all that we have accomplished, knowing that CCND continues to help change the way people divorce in Ct. I look forward to all that lies ahead...

Jen



## *Meet Amy Stone, CCND's New Executive Director*

We are thrilled to welcome Amy as the new Executive Director of the CCND. Amy joined us in early June and new board member Traci Provost was lucky to sit down with her and learn a little more about her.

**Tell us about the path that brought you to CCND?** Several years ago, I served as deputy director of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation national program aimed at reducing emergency department visits for children with asthma and more recently as executive director of the 2400-member Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) based in Milwaukee. My role with SBM encompassed growing and retaining members, planning and executing annual meetings, negotiating contracts, and building and overseeing budgets.

Then came the arrival of my granddaughter at the outset of the Covid pandemic. I heeded my New York-based daughter's and husband's pleas for child-care, moved to Connecticut, and became their nanny, albeit a picky one since I drew the line at 2 a.m. feedings. When the pandemic abated and made me redundant, I was thrilled to spot the CCND opening, and happier yet to learn that CCND's needs and my skills matched.

**What challenges have you seen at CCND so far?** Well, I have to say I am so impressed with the enthusiasm and hard work of the member volunteers. Increasing public and professional awareness of collaborative and mediation divorce processes is a challenge, so it's exciting that CCND rose to it by launching the Divorce with Respect Week. Maybe there's a way to incorporate the stories of members' clients into CCND's outreach efforts as I imagine that many who have found the non adversarial approach helpful have also found it healing. Story-telling can be such a powerful tool.

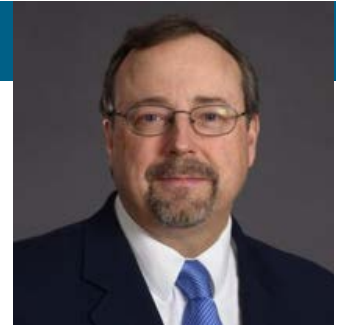
**What is one thing most people wouldn't know about you?** That I love to write and edit almost anything, even grant proposals, which might be appropriate for some CCND projects, particularly ones geared toward public education. Ensuring a financially healthy organization falls within the Board's and executive/administrative director's purview and I hope to help identify new revenue streams and increase current ones.



**What about music?** My tastes are something of a mash up. I'm currently listening to Miles Davis' Sketches of Spain, and I never tire of Nina Simone. Johnny Cash's final album, Ain't No Grave, fills me with an ineffable longing, but when Louie Prima tunes float through my kitchen while I'm cooking Italian – that's dance time (at least when no one's looking).



# *PRESIDENT ELECT'S MESSAGE*



Michael Conway, J.D.

I must confess that I was a reluctant convert to Collaborative Divorce having spent most of my career as a litigator. My training involved strategies for uncovering the truth by comprehensive discovery requests, thorough cross examination and developing trial strategies that maximized my client's position at the expense of the other side. I advocated with the utmost zeal so I could earn a reputation as a litigator among my colleagues in the family bar. The irony of litigated cases is that you fight for the client, but it often comes at the expense of the client. It is nearly impossible to say, after 35 years of litigation, if there were any true winners, but there were many losers despite a favorable outcome from the court.

Non-adversarial divorce offers parties a better way – a way in which they can mutually and respectfully enter into a negotiation to resolve issues that should never be decided by anyone else but the parties. I wonder why I waited so long to be part of this process; it treats the parties with dignity, and allows them to make decisions that impact their lives. In the words of Justice Felix Frankfurter: "Wisdom too often never comes, and so one ought not to reject it merely because it comes too late."

Our organization is comprised of many professionals who understand the wisdom in what we are doing and provide clients with non-adversarial options to divorce. We have the privilege to be invited into peoples' lives at a time when they are vulnerable and hurting. We owe them nothing less than our best to assist them through a difficult process. CCND is continually training and preparing its members to provide the very best to these families and therein lies the true value of CCND.

I am honored to move into the position of President of CCND. I have, as they say, "some pretty big shoes to fill" as outgoing President Jennifer Luise-Champagne has managed to keep CCND moving forward during a time when most things were at a dead stop. Jennifer, through some very creative ideas, kept CCND active through Thankful Thursdays, Lunch and Learn, Collaborate and Connect and Mediator Meetups. These alliterative events ensure contact, albeit virtual, and allow the exchange of ideas; they continue to provide informative and educational instruction to our members. She kept us connected through a pandemic, and I consider myself so fortunate to have been able to assist her. Through her leadership, we managed to keep CCND going.

Rosemarie Ferrante has graciously accepted our request to be our new Vice-President. I am very happy that Michelle Adelman and Sophie Helenek will continue to serve as our Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Our past presidents, Doug Fishman and Abby Cole remain involved and play an integral role, and I truly appreciate their commitment to CCND.

As incoming President, it is my good fortune to inherit a website that maximizes the exposure we need to communicate the message we have to as many people as possible. Non-adversarial divorce will no longer be the best kept secret in our state. I imagine that there can be many additions made to our website to inform individuals who recognize that divorce need not be destructive. Links to our growing YouTube video collection, podcasts, and other related material will help people see the wisdom in choosing a CCND professional. And for our membership, publishing the dates and times of our Board and Executive Committee meetings, as well as for Collaborative and Mediation trainings will make for easy reference. Links to recent developments in the field of non-adversarial divorce, introduction of legislation by our organization, and updates on relevant case law and statutes can also be posted. It is my goal to expand the website to draw in the public and professionals alike so CCND will be the go-to place for non-adversarial divorce.

I will also have the pleasure to work with our new Executive/Administrative Director Amy Stone. Amy is a highly motivated and organized person who has already been of great assistance to me as I transition into my new role. Amy, in addition to working as an administrator, will be taking a more active role as a director and providing us with her insight and creative solutions as to how we can achieve our goals as an organization.

Just because we are a small group from a small state doesn't mean we need to think small. We are beginning to explore advertising, both large scale and small. Our use of social media is growing and we ask all of our members to be engaged and proactive in spreading CCND news, as we are committed to sharing the news of our members. The world has changed and we underutilize the free resource of the internet. Reposting a message or link from any of the resources like a podcast by one of our members can spread the message of our organization and how CCND can help through our trained professionals. Reposting announcements, following and liking CCND on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, will make a tremendous impact. It is important to continue to remind people of the wisdom and value that the committed professionals of CCND have to offer.

The time has come to move from virtual to in person from time to time. It is anticipated that we will host another conference to bring everyone out and begin to network again. Our Professional Development Committee has always managed to find the most remarkable speakers who contribute to our ability to assist clients in navigating the process of divorce.

My goal is to expose the best kept secret in Connecticut and to make non-adversarial divorce the first option that people will consider. I am truly honored and look forward to working with all the members of CCND.

Michael K. Conway.

# DIVORCE WITH RESPECT WEEK

Rosemarie Ferrante, J.D.

CCND is proud to have hosted its first Divorce with Respect week! 55 CCND members joined the effort, not only volunteering their time to offer free consultations to educate individuals about non-adversarial divorce options, but also providing informational sessions, workshops and interviews in 10 events in which the mediation and collaborative divorce processes were broken down and our professionals explained how the divorce process can be managed respectfully, without going to Court. Thank you to all for participating! We will be sharing the recordings of the events soon!

## DIVORCE WITH RESPECT WEEK

Collaborative Divorce CT



A WEEK OF EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

FOR THOSE CONTEMPLATING DIVORCE  
OR IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS

PRESENTED BY THE CONNECTICUT COUNCIL FOR NON-ADVERSARIAL DIVORCE

**THANK YOU TO ALL  
PARTICIPATING  
COLLABORATIVE  
PRACTICE GROUPS!**

*CCDG: Connecticut  
Collaborative Divorce  
Group*

*CDCT: Collaborative  
Divorce of CT*

*DSC: Divorce Solutions of  
Connecticut*

*CDTC: The Collaborative  
Divorce Team of CT*

*CCCGLG: Central CT  
Collaborative Family Law  
Group*

*CDPFC: Collaborative  
Divorce Professionals of  
Fairfield County*

### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR COMMITTEE!

Jennifer Luise Champagne, Rosemarie Ferrante,  
Kathryn Bissonette, Louise Zito, Nicole Bikakis,  
Elizabeth Thayer, Brenda Larkin, Jill Bicks, Michelle  
Adelman, Mark Soboslai, Sophie Helenek, Deborah  
Noonan and Vicki Volper.





# DIVORCE WITH RESPECT WEEK VOLUNTEERS

## Divorce with Respect Week



*Thank  
You!*



Michelle Adelman  
John Aldrich  
Karen Anderson  
Jill Bicks  
Nicole Bikakis  
Kathryn Bissonnette  
Kathy Boufford  
Erica Burton Hochman  
Donna Buttler  
Patricia Carrera  
Jennifer Champagne  
Traci Cirpiano  
Abby Cole  
Michael Conway  
Eva DeFranco  
Laurie DeNigris  
Bill Donaldson  
Elaine Ducharme  
Elizabeth Edwards  
Deborah Eisenberg

Rosemarie Ferrante  
Robert B. Fried  
Richard Gee  
Lisa Gresham  
Wendy Habelow  
Hollis Hardiman  
Sophie Helenek  
Brendan Holt  
Kelley Hopkins-Alvarez  
Robert Horwitz  
Beth Karassik  
Sophie Koven  
Brenda Larkin  
Jessica Lasterza  
Bruce Loudon  
Darcy McAlister  
Karlene Mitchell  
Susan Moch  
Mondana Nikoukari

Deborah Noonan  
Stephanie Norton  
Bob Opotzner  
Lynn Pelligrino  
Traci Provost  
Laura Renfro  
Margaret Rudin  
Yvonne Shoff  
Mark Soboslai  
Olivia Summerhill  
Shari Switko  
Elizabeth Thayer  
Lili Vasileff  
Vicki Volper  
Louise Zito  
Laura Zullo



# *THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON DIVORCE*

Beth Karassik, Ph.D.

I used to live next door to the guy who wrote the “This is your brain on drugs” commercial in the ‘80’s, with the frying pan and eggs. Many of you probably are too young to know this commercial. It is an image I think of when I see people in the midst of divorce and any major loss and change. We ask our clients to make some of the most important decisions of their lives while their brains can barely think straight. We ask them to consider the interests of the other when they are automatically most focused on their own survival. Divorce, loss, and other major life changes are perceived as threats. Humans have hard-wired ways of responding to threat. People enter the divorce process with a threat-based mindset – with corresponding responses of fight, flight and freeze, which are automatic responses to stress/threat. The flood of emotion that arises in response to such threats hijacks higher-order thinking abilities and obstructs that person’s ability to connect with others. The divorce process will proceed most smoothly when the professionals involved assist the couple in shifting to a curious, learning mindset. Thus, it is quite important for divorce professionals to understand these reactions and learn ways to create, promote and recover safety and calm in our sessions, because mediation and the collaborative process require the capacity for our clients to be present, to think and to speak.

Coupled with our growing understanding of the autonomic nervous system and how it responds to anxiety, fear, and trauma, it turns out we are also wired neurologically to care; thanks to the vagus nerve and a prosocial nervous system. Understanding these internal dynamics allows us to help clients who may be feeling threatened to engage their nervous systems to access safety and compassion – rather than being stuck in survival mode. Their ability to access prosocial, caring behavior can make all the difference in moving the divorce process forward.

As a mediator and collaborative professional, you can learn ways to return clients (and yourself) to a “Window of Tolerance,” a term coined by Dan Siegel, PhD. This is the optimal state of “arousal” or stimulation in which we are able to function and thrive in everyday life; to learn, play, and relate to ourselves and others effectively. It’s like the Three Bears – not too hot (hyperarousal), not too cold (hypoarousal), but just right (Window of Tolerance). Non-adversarial, collaborative divorce professionals provide a container to hold clients in a safe and compassionate space. By encouraging and supporting curiosity and collaboration, we are helping our clients to engage the vagus nerve and the prosocial nervous system.

Join me on Monday, December 5th for a deeper dive to understand your divorcing/separating clients and the obstacles in the way of the process proceeding smoothly. We will discuss how to help them (and ourselves) tolerate emotional distress, and to respond in ways that will support effective interaction and engagement as we seek to bring their best thinking and best selves into the constructive resolution of the divorce process. With this foundation and understanding, we and our clients may then move forward in new ways, which can bring forth unexpected outcomes.

## *Uniform Laws Update*

Mark Soboslai, J.D.

Uniform Mediation Act As we reported in the Spring edition of this newsletter, the ADR section of the Connecticut Bar Association is continuing its efforts to get the Uniform Mediation Act passed as law in the State of Connecticut. Although that law is not limited to mediation of family matters, CCND clearly has an interest in the initiative as the statewide professional organization devoted to mediation and non-adversarial divorce. As such, we will be supportive of the efforts of the ADR section as they continue their valuable work with the legislature.

Uniform Collaborative Law Act Several members of CCND are actively working on the preparatory stages necessary to promote passage of the Uniform Collaborative Law Act (UCLA) in Connecticut. As we previously reported that act has been adopted as law in 23 states in the United States. We’ll continue to update you as CCND continues these efforts to join those states in seeking to have the UCLA passed in Connecticut.

# HOW TO CONNECT

*Follow, Like & Share- click on live links on this page to go to each platform!*



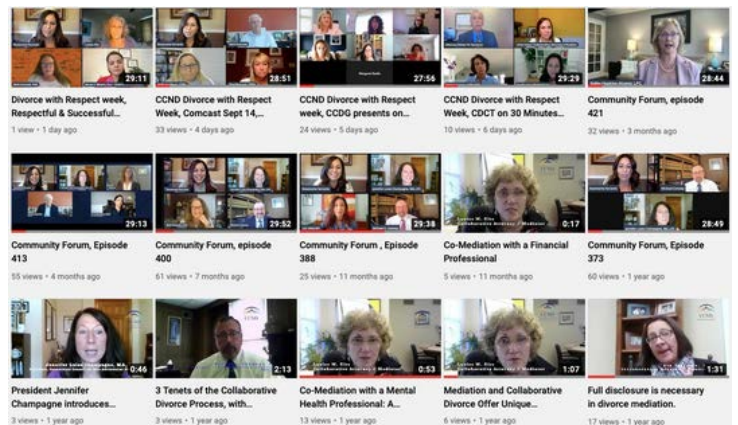
## facebook

CLICK HERE

## LinkedIn



CLICK HERE



*Have you seen our collection of videos on YouTube?*

*CCND President, Jennifer Luise Champagne, Vice President Michael Conway, and Board Member Rosemarie Ferrante have been busy raising public awareness about non-adversarial divorce options by appearing on Comcast Channel 23 show Community Forum. Have a show idea? Email Rosemarie!*



# UNMUTE YOURSELF

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of CCND. CCND Connection's Editorial Team are accepting Letters to the Editor and/or Opinion articles which members would like to submit for consideration of publication. Please send all such submissions to Eva DeFranco.

## *Drafting Separation Agreements and the Unauthorized Practice of Law*

Eva DeFranco, J.D.

Here in Connecticut, we have a culture in which mental health professionals, financial professionals and lawyers practice divorce mediation. I have come to appreciate the elevated skills which my mental health and divorce financial professional colleagues bring to the table in and out of the mediation room. I think most of us would agree that the core skills of mediation; i.e., helping people to effectively communicate, problem solve and negotiate effectively in order to resolve their disputes is a skill that, if properly trained, all professional varieties can competently engage. Perennially, however, I hear complaints from colleagues and judges that non-lawyer mediators are drafting Separation Agreements in divorces and that these agreements can be confusing, ambiguous, contradictory and generally problematic. While I am likely preaching to the choir, some thought it would be useful to reiterate the rules with regard to drafting agreements and the unauthorized practice of law.

C.G.S., Section 51-88 prohibits the unauthorized practice of law and is a Class D felony. Rule 5.5(b) of the Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct states that a lawyer shall not assist a person who is not a member of the Connecticut bar in the performance of an activity that constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. A violation of the rule can result in disciplinary action against a lawyer.

While all states prohibit the unauthorized practice of law, different jurisdictions have reached different conclusions about what exactly in the mediation process is the unauthorized practice of law. The bottom line is that legal standards are indefinite, vary from state to state and different states utilize different legal tests to distinguish the practice of law from other activities. See this [article](#) for a comprehensive article on mediation and the unauthorized practice of law in CT. Having said that, it is crystal clear in CT that drafting legally binding contracts for a client constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. There are a number of clear cases in CT which stand for this proposition.

Non-lawyer mediators can draft letters of understanding describing the proposed agreements of the parties in a mediation. The memo should clearly state that the document is not a legal or binding contract and is not intended for filing in court. The clients should not be asked to sign the document, legalese should not be used, boilerplate language and references to statutes should be avoided. Mental health professionals and divorce financial professionals will have to use lawyers to draft the Separation Agreement that will be submitted to Court. Clients should know a mediator's limitations and these should be stated in a retainer letter.

Unauthorized practice of law statutes and rules are thankfully moving away from turf issues and placing the focus on competence. However, drafting Separation Agreements as a non-lawyer mediator is and, in all likelihood, going to continue to be considered the unauthorized practice of law with potentially serious criminal and civil consequences. In order to encourage the legitimacy of divorce mediation, we should all encourage each other to stay in our lanes and use the best of each other's skills to complement quality services to our clients.



*There are new mediators in town!*

**CONGRATS**

To the newest graduates of  
CCND's 40 hour mediator  
training program!

**Kristen Wolf**

Attorney Wolf is a partner and owner of Wolf & Shore Law Group. Prior to opening Wolf & Shore Law Group, Attorney Wolf was a partner at a small general practice law firm in Orange, Connecticut. Attorney Wolf also previously clerked at the Hartford Superior Court and worked as a legal assistant in a private practice in Stamford, Connecticut. While attending UCONN, Attorney Wolf interned at the Public Defenders' Office in Hartford, Connecticut. While in law school, Attorney Wolf received several awards including Excellence in Clinical Work and interned in the legal department of a large utility company.

**Jennifer Mancini**

Mancini & Associates, LLC was formed in 2006. Attorney Mancini is married and currently lives in South Glastonbury, CT. She practices in the areas of family law, child protection, estate planning/probate, and business formation and acquisition. Since 2005, Attorney Mancini has represented clients and children in divorce cases, legal separations, child support matters, child custody matters, juvenile neglect and termination of parental rights matters, juvenile delinquency matters, as well as probate and estate settlement matters in Connecticut.

**Alexander Puzone**

Attorney Puzone is a 2021 graduate of Quinnipiac University's School of Law, where he graduated with honors concentrating in Family Law. Prior to law school, he earned a B.S. in Economics at Roger Williams University. Alex first discovered The Children's Law Center (CLC) during his Children and Social Science class in his final semester of Law school. Outside of CLC, he likes to hike, play guitar and sing, and play basketball with his brother and sisters.

**Michelle Sigfridson**

Michelle was born and raised in eastern Connecticut and has a strong affection for the area and the people who live here. After college and law school, she returned to Canterbury and joined a local firm. In 2019, after nearly a decade in practice, she opened her own firm dedicated to providing high-quality legal representation to local clients who might otherwise need to hire firms from larger cities. When you hire Michelle, you can expect the same skill and legal experience that you'd find at one of these high-end divorce firms. Michelle has been named to the prestigious Super Lawyers Rising Stars list for three consecutive years beginning in 2019.



## *There are new mediators in town!*

### **Patricia Carrera**

As a financial advisor, Patricia draws on her professional and life experience to help clients find meaningful, financially sustainable lifestyles and be prepared for whatever journey life takes them on. A New York City native, she began her career in finance and compensation/benefits roles in Fortune 500 companies. These roles provided a great foundation for her work today.

As a Certified Financial Planner®, she takes pride in delivering the highest level of professionalism by listening closely to my clients, being objective and transparent, and providing top-notch service and advice with integrity. Patricia is also a CDFA. She earned a B.A. in Economics from Swarthmore College, an MBA in Finance from the NYU Stern School of Business, and the Retirement Planning Specialist designation from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She is the proud mother of three adult children and enjoy the empty-nester life in Milford, CT with her dog, Fettuccine.

### **Karen Fisher**

Attorney Fisher is a graduate of Quinnipiac College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Legal Studies with a Minor in Political science in 1996. Attorney Fisher is a Cum Laude graduate of Quinnipiac University School of Law - 2003. Karen strives to thoroughly embody the dignity of the legal profession and her behavior and service with every case she handles. In litigation she treats both sides with respect, advocating vigorously for her client's interests while seeking to resolve the issues between the conflicted parties. Karen resides in Oxford with her husband, Chuck. She has a love and passion for animals and has 3 dogs Tucker, Sonny and Levi and 2 cats, Jem and Cammie. Her love of animals comes to the office as Tucker can be found laying on the floor of her office or greeting clients at the door

### **Stephen Humphrey**

Dr. Humphrey is a forensic psychologist. His practice has focused on work with children and families throughout Connecticut since 1989. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1988 and obtained his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Connecticut in 1993. Since 1995, he has been in private practice.

He has served as a Special Master for the Regional Family Trial Docket in Middletown, CT and assisted as an instructor in Forensics for medical residents at the Institute of Living in Hartford. He has been married for twenty-two years and has two sons.



**WELCOME**

## *CCND Behind the Scenes*

Eva DeFranco, J.D.

Shortly after the CT Bar Foundations's 10th Annual John A. Speziale Alternative Dispute Resolution Symposium, a steering committee was formed to continue to push initiatives to promote mediation and collaborative divorce models in CT. This committee is made up of CCND members and is a joint project of CCND and Quinnipiac's Center for Dispute Resolution. The focus of our group has been to refine proposals for partnering with Judicial to make non-adversarial divorce processes more efficient, to educate the public and other professionals about collaborative divorce practice and mediation and to foster more widespread training for collaborative divorce and divorce mediation.

Through the leadership of Deborah Noonan and Louise Zito, we have some important developments to report. First, the committee was successful in recording [two 2-part podcasts](#) on the Judicial Branch's official podcast, "Calendar Call", hosted by Statewide Bar Counsel Michael Bowler. You can listen to CCND members Elizabeth Thayer and Eva DeFranco discuss collaborative divorce practice [here](#). You can listen to CCND members Francis Calafiore and Deborah Noonan discuss divorce mediation [here](#). These podcasts are now posted on the judicial website.

In our mission to further educate the public about non-adversarial divorce options in CT, we have been successful in working with the Judicial branch to post FAQs on the Judicial Website about divorce mediation and collaborative divorce practice. You can see the [FAQs here](#).

## *J.D. FORM 278: Please File It!*

In November of 2019, at the request of CCND board members, Judge Albis created [J.D. Form 278](#): Notice of Collaborative Divorce/Mediation. The notice is designed to inform the Court that a divorce matter is being mediated or resolved through a collaborative divorce process. Since its creation, judges have used the form to help manage cases. The form has also been helpful in avoiding family relations review of separation agreements before agreements can be sent to a Judge for approval; as is the case with other self-represented agreements. CCND has been asking the judicial branch to track mediation and collaborative divorce cases for years. Form 278 would allow the judicial branch to track. The judicial branch has informed us that the forms filed in 2020 and 2021 are extremely low: less than 200 for each year.

Anecdotally, we know that there are far more divorce cases that are resolved through mediation and collaborative processes than what is being reported. CCND and the Task Force on Reimagining Divorce in Ct. are digging deeper into these numbers. However, it is critically important that all attorneys who resolve cases through mediation or collaborative divorce file the form with the uncontested documents. If we do not file Form 278 in our mediated and collaborative cases, the judicial branch cannot count the cases in their tracking. In general, our collective voice for non-adversarial divorce may well have limited impact with the branch if the number of verified cases are negligible as the current numbers suggest. Please file the form in every applicable case.





## HAVE NEWS?

Hosting an event? Writing an article?  
Please share your news, so we can highlight you!

## It's Time To Update Your Profile



[CLICK HERE](#)



### Here's How!

Go to Home - Connecticut Council for Non-Adversarial Divorce ([gooddivorcect.com](http://gooddivorcect.com))

Click on "Member Login" in the upper right corner

Enter your username and password

If you cannot remember your password, you can reset it [Here](#)

Follow this easy video tutorial that shows how to update your profile: [Tutorial](#)

When uploading your profile picture, it is best that we try to keep the pictures uniform.  
Please try to use a 4x6 professional headshot.



The Connecticut Council  
for Non-Adversarial Divorce



## *APFM update*

Rosemarie Ferrante, J.D.

CCND Incoming President Michael Conway was invited to participate in APFM's newly formed Roundtable of Mediation Presidents. APFM will be hosting the Presidents of National, State and local mediation associations on November 2, 2022. This is an opportunity for representatives from around the World to come together and discuss the field of mediation. We will share more information soon!

The upcoming APFM annual conference is being held on October 13-15, 2022, virtually. Keynote address by Karlina Paredes, presenting on the impact of diversity in family mediation.

[Register here](#)



## *IACP Update*

Mark Soboslai, J.D.

Several members of our Connecticut collaborative community will be attending the IACP Networking and Educational Forum at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida October 27 through 30. For those who will not be able to attend this years' Forum, we should have opportunities to share the learning and key take aways in the upcoming months.

For some who may not have heard, IACP will be launching a new and improved website. We'll keep you updated!

IACP is also in the process of searching for a new Executive Director. That process has been a slowed a bit due to the demands associated with preparations for the upcoming Forum and the launch of the website. We'll be looking for an announcement of the new Executive Director in the upcoming months.

[Register here](#)



## *Discovering Mediator Vikram*

Mark Soboslai, J.D.

This is a remarkable story about a worldwide mediation initiative that was started by one person located in India. His name is Vikram Singh and he is known throughout the world as “Mediator Vikram.” As of the date of this publication in the Fall of 2022, Vikram has hosted over 400 presentations, discussions, lectures and interviews with mediators across the world.

If your initial reaction to this story is anything like mine, you might be thinking: “I’m just a divorce/family mediator working in one small state in the United States. This is far beyond me because I really don’t have any connections to mediators around the world.” My initial hesitation upon discovering Mediator Vikram was immediately dispelled when I saw that Ken Cloke had given extensive keynote addresses for all of these worldwide Symposiums and Conferences. As most CCND members are aware, Ken is an esteemed and highly regarded mediator, author and trainer who is known worldwide for his work. He has come to Connecticut on several occasions to meet with CCND for day-long trainings and everyone who has spent any amount of time with Ken comes away energized with a fresh perspective on mediation and conflict resolution. Thus, it was largely because of Ken’s commitment to Vikram’s efforts that I immersed myself fully in the exploration of the hundreds of truly amazing mediators, authors, trainers, and thought leaders around the world who have joined in this exciting initiative.

To give you a flavor of the nature of some of these conversations, one series is labeled: “Heart, Soul and Spirituality in Mediation.” Another is called: “Conversations With A Beautiful Mind.” Yet another series was called: “Evolution Of A Mediator.” As these labels suggest, in these discussions the speakers share some very candid insights about themselves, their values, and their beliefs about the work. Vikram would admittedly rather speak with authors than read their books. So he also hosted a series of presentations called “Talking Books” in which authors give presentations about their books related to mediation and conflict resolution.

Vikram is quite welcoming and he extends open invitations to anyone with a “mediator mindset” to reach out to him and join his meetings and discussions on Zoom. He likes to refer to his initiative as the “Conflict Resolution Revolution.” It is my hope that many more mediators will join him in this important revolution.



FOR MORE INFO:

**[MEDIATOR VIKRAM'S YOUTUBE](#)**

**[MEDIATOR VIKRAM'S WEBSITE](#)**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Collaborative Training

**October 17, 18, 19 & 24, 2022**

Basic Interdisciplinary

Collaborative Training presented

by

Elizabeth Thayer, Ph.D. Attorney

Kim Duell

Lisa Gresham, CDFA

As we continue to engage in a “virtual” and Hybrid court structure, our collaborative trainers have developed an online collaborative divorce training that introduces professionals to a process that enables couples to complete their divorce without ever stepping into a courthouse building.

Lawyers, licensed mental health professionals, and financial specialists work together as a team to help families reduce conflict, exchange financial data, and resolve legal issues. This training meets the minimum standards established by the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals (IACP).

## More Trainings!

### "This is the Brain on Divorce"

December 5, 2022, 9am-12pm:

A half-day Zoom training

presented by Beth Karassik, PhD

### 40 hour Basic Mediation Training

February 1 through 4, 2023

8:30 am - 1:30 pm

February 7 through 10, 2023

12 pm - 5 pm

presented by Eva DeFranco & Louise Zito

## Calendar:

Jennifer Luise Champagne will continue to host Thankful Thursdays on the first Thursday of each month, commencing on November 3, 2022.

If you're interested in hosting a Mediator Meet Up, Collaborate & Connect, or Lunch & Learn, please reach out!

*Stay  
tuned*



**CCND**

The Connecticut Council for  
Non-Adversarial Divorce

# Membership has its benefits!

**10% off  
HIGH CONFLICT MEDIATION  
TRAINING  
with  
Bill Eddy!**



**CODE #CCND10**

November 3-4, 2022

High conflict disputes are different. They often involve one or more individuals with a pattern of high conflict behavior, characterized by all-or-nothing thinking, unmanaged emotions, extreme behavior, and preoccupation with blaming others.

In this 12-hour training, Bill Eddy will provide training in five potentially high conflict personality disorders and managing high conflict individuals. He will present his new approach to mediating such disputes: New Ways for Mediation. This approach includes several paradigm shifts from ordinary mediation by not relying on insight, expression of emotions or discussions of the past.

**[REGISTER HERE!](#)**





## NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!

### *Meet Vasiliki Filippakos*

#### How and why did you become involved with CCND?

A couple of my colleagues had mentioned CCND and I had a few people call my office and inquire if I do divorce mediation. I looked into it and realized that it was a great fit for me and my practice. The demand is definitely there and I am happy to be able to meet it. I will be completing the Collaborative Divorce training in October as well.

#### What draws you to non-adversarial divorce processes?

Not every divorce is suited for litigation. I like offering an alternative service to my clients and showing them that there is another way to get divorced. I believe that my approach, even in the litigation setting, is more interest driven than position driven.

#### What were some important take aways from the mediation training for you?

One of the most important take aways from the mediation training was that I had to take off my litigator hat when I step into the mediation room and to be aware of my own biases. Also, I need to listen really hard to what people are saying and even harder to what they are not saying.

#### What are your hobbies and interests outside of the law?

I love to read self-help books as well as fiction, especially historical fiction. I love to travel, especially 3- day weekend getaways and going to Greece in the summer. I always find a local bookstore to visit in every city or town I go to. I also love weight-lifting and riding my Peloton.

Working out is my daily self-care. Working out is more than looking good for me; it is about being mentally strong and pushing limits.

For me, an important effect of working out is that I show up for my clients as the best version of myself. It helps promote mental sharpness, which is very important, especially in family law. When I go to the gym or ride my Peloton, it is just my effort and, over time, you realize that what you get out of yourself is proportionate to the effort you put in. I believe that translates to every aspect of our lives.

#### What are your career goals?

I want to get my Collaborative Divorce training completed and be able to offer this additional service to my community. I want to increase my professional knowledge in the family law arena. I am in the process of upgrading our case management software to provide high quality service to our clients.

I want my firm's culture to continue to evolve and transform. Work-life balance, as cliché as it sounds, is something that I strive for with my staff. I plan firm retreats every quarter as well as going out to lunch or dinner with my staff.



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# Thank you

SAVE  
*the*  
DATE

As we welcome our new  
President, Michael Conway, we  
thank Jennifer Luise Champagne  
for her service and dedication to  
our organization!



Annual Meeting  
October 6, 2022 5:00 pm

We look forward to  
welcoming the new slate at  
our annual meeting!

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