

Williams Family Law...Down in New Orleans

The attorneys of Williams Family Law kicked off the year in the Big Easy with a number of high-profile appearances at key industry conferences. Jeff Williams presided over the mid-year meeting of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, held at the historic Roosevelt Hotel. He then went on to introduce the keynote speaker of the winter meeting of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section. At that same event, Susan Smith and Robert Salzer presented a key session on “Six Keys to Winning a Custody Case.”



Roger Dodd (right), the keynote speaker for the winter meeting of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section, is shown with Jeff Williams, who introduced him at the event. Dodd is one of the country's top experts on cross examination.

Susan Smith (left) and Robert Salzer (second from left) prepare to present “Six Keys to Winning a Custody Case” along with their fellow panelists Hon. Daniel Clifford, Hon. Michele P. Bononi and Jennifer P. Bierly, Esq.



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Melanie Wender Becomes Trustee of the Bucks County Bar Foundation

Williams Family Law attorney Melanie J. Wender has been appointed to the board of the Bucks County Bar Foundation (BCBF). As the charitable arm of the Bucks County Bar Association, the foundation works to support programs, organizations and individuals who work toward social justice in Bucks County.

The group's activities include contributions to such organizations as Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Doylestown FISH, Tabor Home, Network of Victims Assistance and the Lenape Valley Foundation. The BCBF has also presented programs on the law in local elementary schools and provided scholarships to area students.

"I am really excited to be a part of the foundation's efforts," said Ms. Wender. "It is behind some really great work being done in our region, and Williams Family Law has long made a pledge to improve the communities we serve through volunteering our time."

Wender concentrates her practice in all aspects of Pennsylvania divorce and family law in Bucks, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. She is familiar with all issues surrounding the complexities of divorce, including equitable distribution, custody and support.



DID YOU KNOW?

Can I move to another state with my children?

Relocation is possible, but without the consent of the other parent (or guardian) this would require permission by the court. The law requires the court to consider these ten factors when determining whether to grant a relocation request.

01. The nature, quality, extent of involvement and duration of the child's relationship with the party proposing to relocate and with the non-relocating party, siblings and other significant persons in the child's life;
02. The age, developmental stage, needs of the child and the likely impact the relocation will have on the child's physical, educational and emotional development, taking into consideration any special needs of the child;
03. The feasibility of preserving the relationship between the non-relocating party and the child through suitable custody arrangements, considering the logistical and financial circumstances of the parties;
04. The child's preference, taking into consideration the age and maturity of the child;
05. Whether there is an established pattern of conduct by either party to promote or thwart the relationship of the child and the other party;
06. Whether the relocation will enhance the general quality of life for the party seeking the relocation, including, but not limited to, financial or emotional benefit or educational opportunity;
07. Whether the relocation will enhance the general quality of life for the child, including, but not limited to, financial or emotional benefit or educational opportunity;
08. The reasons and motivation of each party for seeking or opposing the relocation;
09. The present and past abuse committed by each party or member of the party's household and whether there is a continued risk of harm to the child or an abused party; and
10. Any other factor affecting the best interest of the child.

AROUND TOWN

MARCH 15: Williams Family Law sponsored the Bucks County Bar Foundation St. Patrick's Day Event, which supported two student scholarship funds

APRIL-NOVEMBER: Doylestown Farmers Market, every Saturday from 8am-1pm. Music, arts, and a host of vendors offering fresh foods and homemade goods: bucksfoodshed.com

JUNE 25: Bucks County Bar Foundation Annual Charity Golf Outing: bucksbar.org/bar-foundation

JUNE 27: Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Summit: lbccc.org

AUGUST 13: Central Bucks County Chamber of Commerce annual golf tournament: centralbuckschamber.com

SEPTEMBER 1: Bucks County Foodshed Alliance "Run for our Farms" 5K Run and 3K Walk: bucksfoodshed.org

SEPTEMBER 15: Williams Family Law sponsors "30 Years: An Evening in Black & White," the 30th anniversary gala of the James A. Michener Art Museum: michenerartmuseum.org

SEPTEMBER 20-22: Bucks County Bar Association Annual Bench Bar Conference: bucksbar.org

SEPTEMBER 23: Williams Family Law is a sponsor for the Travis Manion Foundation 9/11 Heroes Run, supporting veterans, survivors, scholarships, and first responders: travismanion.com

OCTOBER 11-13TH: Annual Upper Bucks Foodie... A Culinary Adventure: ubcc.org

Smith, Salzer Serve as Faculty for 2018 Family Law Institute

Williams Family Law partners Susan J. Smith and Robert J. Salzer served as faculty members at the 2018 Family Law Institute, hosted by the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, the educational division of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. The program was presented live on April 17 and 18 at the CLE Conference Center in the Wanamaker Building in Philadelphia and simulcast live to 18 locations throughout Pennsylvania.

The duo, along with two members of the judiciary, participated in a panel discussion entitled "Things We Do Wrong in Custody Litigation – 6 Keys to Trying Custody Cases." The discussion both recaps and builds on a previous seminar the group presented earlier this year at the Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section 2018 Winter Meeting in New Orleans.

Susan Smith is widely considered one of the top divorce and child custody attorneys in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Recognized by ALM publications as a "Woman Leader in the Law," she concentrates her practice on divorce, child custody, alimony and support, equitable distribution, and complex business valuation and asset investigation issues impacting high net worth clients.

Salzer, who holds an LL.M in Taxation, focuses his practice on financially complex, high net worth family law matters, including divorce, alimony and spousal support, equitable distribution, child support, child custody, and marital agreements. In 2017, Salzer published "Stress-Free Divorce," one in a series of books on divorce and related issues.



From our Family Law Blog

Please visit our blog where we share legal insights, thoughts on legal news and much more. Below are some of our most recent posts. You can find these and more at bucksfamilylawyers.com/blog.

Amendment to Pennsylvania Child Custody Statute Expands Standing

On May 4, 2018, the Pennsylvania statute setting forth the basis upon which an individual who is not the parent of the child may seek physical or legal custody of a child was amended. Prior to the amendments to 23 Pa.C.S.A. §5324, only a parent of a child, a person in loco parentis to the child or a grandparent of a child, in certain circumstances, had a basis or right to seek some form of custody of a child.

Trump Tax Plan Eliminates Tax Deduction for Alimony Payments

The Trump Administration's massive federal tax-reform legislation, known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, was made public on Nov. 2, 2017. The \$1.5 trillion plan eliminates a host of current tax deductions... and dramatically changes current alimony law.

Pennsylvania Shortens Waiting Period for No-Fault Divorces

The "no-fault" divorce recently got a slight rewrite from a bill signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf. The new law reduces the mandatory separation period for no-fault divorces from two years to one.

Finances After Divorce

While divorce is final, you and your ex-spouse may still be connected financially. A recent article in Forbes shared steps that couples need to take to become fully fiscally independent following a divorce.

DID YOU KNOW?

How long will I have to pay child support?

More often than not, child support continues until either the child turns 18 years old or graduates high school, whichever is later. However, the length of time does vary depending upon the circumstances.

- Child support does not automatically end when the child turns 18. If the child is still in high school, for example, the support order continues until high school graduation.
- There are some exceptions to this rule, such as where a child is enrolled in high school but not attending school. In this case, the child support could terminate prior to high school graduation and instead terminate when the child turns 18 years old.
- Other situations, such as a child with special needs, also can result in child support obligation past a child's 18th birthday and into adulthood.

FEATURED PRACTICE AREA

GRANDPARENTS' CUSTODY RIGHTS

It is not widely known that grandparents may seek custody of their minor grandchildren. This can occur under the following circumstances:

- The grandparent whose relationship with the child began with the consent of a parent or under a court order;
- A grandparent who assumes or is willing to assume responsibility of the child; and
- It has been determined that the child is dependent or the child is substantially at risk due to parental abuse, neglect, drug or alcohol abuse or incapacity; or the child has resided with the grandparent for at least 12 consecutive months and the grandparent seeks custody within 6 months of the child's removal from the home.

Grandparents may also seek partial physical custody and/or supervised physical custody in the following situation:

- the parent of the child is deceased;
- the relationship with the child began either with the consent of a parent of the child or under a court order and where the parents of the child have commenced a proceeding for custody; and do not agree as to whether the grandparents or great-grandparents should have custody; or
- the child has resided for at least 12 consecutive months with the grandparent and the grandparent seeks custody within 6 months of the child's removal from the home.