

Association of Family and Conciliation Courts:
Alberta Chapter, Presents

**Access to Justice: Diversity in
Family Law in Alberta 2022**

**March 4, 2022
Annual Conference and AGM**

An in person and virtual event

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AFCC Alberta Chapter Conference 2022

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: Diversity & Inclusion in Family Law in Alberta 2022

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Access to Justice: Diversity & Inclusion in Family Law in Alberta



**The Honourable Justice Sheilah
Martin, Supreme Court of Canada**

A Conversation About Access to Justice The Honourable Justice Sheilah Martin, Supreme Court of Canada, and Patricia L. Blocksom, Q.C.

Access to Justice – what needs to change?

Access to justice turns on the timeliness, affordability and accessibility of legal remedies. Despite many recent innovations in family law services and procedures, access to justice concerns persist for litigants in Alberta.

The barriers are diverse, longstanding, and well-recognized by justice system participants: the cost of legal services, the pace of court proceedings, and the cultural and linguistic preferences of the court system.

This conversation will review some of the most acute access to justice concerns for family law litigants and highlight areas for reform.



Patricia L. Blocksom, QC

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Mental Health Professionals: Best Practice and Ethical Aspects Relating to Diversity & Inclusion in Family Law

Various factors – such as race, ethnicity, nationality and religious beliefs – may affect the interactions between mental health professionals and family members when parents separate.

What are reasonable expectations for professionals regarding a level of understanding of these cultural factors?

Are there ethical dilemmas for these professionals being involved with family law cases without an understanding of diverse beliefs and values?



Dr. Siu Ming Kwok,

Academic Director, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary
Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
President, Alberta College of Social Workers



Dr. Richard Spelliscy

Registrar & Chief Executive Officer
College of Alberta Psychologists

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Critical Conversations

Mosi Taylor-Cole; family lawyer in private practice, Robertson LLP, Secretary of Canadian Association of black lawyers

Susannah Alleyne, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Counsel, and Equity Ombudsperson, Law Society of Alberta

Enrique Dubon-Roberts; family lawyer in private practice at Kahane Law



Please join these three speakers in an engaging and critical conversation about the systemic issues facing families and law professionals when working with families from diverse backgrounds. The session will help practitioners grow a deeper understanding of culture as an important consideration for lawyers to know in order to support families going through separation and divorce as best they can as a system and as professionals.



They will discuss the connection between culture and what is in the best interests of the child, as well as the practitioners' own experience and impact. This session will highlight the need and importance for family law professionals to think about the role of a family's unique culture and identity in finding solutions whether in mediation, arbitration or litigation; and, the need to engage in what may be hard conversations for families who are already facing challenging times.

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Access to Justice: **Diversity & Inclusion in Family Law in Alberta**

Current Issues in Access to Justice in Family Law in Alberta

*A 21st Century Court: Initiatives to Improve Access to
Justice for Alberta families*

The Honourable Mary T. Moreau, Chief Justice of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench

Chief Justice Moreau will discuss lessons learned from the Alberta Family Court initiative, from the Court of Queen's Bench experience with virtual hearings and from her work with the federal Action Committee on Court Operations in Response to COVID-19 in removing barriers and overcoming challenges to access to justice.



**The Honourable Mary T. Moreau, Chief Justice
of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench**

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Current Issues in Access to Justice in Family Law in Alberta

The Honourable Judge Mah of Calgary Family and Youth Court

Judge Mah offers her perspective on scenarios which the Court commonly encounters in family law and child protection proceedings. She will lead and invite discussions on topics relating to access to justice and diversity and inclusion such as:

- **Access to justice** – including programs and resources available to litigants and practitioners; common barriers to individuals who face financial or language difficulties; and possible collaborative steps which can be taken by the Bench and Bar in facilitating access
- **Effective representation of children and youth** – how should evidence be presented?; is there a role for the Charter? and the noteworthiness of the role played by Children's Counsel in providing access to justice for this important group
- **What makes a “good” Order** – things that should be addressed by Counsel and/or the Court in crafting Orders which lead to stability, predictability and (sometimes) finality to the parties, reducing their need to continue to access justice

AFCC Alberta Chapter Conference 2022

Access to Justice: Diversity & Inclusion in Family Law in Alberta

March 4, 2022

A full day in person and virtual event

Marriott Calgary, downtown,

8:30 am - 4:15 pm, and cocktail hour

8:30

Welcome

By Alberta AFCC Chapter
President, Judith Lake

10:30 - 12:00

Mental Health Professionals: Best Practice and
Ethical Aspects Relating to Diversity & Inclusion
in Family Law

Dr. Richard Spelliscy and Dr. Siu Ming Kwok

2:30 - 4:00

Current Issues in Access to Justice in Family Law in Alberta
The Honourable Mary T. Moreau, Chief Justice of the Alberta
Court of Queen's Bench and
The Honourable Judge Mah of Calgary Family and Youth Court

8:45 - 10:15

Access to Justice – what needs to
change?

The Honourable Justice Sheilah Martin,
Supreme Court of Canada and
Patricia L. Blocksom, QC

12:45 - 2:15

Critical Conversations - systemic issues facing
families and law professionals when working
with families from diverse backgrounds
Mosi Taylor-Cole, Susannah Alleyne,
Enrique Dubon-Roberts

4:00 - 4:15

Annual General
Meeting of the AFCC
Alberta Chapter

4:15 - 6:15

Cocktail hour for
in-person attendees



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REGISTRATION

AFCC Alberta Chapter Member, in person \$200

Non-Member, in person \$250

AFCC Alberta Chapter Member, virtual \$100

Non-Member, Virtual \$200

Student \$50

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ABOUT AFCC Alberta Chapter

Who we are

We are the Alberta Chapter of the AFCC, the "Association of Family and Conciliation Courts", the premier interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict. AFCC members include many of the leading practitioners, researchers, educators and policymakers in the family court arena. AFCC provides training and education, and does not license, certify or regulate the practice of its members. Not a member? [Click here to join](#)

OUR Mission



Mission

AFCC promotes a collaborative approach to serving the needs of children among those who work in and with family law systems, encouraging education, research and innovation and identifying best practices.

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We believe in



Vision

A justice system in which all professionals work collaboratively through education, support, and access to services to achieve the best possible outcome for children and families.



Values

Collaboration and respect among professions and disciplines.

Learning through inquiry, discussion and debate.

Innovation in addressing the needs of families and children in conflict.

Diversity in family structures and cultures.

Empowering families to resolve conflict and make decisions about their future.