

2015 Child Law Symposium – Presenter Biographies

Laura DiGalbo, M.Ed., C.R.C., L.P.C., has worked in the disability field including Vocational Rehabilitation and Public Policy for 39 years as a practitioner, supervisor, administrator and consultant with the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. She is currently the President of Laura DiGalbo consulting, and serves as an adjunct faculty for the Graduate Schools of several colleges and universities. She is the Lead Trainer for the Connecticut Parents with Cognitive Limitations Workgroup.

Alexandra Dufresne joined the Center for Children’s Advocacy in 2012, where she focuses on legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of young children at risk of child abuse and neglect. She is a member of Connecticut’s Child Fatality Review Panel, an interdisciplinary body charged with reviewing unexpected deaths of Connecticut children. From 2007-2012, she worked as a Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children, focusing on child welfare, juvenile justice, and education policy. From 2003-2005, she was the Catholic Legal Immigration Network detention attorney at Boston College Law School, where she supervised law students in the representation of low-income refugees and immigrants detained by the Department of Homeland Security. Alexandra also worked as a litigation associate for several years at Latham and Watkins, LLP and Hale and Dorr (now WilmerHale). In 2001-2002, Alexandra clerked for the Hon. Martha Craig Daughtrey of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Alexandra is a Lecturer in the Ethics, Politics, and Economics Department at Yale, where she teaches seminars in children’s law and policy, immigration law and policy and refugee law and policy. From 2005-2007, she served as the Dean of Morse College at Yale. Alexandra received a B.A. from Yale College in 1996 with Distinction in History and a J.D. with Honors from the University of Chicago Law School in 1999. Alexandra is a member of the bars of Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia.

Wendy Kwalwasser, Ph.D., was on staff at the Children’s Trust Fund before coming to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. In her current position she oversees contracts and provides technical assistance to community providers. In addition, she is a co-founder and Co-Chair of the Connecticut Parents with Cognitive Limitations Workgroup which has been meeting for 12 years. She was a co-founder and Co-Director of Interval House, a program for battered women and their children and also served as the Statewide Training Coordinator for Connecticut’s legal services programs.

Donna Maitland-Ward, Office Director for the DCF Hartford Area Office, is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, receiving a Degree in Psychology. Over her 22 year career with the Department of Children and Families, Ms. Maitland-Ward has worked as a caseload carrying Social Worker in ongoing services, permanency, and the foster care unit. She has held positions as a Social Work Supervisor leading training and permanency units and as a Program Manager in multiple area offices and the area for the Administrative Case Review unit. She has led efforts around early childhood including, serving as the Hartford Office Managerial Lead for the DCF-Head Start Collaborative, a member of CRT Head Start Policy Council, and serves as the co-lead of the Department’s Early Childhood Community of Practice. In addition she has also led efforts around Permanency and is a standing committee member of the agency’s Mentoring Program.

Robin P. McHaelen, MSW is the founder and current Executive Director of True Colors, Inc. She is co-author of several books and articles on LGBT youth concerns. Robin is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2014 Human Rights Campaign’s Upstander Award for Leadership in LGBT youth issues, the 2011 UConn, Provost’s Award for Excellence in Public Engagement; the 2008 National Education Association’s Virginia Uribe Award for Creative Leadership in Human Rights and the 2008 Social Worker of the Year (National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter).

Jeanne Milstein has a long and distinguished career in the fields of child welfare and juvenile justice. She has dedicated her entire career to improving the lives of children and families. She currently serves as the Staff Researcher for the newly created Tow Youth Justice Institute at the University of New Haven. Jeanne served as Connecticut's Child Advocate for the State of CT for almost twelve years. Jeanne was charged with overseeing the care and protection of CT's most vulnerable residents, our children. During her tenure, she led reforms and changes in policy and practice and programs in child welfare juvenile justice, children with disabilities, children's mental health and education. Jeanne has also served as the Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Planning and Policy Development for the Office of Children and Family Services, the child welfare and juvenile justice agency in New York State and most recently, the internal monitor for the Administration for Children's Services, the child welfare and juvenile justice agency in New York City. She has overseen implementation of the child welfare reform plan. Jeanne coordinated the improvement of policies and practices across the system, as well as revamping the child fatality and critical incident review processes.

Barbara Prine has been a staff attorney for the Disability Law Project of Vermont Legal Aid for nineteen years. Prior to this she was a Skadden Fellow, representing rural victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

A.J. Ruben is the Supervising Attorney at Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT), the federally funded and mandated protection and advocacy system for Vermont and has been in that position since 2002. Prior to moving to DRVT A.J. had been a Public Defender in Rutland County Vermont for nine years and had represented the Sovereign Abenaki Nation of Mississquoi, a non-federally recognized Native American Nation for approximately two years.

Jay Sexton is a partner at Taylor & Sexton, LLC, where he handles special litigation matters, concentrating in appeals that involve civil, criminal, family, and child protection issues. He appears regularly before Connecticut's Appellate Court and Supreme Court, and represents both domestic and international clients. Prior to co-founding Taylor & Sexton, Attorney Sexton owned his own appellate firm. Before that, he worked on appeals involving professional liability matters at a mid-size insurance defense firm. He began his legal career as a law clerk, first to the judges of the Connecticut Superior Court and then to the Hon. Richard A. Robinson at the Connecticut Appellate Court. In addition to Connecticut, Mr. Sexton is also admitted to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Kitty Tyrol is the Curriculum Developer/Instructor at the Tow Youth Justice Institute, Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences, University of New Haven in Connecticut; enhancing juvenile justice coursework and experiential learning, developing a youth justice leadership program, and supporting research and evaluation projects in conjunction with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee of the CT General Assembly. With more than fifteen years of experience in Professional Staff Development & Training, Program & Curricula Development, Quality Assurance, and Project Management, she brings a national and international perspective on the change process within criminal justice systems from an individual and humanist perspective; *"(People) change for two reasons: either you learn enough that you want to or you've been hurt enough that you have to."* Author unknown. Ms. Tyrol is a true *change agent*, supporting reform in youth services contributing in various capacities in Connecticut for the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division and the Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Juvenile Services including: The Juvenile Justice Joint Strategic Plan, the Gender Specific Initiative at the Center for Best Practices; as a Quality Assurance Project Director for Community Solutions, Inc. on the Juvenile Risk Reduction Project and as a trainer and QA coach in evidence-based programming for both adults and juveniles. Most recently she served as the Director of

Training for One Circle Foundation of San Rafael, CA, home of the *Girls Circle*® and *Council for Boys and Young Men*® programs, developing trainers and curricula for gender specific youth programs across the US and Canada. She is a Certified Instructor of the *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Programme* for the Cognitive Center of Canada at University of Ottawa and a Certified Trainer of Cultural Competency by the National Multi-Cultural Institute in addition to a host of other training topics including Motivational Interviewing, Strengths-Based Approach, Female Responsive Programming, and Restorative Justice. Ms. Tyrol is privileged to have served many committees and boards including the Advisory Committee of the CT Juvenile Training School, the Advisory Board of The Latina A.R.M.Y., the CT Girls Consortium, and the Board of Directors for the CT Women's Alliance. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from The University of Connecticut and resides with her family and dogs in rural CT.