



JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

SUPERIOR COURT
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

90 WASHINGTON ST.
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
PHONE: (860) 706-5060
FAX: (860) 706-5077

February 16, 2007

Mr. Douglas Edwards
President, Board of Directors
The Children's Law Center
30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Edwards:

The letter I have enclosed is provided to you solely for use pursuant to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Very truly yours,

Elliot N. Solomon
(klm)

Elliot N. Solomon
Presiding Judge, Family

ENS/klm



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President, Board of Directors
The Children's Law Center
30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Edwards:

A little over two years has passed since I assumed the position of Presiding Judge of the Family Court in the Hartford Judicial District. As you know, this Court handles substantially more family matters than any other judicial district in the State. Although there are many who contribute to the efficient administration of our docket, the Children's Law Center has played a unique and important role in the more difficult cases which come before this Court.

Our most frequent contact with the Law Center occurs as a result of the appointment of one of its staff attorneys to serve as guardian ad litem or counsel for minor children in high conflict custody and visitation cases. Your staff attorneys serve on behalf of the weakest and most powerless element of society – indigent children. Naturally, I have little difficulty in finding counsel to serve on behalf of children in cases where the parents have the resources to pay the fees of that counsel. In my tenure here in Hartford, I have also been able to persuade members of the private bar to accept occasional pro bono assignments as a guardian ad litem or attorney for a minor child. Unfortunately, their responsibilities to their respective practices and the likelihood that a pro bono engagement in a high conflict custody dispute can be an incredibly time-consuming endeavor prevents such attorneys from accepting more than one or two such engagements in any given year. And even when I am in a position to authorize payment of fees at state rates, most attorneys are not interested in accepting these engagements because those rates are too low. As a result, pro bono engagements on behalf of children only reach a small percentage of those in need. It is this unique and important niche that is filled by the Children's Law Center – representing literally hundreds of children each year who, sadly, get caught in the middle of bitter, and often dangerous, battles between parents who themselves are often damaged as well. But for the commitment and perseverance of staff counsel at the Law Center, I honestly have no idea how the interests

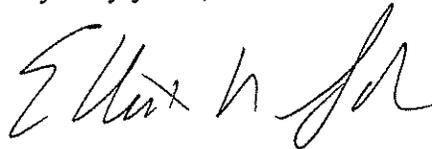
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of these indigent children would be adequately protected. The words which I dread hearing most in cases where the appointment of a guardian ad litem is necessary are "The Law Center is not taking appointments at this time." This occurs, of course, when the Law Center's staff counsel are carrying full case loads and are not in a position to accept more engagements. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon occurrence because the need is so great.

As noted earlier, my most frequent and direct contact with the Children's Law Center occurs in the manner described above. I also rely heavily on the Law Center in another important way, and that is through the referral of conflicted parents to the Family in Transition program which the Law Center operates. Again, parents with resources are able to engage private practitioners to provide parenting education services, mediation and counseling as an aid to the resolution of their conflicts. These services assist, and are often critical to, the family's transition from an intact household to separate households when parents terminate their relationship. Unfortunately, no-income and low-income families often lack the resources needed to obtain such professional help. Once again, the Law Center has stepped in to provide these services to the indigent. The process has been very successful in minimizing the conflict to which these children would otherwise be exposed. As in the case of any program of such value, however, its most significant limitation is a lack of resources. Consequently, those referred for participation in the program are typically placed on a waiting list.

As should be evident from the above, the Court's ability to act in the best interests of children has been truly assisted by the involvement of the Children's Law Center and its staff. I know that the family bar in Hartford has been supportive of the Law Center's efforts. This Court is likewise most appreciative of the work the Law Center has done on behalf of the children of this community. Your organization has had a profound impact on their lives.

Very truly yours,



Elliot N. Solomon
Presiding Judge, Family

ENS/klm