

**South Carolina  
Children’s Justice Act Task Force  
Member Bios 2018-2021**

**Nikki Acerra**

*Deputy Coroner*

Richland County Coroner’s Office

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Nikki Acerra is a Deputy Coroner with the Richland County Coroner’s Office and currently serves as part of the newly implemented Child Death Response Team (CDRT). The three member team investigates any unnatural or suspicious death that occurs in Richland County where the victim is under the age of 18 months old. Prior to becoming a Deputy Coroner in Richland County, Nikki served as a Medicolegal Death Investigator in her hometown of Memphis TN. While in this capacity Nikki worked for the Memphis and Shelby County Medical Examiner’s Office for approximately 4.5 years. Nikki became interested in death investigations during her ten year career as a Police Officer in Memphis. During her career in Law Enforcement Nikki worked in uniform patrol, Crime Prevention, Criminal Investigations and Mounted Patrol. She was also responsible for supervising an undercover detail focusing on crime around The University of Memphis Campus. Nikki attended weekly COMPSTAT meetings with Memphis Police Command Staff to address crime trends and hotspots. Nikki served as a Certified Police Training Instructor in disciplines such as Domestic Violence, Defensive Tactics and TN Highway Patrol Crash Reports. She served as the Reporting Agency Coordinator (RAC) where she was responsible for reporting all incidents and arrests to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations. During her Law Enforcement career she was a member of the local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police. Nikki was also a member of The United States Naval Reserves for four years where she served in the LEPSU unit as a Master at Arms (MAA). Nikki studied Law Enforcement Administration with a Concentration in Criminal Justice from Mountain State University located in Beckley; West Virginia.

**Deborah C. Boone**

*McKinney-Vento Coordinator*

Richland County School District One

EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH HOMELESS CHILDREN

Deborah Boone has served as the McKinney-Vento Coordinator in Richland County School District One for over 20 years. The Parents and Students Succeed (PASS) Project is Richland One’s homeless initiative. PASS is a comprehensive program that utilizes district and community resources to help students succeed. Under her capable leadership, the needs of students and families experiencing homelessness are being met on a daily basis. The PASS Project is considered a “model” program in the state. Ms. Boone collaborated with the University of South Carolina and developed a graduate level course entitled, “*Promoting School Success in Homeless and Other High-Risk Students: Concepts and Strategies.*” District educators are able to take this graduate class for free and to date, over 800 educators have completed this course. Ms. Boone has served on numerous state, community, and district-wide committees/advisory boards. Ms. Boone recently completed a six year stint (3 – 2 year terms) on the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) Board of Directors. Deborah is the past co-chair of the Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless (MACH), which is one of four Continuum of Cares (CoC) in

the state. She also serves on the Department of Social Services Domestic Violence Coordinating Council as well as the Advisory Board for the University of South Carolina Trio Programs. In addition, Ms. Boone serves on the Board of Directors for two area homeless shelters.

**Megan Branham**

AT-LARGE MEMBER

*Director of Policy and Research*

Palmetto Association of Children and Families

Megan Branham is the Director of Policy and Research at the Palmetto Association of Children and Families. Megan has spent more than a decade in South Carolina working to improve the lives of children. She has advanced policies giving more children the opportunity to grow up in a safe environments, implemented programs to improve maternal and child health and has facilitated community work to prevent teen pregnancy. Megan was recently the Director of Policy at Children's Trust of South Carolina. Megan has a Masters in Social Work from the University of South Carolina and is a Licensed Master Social Worker. Last year, she completed The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Leadership Institute for State-based Advocates with thirteen policy colleagues from across the country.

**Kelley Perkins Brown**

ADULT SURVIVOR OF CHILD ABUSE

*Deputy Public Defender and Former Foster Child*

Aiken County, 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit – Juvenile Division

Kelley Perkins Brown is the Deputy Public Defender for the Second Judicial Circuit in Aiken, South Carolina, where she represents juvenile defendants for the counties of Aiken, Bamberg, and Barnwell. Kelley grew up at the Thornwell Children's Home in Clinton, South Carolina, then went on to receive her B.A from Presbyterian College in 1994. After receiving her J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1997, Kelley joined the Aiken County Public Defender's Office in April of 1998 and represented both adult and juvenile defendants until the formation of the Second Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office in 2008 when she chose to focus exclusively on juvenile defense for the Circuit. Kelley serves on the SC Bar Children's Law Committee and is currently a member of the board of the South Carolina Public Defender's Association. Kelley lives in the country outside of Aiken along with her husband, Trey Brown. She is very active in the First Presbyterian Church of Aiken as well as with the PTO of Mead Hall Episcopal School.

**Jennifer R. Buster, M.Ed.** EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

*BabyNet Director*

SC Department of Health and Human Services

Jennifer R. Buster is currently the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Part C Program Manager at The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to that she was the Director of Children's Services at the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs for more than fifteen years. She has over 23 years of experience in the Developmental Disabilities field at both the local and State level. She earned her Bachelor's and her M.Ed. from the University of South Carolina. She is the mother of two sons, one of which has special healthcare needs.

**Stacey Coleman**

*Senior Public Defender*

Sixteenth Circuit Public Defender's Office, York County, Juvenile Division

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Stacey Coleman graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. After taking a year to work for the Clerk of Court's office in General Sessions court, she attended and then graduated from the University Of South Carolina School Of Law in May 2000. Upon graduation from law school, she clerked for the Hon. Lee S. Alford (Retired). In April, 2001, she began working as a General Sessions attorney in the York County Public Defender's office. For 6 years, she represented indigent adults in General Sessions Court, Magistrate's Court, Probation Revocation hearings, Transfer Court, Adult Drug Court, and Preliminary Hearings. In May, 2007, an opening in the Juvenile Division of the York County Public Defender's office paved the way for her to pursue her passion: representing juvenile clients. Ms. Coleman's undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice with studies in Juvenile Delinquency, Psychology, and Sociology helped prepare her to practice in this unique area of law. Being the only attorney assigned to represent juveniles in one of the bigger counties in S.C., she represents approximately 500 juveniles per year.

Ms. Coleman is a member of the South Carolina Bar Association, the South Carolina Public Defender Association, and is a member of the Juvenile Subcommittee for the South Carolina Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (SCACDL). She is also a current member and past President of the York County Bar Association (2006-07). She has taken numerous courses to improve her knowledge in areas of criminal defense and drug court programs and has completed the 45<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Short Course for Defense Lawyers in Criminal Cases (Chicago, IL, July 2002, July 2004); the National Association of Drug Court Professionals 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference (Reno, NV, May 2003); the National Criminal Defense College (NCDC) (Macon, GA, June 2006); the South Carolina Public Defender Association conference, annually since 2001, and numerous other local continuing education programs.

She regularly speaks to middle and high school students about Juvenile Justice, including the Color of Justice panel, and has taught the topic of Juvenile Justice at several S.C. Bar sponsored Law School for Non-Lawyers programs. In September 2011, Stacey Coleman was recognized by the South Carolina Public Defender Association as being its Juvenile Defender of the Year. Ms. Coleman is passionate about issues affecting juveniles and was pleased to have worked on the recent "Raise the Age" legislation that will soon go into effect in our state. She is a member of Bethesda Presbyterian Church, past member of the Bethesda Children's Development Center Council, and proudly serves as Team Mom for her son's Pee Wee tackle football team.

**The Honorable Rosalyn Frierson-Smith**

*Family Court Judge*

CIVIL COURT JUDGE

Judge Rosalyn W. Frierson-Smith is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, School of Law and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of South Carolina. She was appointed Director of South Carolina Court Administration by the South Carolina Supreme Court, serving from 1998 until 2017, having previously served as a S.C. Supreme Court Staff Attorney, Law Clerk to former Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney, Jr. and Research/Budget Analyst for the Ways and Means Committee of the S.C. House of Representatives. She also served as a substitute Municipal Court Judge for the City of Columbia for four years. On February 1, 2017, she was elected by the S. C. General Assembly

to the Family Court Bench.

Judge Frierson-Smith participated in the three year Executive Session for State Court Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She is a graduate of the Furman Diversity Leadership Institute and the S.C. Executive Institute. She is a member of the Richland County Bar Association, the S.C. Black Lawyers Association and the S. C. Women Lawyers Association, having served as President of SCWLA in 2007. She served as President of the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and Vice-Chair of the National Center for State Courts in 2011 and is a former member of both the S.C. Bar Association and American Bar Association Houses of Delegates. Judge Frierson-Smith co-chaired the Conference of Chief Justices/COSCA Joint Courts, Children and Families Committee, and has served as a member of the Family Court Bench Bar Committee, Children's Justice Act Task Force, the S. C. Access to Justice Commission, and the Commission on Alternative Dispute Resolution. She has served on numerous S.C. Bar committees, including a term as Editor of the S.C. Lawyer Magazine and volunteered as pro bono counsel. Her community involvement includes service on the Palmetto Health Hospital Board of Directors and Palmetto Health Richland Board of Trustees. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., serving as President of the Columbia Alumnae Chapter from 2007-2011. Judge Frierson-Smith received the Richland County Bar Association Civic Star Award in 2002. In 2014 she was inducted into the National Center for State Courts Warren E. Burger Society and in 2015 was selected as a South Carolina Lawyers Weekly Leadership in Law Honoree. She was selected as a recipient of the 2016 Gold Compleat Lawyer Award given by the USC School of Law Alumni Council.

**Sara Garrett**

**EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

*Education Associate, Special Populations*

SC Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services

Sara Garrett is an Education Associate working with special populations in the Office of Special Education Services. In this position, she works to address the needs of special education students in correctional and alternative facilities; students in military families; migratory students; immigrant students; students in foster care; students who fall under the McKinney-Vento act; and English language learner students. Sara received a Bachelor's degree from Bluefield State College, and a Master's degree from Concord University in West Virginia.

Prior to working for the South Carolina Department of Education, Sara worked as a middle school principal in a highly economically-disadvantaged rural school district in southern West Virginia. In this capacity, Sara has worked in collaboration with a myriad of state agencies, including the judicial system and Child Protective Services. Sara's compassion for the needs of students was the driving force behind establishing the school's first food bank in order to meet the basic needs of students and their families. Prior to her assignment as a principal, she worked in the same district as a special education teacher; technology integration specialist; English teacher; and coordinator of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center's after school program. She also held certifications as a coach and mentor to help foster retention and professional growth among teachers.

**Vicky Gaskins**

LAW ENFORCEMENT

*Lieutenant*

Aiken County Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Division

Mrs. Gaskins is a Lieutenant with the Aiken County Sheriff's Office. As the Juvenile Division Lieutenant, she is responsible for supervising all investigations of child abuse or neglect, all child fatalities, and all juvenile offender crimes. Previously Mrs. Gaskins served as an intern at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations, Patrol Deputy, School Resource Officer, Investigator (Juvenile Division), and Senior Investigator (Juvenile Division). She received her B.S. degree in Criminal Justice from the University of South Carolina.

**Ellen C. Hamilton**

AT-LARGE MEMBER

*Executive Director*

Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Assault

Ms. Hamilton is the Executive Director of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault, a community based organization founded in 1986 whose focus is the prevention and victim services related to sexual assault, family violence, and child abuse. The Coalition operates the Elizabeth Pettigrew Durant Children's Center established in 1994 located in both the 12<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuits. The Coalition and the Durant Center have been the recipient of both national and state recognition and provide services to a seven county area of the Pee Dee. Ms. Hamilton has worked 36 years in victim advocacy at the local, state, and national level and has a B.A. in Psychology and a Master's in Public Administration.

**The Honorable Roger Henderson**

CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE

*Circuit Court Judge*, Fourth Judicial Circuit

Chesterfield County

Judge Roger E. Henderson received his bachelor's degree in Government from Wofford College and served in the United States Army Reserves from 1971 to 1977. He attended the University of South Carolina School of Law, where he received his juris doctorate degree. Henderson and his wife, the former Sarah Jane Leppard, returned to their hometown of Chesterfield in 1978, where Henderson joined Edward M. Leppard, Sr., his father-in-law, in the practice of law and later formed the firm of Henderson and Spencer. He continued in the general practice of law until 1995, when he was elected by the South Carolina General Assembly to the position of Family Court Judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit. Judge Henderson served as a Family Court Judge until 2015. He was then elected to the position of Resident Circuit Judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit on February 4, 2015. Judge Henderson has been a member of the South Carolina Bar Association, Chesterfield County Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He has also been a member of the South Carolina Trial Lawyers' Association. He is admitted to practice in all South Carolina courts and the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina. Judge Henderson served on the Family Court Judges' Advisory Committee and was President of the South Carolina Conference of Family Court Judges. He was also awarded the Family Court's Buchan, Brown and Jacobs Award in 2014. In his community, Judge Henderson has been a member of the Jaycees, Lion's Club, Chesterfield Civitan Club, Chesterfield Service Club and has served on the executive committee for Boy Scout Troop 650. He is an Eagle Scout, coached Dixie Youth baseball for many years and is an avid

baseball fan.

**L. Eden Hendrick**

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

*Assistant Solicitor*

Richland County Family Court, Fifth Judicial Circuit

L. Eden Hendrick is originally from Columbia, South Carolina. She graduated from the University of Georgia in 2002 and the University of South Carolina School of Law in 2005. Immediately after law school, Mrs. Hendrick began working as a prosecutor in the Fifth Judicial Circuit as an Assistant Solicitor in Family Court. Mrs. Hendrick worked exclusively in Family Court from November 2005 until February 2007 when she moved to General Sessions. As a prosecutor in General Sessions, her case load included both violent and non-violent offenders. She was also part of the DUI team prosecuting DUIs in Magistrate Court and General Sessions. During this time, Mrs. Hendrick continued to prosecute in Family Court and handled all of the waiver eligible Family Court cases, including conducting over 10 waiver hearings. Beginning in 2010, along with her General Sessions case load, Mrs. Hendrick prosecuted all juvenile cases in Kershaw County. In September 2010, Mrs. Hendrick became the staff attorney for the Foster Care Review Board Division with the Governor's Office of Executive Policy and Programs (now the Department of Administration). In that position, Mrs. Hendrick appeared in Family Court hearings around the state advocating for permanency and safety for children in foster care. From March 2013 until January 2015, Mrs. Hendrick represented the Department of Social Services in abuse and neglect and termination of parental rights actions in Richland, Fairfield and Chester counties. In January 2015, Mrs. Hendrick returned to the Fifth Circuit Solicitor's Office to manage the Richland County Family Court Division handling all juvenile petitions in Richland County.

**Amy Holbert**

PARENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

*Executive Director*

Family Connection of SC

Amy Holbert is a licensed, clinical social worker (LISW-CP) with over twenty years of experience working in the maternal, child health field. Currently, She is the Executive Director of Family Connection of SC. Family Connection is a statewide, nonprofit connecting families that have a child with a disability or chronic health need to resources, services, and other families. Family Connection is SC's Parent Training Information Center, a grant award by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and SC's Family-to-Family: Health Information Center. Amy is passionate about improving the lives of children and their families has been recognized as a "Hero in the Field" for her work around reducing infant mortality in the state of SC, as well as the "Catalyst Award" presented by PASOs, for her "initiative, advocacy and support to Latino families in SC". Amy has two wonderful sons, both are diagnosed with asthma and ADHD. The life lessons of being a parent to two children with special medical and behavioral needs, has shaped her career path and choices.

**Alexandra Karydi, Ph.D.**

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

*Program Director*

South Carolina Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative, DMH

Dr. Alex Karydi, LMFT, CSAC, CAC, is a certified drug and alcohol counselor who has been trained in the impact of minority stress. She has a Masters in Clinical Psychology, Ph.D. in Clinical Sexology, and a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy (ABD). She has served for Richland 2 School District as a therapist and with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as an evaluating psychologist with the designation of the SCDJJ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) youth coordinator. She is currently the Program Director for the SC Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative (SCYSPI) a community movement to end suicide in children and young adults. She has been working with kids and their families throughout her travels since 2000

**Tom Knapp**

SCNCAC REPRESENTATIVE

*Executive Director*

SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

Tom Knapp was welcomed to South Carolina in August of 2017 as the Executive Director of the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC). Prior to that, he served as the Executive Director of the Michigan Chapter of the National Children's Alliance (NCA). Tom is the 2017 recipient of the Outstanding Chapter Leader Award and was also the NCA Leadership conference coordinator and an NCA accreditation site reviewer.

Tom's work with Children's Advocacy Centers started during his career in law enforcement where he was a detective with the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department in Michigan. As a detective, he was assigned to major cases and to the local Children's Advocacy Center, investigating crimes against children. During his years serving on the CAC multidisciplinary team, he was trained as a forensic interviewer and received specialized training related to investigating crimes against children. He became the executive director for the Michigan Chapter after retiring from the sheriff's department. In addition to his experience in the CAC movement, Tom has experience with non-profit management, serving as the executive director for the Society of Michigan EMS Instructor Coordinators and serving on many non-profit boards during his career. He has served as adjunct faculty at Grand Valley State University criminal justice program and has been an educator both at police academies and in the emergency medical services field.

**Faith Lee, MSHS, MA**

DSS REPRESENTATIVE

*Director of Performance Management & Accountability*

SC Department of Social Services

Faith Lee has over 21 years of professional experience in child welfare and human services. Currently, Ms. Lee is the Performance Management & Accountability Director for the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS). Ms. Lee is responsible for all federal reporting, the Child & Family Services Review, and the oversight of child welfare services policy. Prior to working with the SCDSS, Ms. Lee was responsible for developing curricula and delivering training for JBS International, Inc., (federal contractor with the Administration of Children and Families) in the Child Welfare Reviews (CWRP) and) and the Child Welfare Compliance Reviews Team (CWCRT) section. Ms. Lee worked with the training team to

develop, organize, and maintain audience-appropriate training and supplementary materials, including manuals, fact sheets, handouts, and audiovisual and multimedia materials. Ms. Lee's child welfare experience includes direct service to children and families, supervision of foster care/after hours, child fatality, and North Carolina child welfare training for the Department of Health and Human Services-NC Division of Social Services (DHHS-NCDSS). For three years at the DHHS-NCDSS, Ms. Lee served as child welfare trainer and for seven years she served as the State Fatality Reviewer. Ms. Lee facilitated trainings on NC child welfare in adoptions, assessment/investigations, child placement (foster care), in home services, and foster home licensing. Furthermore, Ms. Lee reviewed and facilitated child fatality reviews for the 100 county departments of social services and community child protection teams in North Carolina. Ms. Lee's role as the State Fatality Reviewer identified and outlined current and ongoing trends that impacted child safety. Prior to working for the DHHS-NCDSS, Ms. Lee worked in the local county departments of social services in North and South Carolina. Ms. Lee has worked in intake, child protective services, in home services, foster care, adoptions, and as a foster care supervisor. Ms. Lee's human service experience includes training for two non-profit agencies. At Substance Abuse Prevention Services, Ms. Lee provided training on substance abuse as it relates to pregnancy. Moreover, Ms. Lee's work with Communities in Schools involved working with at-risk children and their families. Ms. Lee provided group and individual health educational sessions to at-risk children to prevent and lessen the drop-out rate. Ms. Lee received an MA from Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri and her MSHS from Capella University, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Candice Lively**  
*Deputy Solicitor*  
Sixth Judicial Circuit

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Candice Lively, JD, currently serves as the Deputy Solicitor in the Sixth Circuit for Chester County, South Carolina. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1996 and moved to the Horry County area to start her legal career. She lived there for 17 years and focused on criminal trial work and family court cases. She initially worked as a defense attorney gaining trial experience with the Horry County Public Defender's office where she handled felony trials and juvenile cases. When she left that office, she worked in the private sector and focused on family law handling divorce, child custody, DSS matters, and adoption cases. In May 2007, she accepted a position with the Fifteenth Circuit Solicitor's office and ran the special victim's unit concentrating on prosecuting sexual assault cases and child abuse/homicides. In 2012, she moved back to Columbia, S.C., and accepted a position with the U.S.C. School of Law, Children's Law Center, as their Senior Resource Attorney. She taught the Children in the Courts course for the Law School and the Children's Law Externship. She served on the Children's Law Faculty during the implementation of the Children's Law Concentration curriculum. She served as the state coordinator for the *ChildFirst* forensic interview program. She was chosen to participate in the ACEs training program and became a Master Trainer for Children's Trust in 2013. Lively facilitated the development of the State Drug Endangered Children Guidelines winning a national award for the work done by the state's alliance. She's served on several statewide task forces and organizations to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children within the state, including Silent Tears, Human Trafficking Task Force, ICAC, and SCPSAC.



**John Melville, M.D.**

MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

*Associate Professor of Pediatrics*

Medical University of South Carolina, Children's Hospital

Dr. John Melville is the Division Chief for the Child Abuse Pediatrics unit and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the Medical University of South Carolina. His passion is ensuring that the very best information is available to parents, courts, and other authorities making difficult decisions about keeping children safe. Dr. Melville attended medical school at the University of California, San Diego, and completed a combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency in Akron, Ohio. After residency, Dr. Melville achieved his first "dream job" as a rural physician 30 miles north of the Arctic Circle in the Alaskan bush. When family concerns made continued rural life untenable, Dr. Melville moved to San Antonio, Texas for a fellowship in child abuse pediatrics. Prior to joining MUSC, Dr. Melville was also an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Northeast Ohio Medical University as well as Medical and Site Directors for Children's Advocacy Centers in Ohio. Dr. Melville developed PhotoDoc — a computer program that allows child abuse pediatricians to organize, analyze, and present forensic information. PhotoDoc helps physicians to find and use all the information known about a child abuse allegation, regardless of its source or format. As co-chair of the research committee of the Ray Helfer Society, Dr. Melville designed the Online Bibliography of Child Abuse Pediatrics, or OBCAP. When it is finished OBCAP, will organize and index current literature, conference talks, and educational resources related to treating abused children. OBCAP is a closed database, so parents cannot access it directly.

**The Honorable Robert E. Newton**

CIVIL COURT JUDGE

*Family Court Judge*

11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Lexington County

Judge Newton graduated from Lexington High School and then attended the University of South Carolina where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree, cum laude, in Finance in 1986. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Beta Gamma Sigma. Judge Newton received his Juris Doctorate from the University of South Carolina School of Law in December, 1988.

After graduating from law school, Judge Newton entered private practice in his hometown of Lexington, South Carolina, where he had a litigation intensive practice with a primary focus in the family courts of South Carolina. He was a member of the South Carolina Association for Justice and served a term on its Board of Governors. He served on the executive committee of the Lexington County Bar Association and was President of the Lexington County Bar in 2006. He served as a member of the Dispute Resolution Section Council of the S.C. Bar and the S.C. Bar Resolution of Fee Dispute Board. He was active in various School Improvement Councils and public service committees, as well.

In the later years of his private practice, Judge Newton narrowed his practice to the mediation and arbitration of family court cases throughout the state. On May 23, 2012, he was elected by the General Assembly to the Family Court Bench for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Seat 3.

**Kimaka Nichols-Graham**

*Managing Attorney and Education Unit Head*  
South Carolina Legal Services, Greenville

CHILD ADVOCATE/ATTORNEY FOR CHILDREN

Kimaka Nichols-Graham is the Managing Attorney of the Greenville office at South Carolina Legal Services and the Education Unit head for the firm. She is responsible for the provision of free civil legal services to low income families, the quality of legal services, providing community legal education, and maintaining connections with the private bar in Greenville, Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties. In her capacity as unit head, Ms. Nichols-Graham seeks education law funding, conducts trainings for attorneys on how to represent students from low income families in public education cases, and teaches parents how to advocate for children in public schools. She practices family law and children's law cases to include divorce, custody, school discipline, special education, special needs relative adoption, and children's social security appeals. Ms. Nichols-Graham provides assistance throughout South Carolina. Ms. Nichols-Graham received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Winthrop University, a Master of Science in Public Policy from Rutgers: the State University of New Jersey, and a Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina, School of Law.

**Robin Page**

*Attorney*  
SC Guardian Ad Litem

CHILD ADVOCATE/ATTORNEY FOR CHILDREN

Robin Page is an attorney for the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program representing volunteer guardian ad litem in Lexington County. She previously practiced primarily domestic law in private practice, representing private litigants, as well as DSS, parents and children in DSS child abuse and neglect cases. Ms. Page received her B.A. Degree in Political Science from Winthrop College and her Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina School of Law. She is a member of the Richland County Bar Association, the South Carolina Bar, and served on the South Carolina Bar Family Law Task Force.

**M. Elizabeth (Libby) Ralston, Ph.D.**

*Director Emeritus, Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center*  
*Co-Director, Project Best*

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

M. Elizabeth Ralston, Ph.D. was the founding director of the Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center, an accredited Children's Advocacy Center located in Charleston, SC until December of 2011 and now serves as the Director Emeritus. Dr. Ralston is on the clinical faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the Medical University of South Carolina. She served on the National Children's Alliance (NCA) Board of Directors, on the NCA mental health standard revision committee and participated in the partnership between NCA and NCTSN to develop the CAC Director's Guide to Mental Health services. Dr. Ralston was on the founding board and served as president of the SC Chapter of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children and is a past president of the SC Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers. She currently serves as the Chair of the SC Children's Justice Act Task Force.

Since 2007 Dr. Ralston has served as the co-director of Project BEST, a Trauma Focused Cognitive

Behavior Therapy dissemination effort funded by The Duke Endowment. Since December of 2013, Dr. Ralston has also served as the Co-Director of the South Carolina Trauma Practice Initiative, also funded by The Duke Endowment. SCTPI is a collaboration between the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the SC Department of Mental Health and Project BEST. Dr. Ralston serves as a consultant to organizations and agencies within South Carolina as well as nationally and internationally in support of child safety and child well-being.

**Pamela D. Robinson** COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE REPRESENTATIVE  
*Volunteer Guardian ad Litem*  
Director, Pro Bono Program, USC Law School

Pamela DeFanti Robinson is currently the Director of the USC School of Law Pro Bono Program. She is a graduate of Clemson University with a BA in Elementary Education and of the USC School of Law. The Pro Bono Program is a nationally recognized, academic-based volunteer program integral to the professional development of law students.

Ms. Robinson is an active member of the S.C. Bar, the Richland County CASA Program, Justice 360, the Clemson University Humanities Advancement Board, the Association for American Law Schools (AALS), the International Journal of Volunteer Administration Board, and the ABA Center for Pro Bono. She is the Immediate Past Chair of the SC Children's Justice Act Task Force. Ms. Robinson has been a volunteer guardian *ad Litem* for over 28 years and is a frequent speaker on the topic of effective representation of abused and neglected children as well as law school pro bono program issues. She is the recipient of several awards for her service to children and to the indigent population in South Carolina and in 2007 was presented with the *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the Richland County CASA Program. In 2014 she was awarded the *Martha Dicus Award for Public Interest Law* presented by the SC Women Lawyers Association and in 2016 was named the *SC Lawyer of the Year* by Lawyers Weekly.

**Olga C. Rosa, MD FAAP** HEALTH PROFESSIONAL  
*Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director*  
USC School of Medicine, Division of Forensic Pediatrics  
SC Children's Advocacy Medical Response System

Dr. Olga Rosa is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, School of Medicine where she also completed her Internship and Residency in Pediatrics at the affiliated Children's Hospital. After her training, she worked as a pediatrician in the academic setting. Later, she followed her interest in the practice of health care in rural communities of the United States as she provided Primary Care Pediatrics in Florida. During this time, she developed an interest in child abuse and neglect and became the consultant physician to the regional Child Protection Team.

In 1999, Dr. Rosa decided to make this interest a full time venture and completed a Fellowship in Forensic Pediatrics (Child Abuse Pediatrics) at Hasbro Children's Hospital through Brown University, School of Medicine in Providence, RI. She returned to Florida in 2001 as the Medical Director for the District 15 Child Protection Team, located in Stuart, where she remained for 3 years.

Since October 2004, she has served as the Medical Director for the South Carolina Children's Advocacy Medical Response System (SCCAMRS). It is in this capacity that she has developed a comprehensive statewide resource system to assist the state's children's hospitals and the SC Network of Children's

Advocacy Centers with the implementation of a consistent quality standard of care and practice for the delivery of medical services to children victims of abuse and neglect. She is also an Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Division Chief of Forensic Pediatrics at the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine in Columbia, SC. She directs the Palmetto Health pediatric forensic nurse examiner program as well as provides direct medical services to the Children's Hospital for the assessment of child maltreatment.

**Anna V. Skipper**

*Director of Education*

SC Foster Parent Association

REPRESENTATIVE OF PARENT GROUP

Anna V. Skipper, MSW, LMSW joined the South Carolina Foster Parent Association staff as Director of Education in 2007. She has more than 25 years of experience in the child welfare field including program and policy development, curriculum design, and developing and implementing training programs on the state and national level. Her previous work experience includes more than 15 years as a project coordinator for the Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of South Carolina and she worked as a project coordinator for the South Carolina Department of Social Services. She has additional experience in Juvenile Justice and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services. She received her MSW from the University of South Carolina in 1990.

**Leslie Taaffe**

*Program Coordinator*

SC Court Administration

COURT ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATIVE

Leslie has been employed with the South Carolina Judicial Branch as a Program Coordinator specializing in Family Court matters since September 2013. Prior to working at Court Administration, she was employed by the Richland County Probate Court as director of the Mental Health Court program – a diversionary court designed for non-violent, mentally ill offenders. She also worked in the Probate Court's estate division as a Senior Estate Clerk. Leslie currently volunteers with the Richland County Sheriff's Department in the Youth Arbitration Program.

Leslie graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice.

**Tana G. Vanderbilt**

*General Counsel*

SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Since March of 2007, Ms. Vanderbilt has been General Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. Prior to that, she was the Pro Bono Coordinator for the Nelson Mullins Law firm. Ms. Vanderbilt was previously employed as a resource attorney at the Children's Law Office, where she provided assistance to attorneys, developed written resource materials, and conducted training programs on child protection legal issues for a broad range of professionals. From October 1994 until June 1999, she was Legal Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. Prior to

that position, Ms. Vanderbilt worked for the South Carolina Department of Social Services as a staff attorney and then as Senior Assistant General Counsel.

Ms. Vanderbilt is a member of the SC Bar Children's Committee and of the Bench/Bar Committee. She is a past board member of SCPSAC and a prior board member of Palmetto Richland Children's Hospital. She received her BA with a major in Political Science and a minor in Psychology from Furman University and her Juris Doctorate from the University Of South Carolina School Of Law.

**Rene'e Hampton**

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE REPRESENTATIVE

*Director*

SC Guardian ad Litem Program

Rene'e Hampton became the Director of the South Carolina Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program in December 2017. Ms. Hampton came to the program three years prior as a Program Manager and served in the capacity of Regional Administrator for the Midlands Region. Prior to her service with the GAL Program, Ms. Hampton worked for the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, and Continuum of Care during her 20 plus years as a state government employee. She possesses a Bachelor's Degree in English, a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and Professional Licensure in the Healing Arts.

**Sharleta M. Woodall, MSW**

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE AGENCY

*Program Coordinator II*

South Carolina Department of Social Services

Sharleta Woodall received her Bachelor of Social Work degree (2004) from Winthrop University and received her Master of Social Work degree (2005) from the University of South Carolina. She has over 15 years of experience working with children and families in a variety of capacities including as an investigator for NCDSS, in a non-profit setting as a family reunification worker, and as a lead therapist for intensive in-home services for children who were at risk for out of home placement. She has also provided mental health services for adult, male inmates at the South Carolina Department of Corrections. She is currently employed with the Department of Social Services as a Program Coordinator in Child Welfare services and has been employed with the SCDSS for the last 5 years. She has supported and project managed various activities and initiatives in Child Welfare, with a specific focus over the last 2 years on the development of a Kinship Care program/initiative and has supported and advocated for collaboration with other agencies to ensure practice improvement and resources for kinship care.

**Donna Xenakis**

AT-LARGE MEMBER

*Chair*

SC Citizen Review Panel, Lowcountry Panel

Donna has worked with and advocated for children and their families during her entire career and volunteer work. She worked for 17 years in the non-profit sector in South Carolina, and in 2015 started her own business, Now Hear This. She offers the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, Child Abuse Awareness &

Prevention Training, and Bullying Awareness & Prevention Training. She is also a certified Facilitator for Parent Cafe` and the Strengthening Families Program. In addition, Donna is a volunteer with the South Carolina Citizen Review Panel since 2009, serving as Chair for the LowCountry Panel. She was honored to receive the South Carolina Juanita Chavez Shared Leadership Award in 2012 and the South Carolina Citizen Review Panel Person of the Year Award in 2014.