



CUYAHOGA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
HON. LESLIE ANN CELEBREZZE

COURT ADMINISTRATOR
JAMES S. ZAK

JUDGES
HON. DIANE M. PALOS
HON. FRANCINE B. GOLDBERG
HON. TONYA R. JONES
HON. COLLEEN ANN REALI

For Immediate Release
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Local Judges Selected to Present at the AFCC 60th Anniversary Conference

Cleveland, Ohio: Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Administrative Judge Leslie Ann Celebrezze and Judge Francine B. Goldberg are pleased to announce The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) has invited Judge Goldberg and Judge Celebrezze to speak at their 60th Anniversary Conference. AFCC is an association of both national and international professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict. The conference, *60 Years of Asking the Difficult Questions*, will take place in Los Angeles, California May 31 through June 3, 2023.

Judge Celebrezze and Judge Goldberg's presentation, *Close Encounters of the Technology Kind: Creating a Virtual Courthouse*, will provide an opportunity on the national stage to share the Court's innovative technology and inform court leaders nationwide.

Technology plays a significant role in all aspects of court proceedings, and the need has become ever more evident as courts have shifted to conduct business electronically and virtually, a development that will continue in the future. In recent years, the number of people using the courts without the assistance of a lawyer has exploded. With the increased number of self-represented litigants in Cuyahoga County and nationwide, family court litigants need resources that are free or low-cost, easy to use, convenient, and that use technology to improve delivery of services.

Judge Celebrezze explained, "Family courts see more self-represented litigants than other court divisions and family court statutes and case law are complex, technical, and can be confusing for self-represented litigants. For these reasons, we must provide the appropriate level of legal assistance and a fair and efficient process."

Celebrezze continued, "The Domestic Relations Court has assisted more than 90,000 families through our Help Center, resulting in increased litigant and court satisfaction, time and cost efficiency, and improved procedural fairness. Exit surveys demonstrate litigants "...have a sense

that decisions are made through court processes that are fair...,” and feel respected and trust the Court. Building on this success, the Court has taken the next logical step and is developing a Virtual Help Center, featuring chat bot and live chat features and providing self-represented litigants 24/7 access.”

Judge Goldberg, a member of the Supreme Court of Ohio’s Commission on Technology and the Courts, led efforts to develop CourtConnect, a free mobile app that connects litigants and attorneys to the Court. CourtConnect provides quick, easy, 24/7 on-the-go access to court-related information through mobile devices. This cutting-edge technology was the first of its kind for a family court in Ohio, and possibly the first in the nation.

“Domestic Relations Court is a leader in innovative technology initiatives. Our presentation will focus on providing hands-on tools and test-proven strategies to inform and provide prototypes to court leaders nationwide,” said Judge Goldberg.

Goldberg continued, “Our goal is to share what we have developed so that we can be the change agent for courts across the country.”

For more information about Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court services and programs, please visit our website at <https://domestic.cuyahogacounty.us>, follow us on Twitter and Meta @CuyDomRelations, and download our mobile app CourtConnect.

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