PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION
FAMILY LAW SECTION MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2016
Chair, Dina Ronsayro, Esquire, presided.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION: Dina called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.
She welcomed everyone and acknowledged the Honorable Diane Thompson and the Honorable Ourania Papademetriou were present.

II. CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO MINUTES: The March minutes were approved.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT: The financial information was not available as of the time of the meeting.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. The Help Desk continues to need volunteer attorneys to sign up for Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please contact Lee Schwartz, Esquire, to schedule at lee@schwartzjordan.com.

B. The Honorable Christopher Mallios’ father passed away. The services are expected to be held on Thursday, April 28th. Our deepest condolences to His Honor, and please see the listserv for further details regarding the services.

C. The issues surrounding “Innovative Models for Non-Lawyer Assistance and Practice” were discussed. One model that was intended to promote access to justice allows for the creation of limited licensed legal technicians. These technicians are permitted to dispense legal advice but cannot practice in court. The meeting attendees stated concerns that there are no current requirements that these technicians carry malpractice insurance, the legal education required for the technicians is too minimal, the lack of attorney supervision of these technicians is problematic, and allowing non-lawyers to provide legal advice is tantamount to allowing the unauthorized practice of law. Please see the listserv for more information regarding this issue.

D. H.B. 380 – This legislation proposes reducing the waiting period of a no-fault divorce based on separation [the Section 3301(d) divorce] from two years to one. This passed the House of Representatives last fall, and the Senate Judiciary Committee is to review it on April 5, 2016. If the Senate approves H.B. 380, it will be sent to the Governor for signing. Note that it will only be effective for separations which begin after the effective start date of the legislation.

V. PROGRAM: “The Voices of the Children of Divorce”
A. Dina introduced Mary Cushing Doherty, Esquire, and Julia Swain, Esquire. Mary and Julie are both former Philadelphia Bar Association Family Law Section Chairs and current fellows of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML).

B. Notable Points – See attached handout for more information.

1. Mary and Julie presented a 17-minute video where child actors (from Upper Dublin, PA) portray children in divorced families during their group therapy sessions. The portrayals are based upon real stories and perspectives from children in these situations, and the questions posed were designed by a psychologist.

2. The video and more information can be found at www.aaml.org.

3. Attendees found the video helpful and proposed it be played on the televisions in courthouse waiting rooms and be available for viewing in the Help Center.

4. Mary and Julie also encouraged attendees to consider joining AAML, as they have enjoyed their membership and believe it is an exceptional organization for family law attorneys.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS: Committee meeting times/dates and announcements are disseminated over the Family Law Section’s listserv.

VII. GOOD & WELFARE: None.

NEXT SECTION MEETING: Monday, May 2, 2016, at 12:00 p.m. on the 15th Floor of the Philadelphia Family Court building at 1501 Arch Street

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 12:00 p.m. on the 11th Floor of the Philadelphia Bar Association at 1101 Market Street

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine L. Calalang, Esquire
Secretary

ATTACHMENTS(2):
- AAML’s “The Voices of Children of Divorce” Handout
- April 2016 PA Appellate Court Family Law Slip Opinions – Courtesy of Sara Slocum, Esquire, of Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel, LLP