

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

Trista Baird

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Lieutenant

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
Special Victims Unit – Department of Child Fatalities

Trista Baird has been with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) since 2013. She is assigned to the Special Victims Unit – Department of Child Fatalities and is the Lieutenant over the Low Country and Pee Dee regions. Her unit investigates all child deaths in South Carolina (under the age of 18), excluding traffic accidents and disease related deaths. Prior to joining SLED, Lt. Baird worked for Rock Hill Police Department for six years where she served on patrol, the Street Crimes Unit, the Professional Standards Unit, and the Criminal Investigations Division where she investigated child and vulnerable adult abuse. Lt. Baird holds a bachelor’s degree from Winthrop University in Psychology and Sociology with a concentration in Criminology and a master’s degree from the University of Cincinnati in Criminal Justice. She is also an adjunct instructor at Winthrop University and York Technical College where she teaches sociology and criminal justice courses. Lt. Baird has previously served as a foster parent for children in South Carolina.

Deborah C. Boone

EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH HOMELESS CHILDREN

McKinney-Vento Coordinator

Richland County School District One

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, 2nd 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 45th and 47th Annual Short Course for Defense Lawyers in Criminal Cases (Chicago, IL, July 2002, July 2004); the National Association of Drug Court Professionals 9th 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 21st 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.

Carissa Gainey

DSS REPRESENTATIVE

Director, Office of Safety Management
SC Department of Social Services

Carissa Gainey began serving as the Director of Safety Management at DSS in February of 2020. Carissa has a Bachelor’s in Psychology from the College of Charleston and will graduate in May 2020 with a Master’s Degree in Social Work from the University of South Carolina. Carissa brings a background in working with DSS (investigations, intake, performance coach, and interim director for Calhoun County) as well as working with minor survivors of sex trafficking. Carissa has also interned at DJJ’s Coastal Evaluation Center and the University of South Carolina Children’s Law Center. She and her husband, Wes, have had the wonderful experience of fostering seven children. Carissa has a vision to establish and maintain an organizational culture where we constantly ask what we can do better by striving for excellence, and where accountability leads to safe children with safe families.

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 21st 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 12th and 4th 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.

Portia Hawkins

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE AGENCY

Program Unit Manager

South Carolina Department of Social Services

Portia Taylor Hawkins is currently employed as a Program Unit Manager in the Safety Management Division of the South Carolina Department of Social Services. She has worked in the field of social work in South Carolina for over 20 years. Prior to going into human services she worked as a Personnel Specialist and Account Executive for a Temporary Staffing and Head Hunting firm. Her previous

experience includes providing technical assistance to county Department of Social Services workers for the Title IV-E Program. The Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program reimburses states for expenditures in three categories: (1) adoption assistance payments to eligible families; (2) adoption placement services and administrative costs related to adoptions from foster care; and (3) expenses related to training for staff and adoptive parents. Eligibility determinations for Title IV-E determines a State Agency's "penetration" rate, e.g. the amount the Federal Government will reimburse a State for adoptions and special needs costs. Portia's duties in this position included approving final eligibility for children who were placed in the care, custody and control of the Department of Social Services; and ensuring county workers applied correct policy to each case. She has also held positions in Foster Care in Group Home and Child Placing Agency Licensing & Regulatory Services and served as a Training Supervisor for Child Welfare. Portia has worked in private adoptions since 2005 while counseling birth parents and volunteering in crisis pregnancy centers. Additionally, she is a certified adoption investigator in South Carolina as well as a Lay Guardian Ad Litem and Notary Public. She received the "Angel in Adoption" award in 2015 which is a National award through the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) in Washington, DC.

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.

The Honorable Alex Kinlaw, Jr.

CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE

Circuit Court Judge, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

Greenville County

Alex Kinlaw, Jr. attended Public School in Georgetown County and graduated from Winyah High School with honors. He enrolled at the University of South Carolina and graduated in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science Degree. Judge Kinlaw attended Law School at the University of South Carolina and graduated with a Juris Doctorate Degree in 1978. While in Law School, he served as Vice President of the Black American Law Students Association (BALSA). He was admitted to the South Carolina Bar in October 1978, the South Carolina District Court in 1981. Also while in Law School, Judge Kinlaw was employed as an intern in the Post-Conviction Relief Division of the South Carolina Attorney General's Office and also served as an intern with the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. Following Law School, Judge Kinlaw was employed as a Staff Attorney with the Legal Services Agency of Western Carolina. He later joined the

Office of the Greenville County Public Defender in 1989 as an Assistant Public Defender. In 1983, Judge Kinlaw went into the private practice of law in Greenville and Greenwood Counties. During that time, Judge Kinlaw became Death Penalty Certified and handled as lead Counsel Four (4) Death Penalty Cases. He also did a short tenure as a part-time prosecutor in the 8th Circuit. In 2009, Judge Kinlaw was elected by the South Carolina General Assembly as a Resident Family Court Judge for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit and has served continuously until his election to the Circuit Court Bench on February 7, 2018.

Judge Kinlaw has been active in the State and Local Bar Associations. He has served on the Resolution of Fee Disputes Board, the Commission on Legal Education and Specialization, the South Carolina Black Lawyers Association, the Donald J. Sampson Bar Association, and the National Bar Association. Judge Kinlaw is also a graduate of the School of Criminal Defense Attorneys in Houston, Texas. Judge Kinlaw has also served as the Juvenile Drug Court Judge for the 13th Judicial Circuit since 2011. He was also a member of the National Conference of Family Court Judges and the National Conference of Drug Court Professionals. Judge Kinlaw has served as Chairman of the Legal Services Board of Western Carolina and as Board Chairman of the Urban League of the Upstate. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the State Legal Services Agency, the Greenville Mental Health Board and the Greenville Cultural Exchange Board. He is also a member of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Tom Knapp

Executive Director

SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

SCNCAC REPRESENTATIVE

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.

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

11th 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.

The Honorable Kimaka Nichols-Graham

CIVIL COURT JUDGE

Family Court Judge

Greenville, SC

Judge Nichols-Graham is a native of Mullins, South Carolina. She graduated from Mullins High School with honors; from Winthrop University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science; and, from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University with a Master of Science in Public Policy. Judge Nichols-Graham returned to South Carolina and earned a Juris Doctor from The University of South Carolina School of Law. Judge Nichols-Graham demonstrated an interest in children's law by interning, clerking or volunteering at the domestic violence shelter in Rock Hill, South Carolina, at the Education Law Center of New Jersey, at the Richland County CASA Office, at the SC Department of Education and the SC Association of School Administrators before seeking a position at a legal services program that would allow her to represent students and families in matters related to public school.

The Legal Services Agency of Western Carolina, Inc., gave Judge Nichols-Graham the opportunity to develop a children's law program that included education law. Judge Nichols-Graham worked as a staff attorney, a children's law attorney, the education unit head, a supervising attorney for the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, and as a managing attorney of a large office at South Carolina Legal Services. She worked with SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center to create an education task force that later became a unit at legal services. Judge Nichols-Graham primarily practiced family and education law but she also practiced housing, consumer, social security, and in a few other areas of law to assist with stabilizing families.

As a young lawyer, Judge Nichols-Graham developed a children's law program that included monitoring the firm's termination of parental rights and adoption cases and assisting attorneys in ways to efficiently and effectively resolve those cases across several counties in the upstate. She coordinated a program focused on explaining legal rights and responsibilities to parents while their children participated in a Saturday Success Program at the Center for Educational Equity. Judge Nichols-Graham volunteered with the School Carolina Bar's children law committee and the SC Black Lawyers Association. By 2001 she had worked successfully to add education law to the areas of practice for all legal services programs in South Carolina. She served on the board of SC Protection and Advocacy, on the SC Supreme Court Commission of Continuing Legal Education and Specialization and on the SC Children Justice Act Task Force. She provided numerous legal education sessions to the Bar and the public. In February of 2020, she

was elected by the General Assembly to the Family Court Bench.

The South Carolina Bar awarded Judge Nichols-Graham with the Young Lawyer of the Year Award for 2001-2002. The SC Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission and the SC Bar Foundation awarded Judge Nichols-Graham the 2014 Ellen Hines Smith Legal Services Attorney of the Year. In 2019 the Greenville Business Magazine included Judge Nichols-Graham as one of the Legal Elite of the Upstate.

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.

Tana G. Vanderbilt

EXPERIENCED IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Former General Counsel

SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

Ms. Vanderbilt served as General Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs for thirteen years. 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.

Amy Wessinger

Family Court Representative

SC Court Administration

COURT ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATIVE

Amy was born and raised in West Columbia where she graduated from Airport High School. From there she went on to graduate from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. After completing her Bachelor's degree, Amy received her Paralegal Certification from Midland's Technical College. Amy worked for a private Family Law attorney in Columbia for 10 years. In 2020 she joined Court Administration as the Family Court Representative with Court Services.

Amanda F. Whittle DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY REPRESENTATIVE
State Child Advocate and Director
South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy

Amanda F. Whittle is the State Child Advocate (SCA) and Director of the South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy (DCA). She was appointed by Governor Henry D. McMaster on June 3, 2019. Prior to her appointment, she worked as an Assistant General Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Social Services and as a family court practitioner with Johnson, Johnson, Whittle & Snelgrove, Attorneys, P.A. During her years in private practice, she served as the attorney for the volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program and as a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the Second Judicial Circuit. Director Whittle graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of South Carolina at Aiken in May of 1992 and earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law in December of 1994. She is admitted to the South Carolina Bar and United States District Court. She is certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) through the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC). Director Whittle's work in the private and public sector, along with her passion for serving and advocating for others, has prepared her to take on this new role with the S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy. She is excited about the opportunity to work with a great team and many partners throughout the state in improving outcomes and ensuring children receive adequate protection and care from services and programs offered by state agencies for children.