

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
JUDICIAL COUNCIL



Joseph M. McDonough, III, Chairman
Elizabeth D. Lown, Vice-Chairman
Ralph Brickell
Hon. John T. Broderick, Jr.
Gerald A. Daley
Aetha L. Froborg
David A. Garfinkel
Donald O. Goodnow
Sen. Ned Gordon
John B. Hammond
Hon. Edwin W. Kealy
Hon. John R. Maher

Nina C. Gardner, Executive Director
25 Capitol Street, Room 324
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-8312

W. Kent Marting
Lynn Mather, Ph.D.
Hon. Philip T. McLaughlin
Rep. Henry P. Mock
Hon. Walter L. Murphy
Pamela B. Neville
David L. Nixon
David N. Page
Gordon A. Rehnberg
Philip H. Usher
Martha Van Oot

November 1, 2004

TO: Governor Benson, Senate President Eaton, House Speaker
Chandler, Members of the Legislative and the Legal Community

It is with pleasure that I submit to you the Final Report of the Task Force on Family Law, established in 2002. The report of this Committee brings forth a wide range of recommendations to reduce the adversarial nature of the process of divorce and separation for families in this State.

We look forward to working with the Courts, the Bar, the Legislature, and the Governor to begin the process of implementing these recommendations.

We hope this will begin the exciting process of creating changes which will be a great benefit to our families and their children.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nina Gardner".

Nina Gardner, Chair
Task Force on Family Law

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of this Task Force could not have been completed without the assistance of many individuals who contributed to its final report.

Attorney Patti Blanchette of Portsmouth and her dedicated staff, Rebecca Myers and Linda White, made the final production of this report possible by giving generously of their time, office resources, and hospitality during the editing process.

It is important to note that the Task Force Report is a composite document. Topical sections were drafted and written by more than ten members who brought their recommendations and descriptive language forward for full committee vote. The reader may note the variations in writing style which preserve the individual contributions of the authors.

The Committee also received staff support from Marie Helene Bailinson, Esq., House Committee Research, and from House Stenographic Services. Their assistance was invaluable to an undertaking of this scope, as no funding was provided to the Task Force directly.

We hope this report is written so that it can be easily understood by its readers.

We also hope that our readers will agree that there is much to share in this report.

The Task Force on Family Law

Task Force on Family Law Members 2002-2004

Nina C. Gardner, Chair, Executive Director, Judicial Council
Honey Hastings, Esq., Vice Chair, Member at Large
Rep. David A. Bickford, House Children and Family Law Committee Alternate*****
Honorable Stephanie Nute, Marital Master
Patti Blanchette, Esq., New Hampshire Bar Association Representative
David Braiterman, Esq., New Hampshire Bar Association Representative
John Cameron, Esq., Guardian Ad Litem Representative
Catherine Cauthorne, Ph. D., Psychologist
Rep. Terri Dudley, House Judiciary Committee**
Rep. Larry Elliot, House Judiciary Committee*
Rep. Peter Franklin, House Judiciary Committee***
Rep. Carolyn Gargas House, Children and Family Law Committee
Michael Geanoulis, Commission on the Status of Men****
Amanda Grady, N.H. Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence*****
Linda Griebisch, N.H. Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence*****
Byry Kennedy, Esq., Division of Children, Youth and Families
Honorable John R. Maher, Supervisory Judge, Family Division, Rockingham County*****
Colonel Richard Martell, Experienced Consumer, Male
Eileen Mullen, Child Impact Provider, Representative
Marilyn Mahoney, Esq., Member at Large
Honorable Tina Nadeau, Associate Justice, Superior Court
Senator Sheila Roberge, Senate Judiciary Committee
Susan Stearns, Experienced Consumer, Female
Honorable Gerald Taube, Supervisory Judge, Rockingham Family Division
John Williams, Esq., Division of Child Support Enforcement
Ronna Wise, Esq., Commission on the Status of Women
Peter Wolfe, Esq., Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Representative

All original appointments were made by Governor Shaheen and Speaker of the House, Gene Chandler, and Senate President, Thomas Eaton.

- *resigned from Task Force when no longer member of House Judiciary Committee
- **replaced Rep. Elliot as representative of House Judiciary, later resigned
- ***replaced Rep. Terri Dudley as representative of House Judiciary
- ****appointed by Governor Craig Benson
- *****resigned from Task Force
- *****appointed by Governor Craig Benson to replace Linda Griebisch
- *****resigned from Task Force
- *****appointed by Governor Craig Benson to replace Judge Maher
- *****appointed as alternate member, House Children and Family Law Committee