

### Mediation Observation Assignment

#### I. Goals of Assignment

- A. To enhance your understanding of the practice of mediation.
- B. To foster the development of a critical perspective about dispute resolution in family law, including an understanding 1) of the difference between the theory and practice of mediation and 2) the relative benefits of litigation, mediation and other dispute resolution options
- C. To assist in fulfilling the requirements of Maryland Rule 17-104(b)(3)

#### II. Assignment

##### A. Mediation Observation

You are required to observe a 2 to 3 hour family mediation session. Because we have made prior arrangements for these observations in the Circuit Courts for, Baltimore County, and Carroll County and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, mediations in these settings would be good choices. Information concerning scheduling, location, and other details for these mediation programs is included in this memo. You may, however, observe a mediation session in any setting as long as it involves a family law dispute and the observation takes place during this semester. If you have any questions as to whether a particular setting is appropriate, please consult faculty. **Whatever setting you choose, please dress appropriately for the observation; introduce yourself to the mediator, parties, and lawyers if any; and, of course, treat all court personnel and others who assist in arranging the observation with courtesy and respect.**

##### B. Written Narrative

After your observation, prepare a 2 to 4 page typed, double-spaced description and analysis of what you observed. The narrative should include:

1. Date and time of your observation; name of court (if court sponsored program) and mediator you observed;
2. Type of mediation you observed: visitation, child custody, etc. and whether parties were represented by counsel;

3. Describe the content of the mediation, including the approach or approaches employed by the mediator (transformative, facilitative, evaluative, etc.), the issues identified, positions of the parties, and the agreement, if any, reached by the parties;
4. Comment on the performance of the attorneys (if any) and the mediator. Also, please provide your reflections/analysis of the observation, including commentary about how the observation relates to class assignments and discussions.

### C. Deadlines

1. Although we have eliminated one class session to compensate for time spent in the mediation observation, you may schedule your observation any time between now and October 30th. Do not wait until the last week to schedule your observation -- it may take more than one trip to the mediation site to obtain the information required for your written narrative. Also we have advised the court mediation programs that students will be in the courthouses on a staggered basis over the course of the semester.
2. **Your written narrative is due by email or hard ~~copy~~copy the beginning of class on Tuesday, October 30, 2007.** Please feel free to turn it in earlier, and keep a copy of your narrative for use in class discussion.

### III. Options for Mediation Observation

We have arranged for you to be able to observe family mediation sessions at the settings listed below. When communicating with the contacts we have provided, please be sure to identify that you are a student in this class.

#### A. Baltimore County

The Circuit Court for Baltimore County is located at 401 Bosley Avenue in Towson. The mediator directing the court's mediation program is Wendy Sawyer. She can be found in Room 515 of the courthouse and can be reached at 410-887-6573 or [wlsawyer@co.ba.md.us](mailto:wlsawyer@co.ba.md.us). In order to schedule an observation of a mediation session in this program, you should contact Ms. Sawyer directly.

#### B. Carroll County

The Circuit Court for Carroll County is located at 55 North Court Street in Westminster. The mediator directing the court's mediation program is Powell Welliver who can be found in Suite 208 (Courthouse annex). In order to schedule an observation, contact Ms. Welliver at 410-

386-2401 or [pwelliver@ccg.carr.org](mailto:pwelliver@ccg.carr.org).

C. The District of Columbia Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division

The Superior Court for the District of Columbia is located at 500 Indiana Avenue N.W. Washington D.C. The court's family mediation dispute resolution program is part of its Multi-Door Dispute Resolution program and is located in the John Marshall annex of the courthouse. For observing family mediation involving divorces, contact Darrell Hale, the Family ADR Branch Chief at 202-879-1557 or [haled@dcsc.gov](mailto:haled@dcsc.gov). For observing mediation sessions conducted as part of the Division's Child Protection Program, contact Shavon Smith at 202-879-0439 or [smiths@dcsc.gov](mailto:smiths@dcsc.gov).