

## **MEDIATORS' BIOS**

### **Judith Achre**

Judith Achre has been a Mediator for the Office for Dispute Resolution since 1986. She has received Advanced Special Education Mediation and Conflict Resolution training through the Justice Center of Atlanta. She has a degree in Education from Wheelock College, Boston, MA and has completed course work in Special Education at Penn State University. She has been a teacher and substitute teacher in the Sharon and Hermitage, PA school districts and has worked with students with special needs and their families through a private agency. An active community leader, she has served on many Boards including Penn State/Shenango, Youngstown (Ohio) University, Community Child Care Center, Head Start and United Way of Mercer County. Prior to her work as a mediator, she served as a volunteer advocate for children with special needs and their families. She co-founded the Mercer County Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. The agency provides family support, academic tutoring and advocacy. She has provided training for parents as well as teachers in the field of Learning Disabilities.

### **Stephanie Bell**

Stephanie Bell has been a special education mediator in Pennsylvania for over 15 years. She has been involved in the field of education for over 30 years providing services to students with special needs at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. Her background includes experience as a coordinator, learning disabilities specialist, reading specialist, and special education teacher in both private and public settings. For over 20 years, Ms. Bell has worked in disability support services at the post-secondary level, and she is currently the coordinator of access services at a college in suburban Philadelphia. She has Master's degrees in Special Education and the Psychology of Reading from Temple University.

### **Ronald A. Burton, MSW, Ph.D.**

Ronald A. Burton, MSW, Ph.D., for the past thirteen years has been involved with special education – including having been the Training and Technical Support Specialist and Cordero Interagency Coordinator for the School District of Philadelphia prior to his retirement in 2001. Dr. Burton completed Mediation Certification Training for Special Education Disputes from the Justice Center of Atlanta. He has been a contracted Mediation Consultant with the Office of Dispute Resolution since 2004. As a senior manager, consultant or appointed official in human services, Dr. Burton's mediation experience has included conflict mediator training on conflict management and implementing policy designed to prevent or mediate conflict for the Department of Army, non-profit mental health and social welfare agencies, and city and state commissions. Dr. Burton received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Policy and Management from the Heller School, Brandeis University, and a Master of Social Work Degree from the National Catholic School of Social Services, the Catholic University of America and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the Federal City College, University of the District of Columbia. Dr. Burton is President of the Center for Social Welfare Concerns, Inc., and President of the National Ostomy Association, Inc. in addition to being the Co-Chair of the Disaster Mental Health Services, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter, American Red Cross, and Vice Chair of

the Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission. Trained in Tavistock Group Relations, Dr. Burton has provided speaking engagements nationally and internationally.

**Millicent Carvalho, L.S.W., Ph.D.**

Millicent Carvalho, L.S.W., Ph.D., received her Doctorate in Social Work and Social Policy, and Masters' degrees in Social Science (social work) and Law and Social Policy from Bryn Mawr College and Counselor Education from Boston University. Dr. Carvalho has been a practicing mediator for more than 25 years. In addition, she is a licensed social worker and master trainer, and trained in most mediation and conflict resolution models. Until recently, Dr. Carvalho was an associate professor and department chair in social work. Her expertise lies in her ability to help individuals and groups to manage change in ways that increase collaboration and result in positive outcomes. That is, her mediation and diversity training has aided in keeping constituencies with diverse stakeholders and points of view working together.

**Cheryl Cutrona, Esquire**

Cheryl Cutrona has been serving as a mediator since 1986 and mediating special education disputes for the Office for Dispute Resolution since 1988. As the Executive Director of the Good Shepherd Mediation Program since 1991, where she develops conflict resolution and mediation training curricula, she has trained more than 2,000 mediators and offered conflict resolution training to thousands of people locally as well as in South Africa, Guam and Israel. Cutrona teaches mediation advocacy and practice, alternative dispute resolution and conflict resolution theory as an adjunct instructor at Temple University Beasley School of Law and St. Joseph's University Graduate Department of Sociology.

Cutrona mediates for the Philadelphia Family Court Domestic Relations Court custody unit, Philadelphia Bar Association Lawyer Fee Disputes Panel, and the United States Postal Service REDRESS program; facilitates pre-hearing conferences for the Philadelphia Family Court Dependency Unit; and arbitrates for the Better Business Bureau and the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Cutrona sits on the PA Legislative Task Force on Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee; the Court Improvement Project Committee of the Philadelphia Family Court Dependency Unit; the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators; the Board of Directors of the Association for Conflict Resolution Delaware Valley Chapter; and the Editorial Board of *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. She is the 2008 recipient of the PA Bar Association Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee "Sir Francis Bacon Dispute Resolution Award." Cutrona holds a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University, a Master's degree in Library Science from Wayne State University, and a Juris Doctor from Temple University, Beasley School of Law. Cutrona considers herself to be a facilitative mediator who is also well versed in the transformative style.

**Gerald Dambach, Ed.D.**

Dr. Dambach has over forty years in education as a School Psychologist and a Special Education Administrator. His Doctorate is in Educational and Psychology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Dambach was an adjunct instructor at Westminster College in the graduate education school for administration and was a Special Education Hearing Officer for more than 25 years before becoming a Special Education Mediator.

**Ellen DeBenedetti, M.Ed.**

Ellen J. DeBenedetti M.Ed. is the Training Coordinator and Senior Mediator for Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Training Services at Center for Victims of Violence and Crime (CVVC) where she mediates, does large group facilitation and training in conflict management, mediation, facilitation, negotiation and related skills. She has been a mediator since 1990. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University and a Master of Education in Special Education from the University of Pittsburgh. From 1977 – 1997, Ms. DeBenedetti was a special education teacher. She has received a wide variety of training including multi-party mediation and diversity education. She is certified by the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation to be a mediator.

In addition to her work at CVVC, Ms. DeBenedetti is a mediator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; United States Postal Service; PA Office for Dispute Resolution; Key Bridge Foundation (Department of Justice mediations about the Americans with Disabilities Act); Transportation Safety Administration; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; and US District Court of Western Pennsylvania. Ms. DeBenedetti designed and taught the original “Methods of Resolving Conflict Course” for the Duquesne University Sociology Department’s certificate program in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking. She participated in the Pittsburgh Public Schools mediation training, co-authored the “Keys to Peaceful Conflict Resolution” curriculum and taught that curriculum as a volunteer at East Hills Elementary School.

**William A. Haussmann**

William A. Haussmann has been a special education mediator since 1986. He is one of the original group of professionals recruited and trained to start the mediation program in Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of Temple University with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1964 and earned a Master's degree in Social Work in 1967 from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. Since 1973 he has been the executive director of Tabor Children's Services, Inc., a comprehensive family services agency in southeast Pennsylvania with divisions dedicated to child welfare, mental health and day care services. Additionally, Mr. Haussmann has been a team leader/peer reviewer for the Council on Accreditation since 1996. He has also been trained as an IEP Facilitator.

**Lorraine Heeter, Esquire**

Attorney Lorraine Heeter earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from LaSalle University and her Juris Doctor from Case Western Reserve University. She has eleven years experience in pediatric nursing before changing careers to the practice of law. Attorney Heeter practiced with a law firm for two years before becoming a PA Special Education Appeals Panel Member, of which she was a member until the current change in the PA Due Process system. Attorney Heeter attended the certificate program for Conflict Resolution and Mediation at the Center for Victims of Violence and Crime in Pittsburgh PA.

### **Diane D. Hitzemann, Esquire**

Attorney Diane D. Hitzemann is a mediator and collaborative lawyer in private practice where she specializes in resolving disputes with dignity and respect outside the courtroom. She also serves on mediation panels providing special education mediation for the Pennsylvania Office for Dispute Resolution; special education mediation for the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania; and court custody mediation for Berks County, Pennsylvania. A Minnesota native, Attorney Hitzemann graduated with a Social Psychology Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. She spent several years as a child welfare caseworker and a residential treatment center counselor prior to attending and graduating Cum Laude from William Mitchell College of Law, St. Paul, MN in 1985. Attorney Hitzemann used her counseling and legal skills to develop estate plans for trust customers of a large regional Minnesota bank until she was recruited to a leadership position in a Pennsylvania bank in 1992. She spent the next ten years working within the Pennsylvania banking community to mentor employees and establish mutually respectful customer and bank relationships. In 2003, Attorney Hitzemann established an independent mediation and law practice. She has received extensive mediation and collaborative law trainings and continues to develop her skills by participating and teaching in state and national mediation and collaborative law advanced skills workshops. Attorney Hitzemann provides leadership in local, state and national initiatives to educate the public about choices in dispute resolution.

### **Deidre Kuban**

Deidre Kuban has served as a mediator with the Pennsylvania Office for Dispute Resolution since 1986, facilitating approximately 450 Special Education Mediations, IEP Facilitations, and Resolution Meeting Facilitations. In 1982, with previous employment experience in community organizing, Ms. Kuban founded the Pittsburgh Mediation Center, serving as executive director and education specialist until 1994. She also consulted with school districts to organize student mediation programs. Now in private mediation practice for thirteen years, Ms. Kuban contracts with government, private and nonprofit agencies to mediate disputes concerning divorce and custody, family issues, adoption, community disputes, and workplace management-employee disputes. Ms. Kuban received a Bachelor of Arts from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Arts from the University of Pittsburgh, in addition to a teaching certification in social studies and history, and paralegal training.

### **Jean M. Lupariello, Esquire**

Jean M. Lupariello is an attorney/mediator with a private practice in Mediation and Collaborative Law. She has been a court-appointed mediator in the custody department of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas for the past thirteen years and has been appointed as a Parenting Coordinator and a Guardian Ad Litem by the Family Court judges on many cases. She is also a contract mediator for the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Attorney Lupariello has spent many years representing families in Juvenile Court where she is involved with the agencies and resources ordered for children with special needs and attending and providing input at IEP meetings as an Educational Guardian.

### **Dr. Constance Lyttle, Esquire**

Dr. Constance Lyttle, Esquire has been active in the field of special education for over three decades as a special and secondary education teacher; tenured university professor (Duquesne University 1976-1986); grant writer; inclusion consultant to federal, state and local education departments, school districts, professional organizations and universities; PA Special Education Hearing Officer (7 yrs.) and Appellate Panel Hearing Officer (over 13 yrs.); and attorney and advocate. She earned her undergraduate degree with honors in Speech Communications, Theatre Education and teaching the Visually Impaired, from Ohio State University; her Master's degree in Learning Disabilities and teaching the Visually Impaired from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University; her Ph.D. in Communications & Technology and Special Education from The University of Pittsburgh (1981); and her Juris Doctor (law review) from Duquesne University (1986). In addition to teaching law and special education as a member of the Penn State University World Campus Faculty, Dr. Lyttle currently serves as a PA Special Education Mediator, IEP/IFSP Facilitator and IDEA Resolution Meeting Facilitator. Dr. Lyttle, through her private mediation/case management/consulting practice, *Special Education Law Solutions*, serves school districts and families with issues concerning appropriate evaluation, identification, programming, placement, and progress monitoring of children with disabilities. Dr. Lyttle has presented across the United States and Puerto Rico on special education and law. She remains active in special education and legal professional organizations, notably, the PBA's Legal Rights for Exceptional Children, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Children's Rights Committees, as well as holding the elected position of PA Representative to the National Council for Exceptional Children.

### **Gerald Powers, Ed.D., Professor Emeritus**

Dr. Gerald Powers has over forty-four years of experience in Special Education. He obtained a Master's degree in Special Education at the University of New Hampshire in 1965. Dr. Powers earned a Doctorate in Special Education from the University of Northern Colorado in 1971. He is the parent of a child with disabilities. He served as an elected member of the Bloomsburg School Board for thirteen years. Dr. Powers was trained in Special Education Mediation, IEP Facilitation and Conflict Resolution by the Justice Center of Atlanta. He has presided over two hundred Mediations and IEP Facilitations. Dr. Powers has served as a Peer Monitor and Compliance Reviewer for the PA Bureau of Special Education for over twenty years. He has served as a Compliance Peer Reviewer and LRE Monitor in over one hundred school districts and charter schools. Dr. Powers was appointed to the Commonwealth Licensure Board of Speech, Hearing and Language from 1989-1997 and was elected chair in 1993 and 1996. Dr. Powers was awarded a distinguished faculty award from Bloomsburg and was granted Faculty Emeritus status in 1999.

### **Marilyn J. Rischmann**

Marilyn J. Rischmann has worked in the field of alternative dispute resolution for more than 20 years. Her interest in conflict resolution began in the 1980s when she trained with the Dallas Board of Conciliators, Texas, to mediate after market disputes in real estate. She held a Pennsylvania Real Estate License for six years and served on the Bucks County Board of Realtors Disputant Resolution Directory List for two years.

Ms. Rischmann's interest in restorative justice practices led her to Good Shepherd Mediation Program, Philadelphia, PA, where, from 2001 through 2006, she coordinated then managed Good Shepherd's Victim-Offender Mediation Program. While at Good Shepherd, she also facilitated cases for abused and neglected children at Philadelphia Family Court, mediated EEOC complaints, and worked in the US Post Offices' REDRESS Program.

In 1995 Marilyn was trained by the Justice Center of Atlanta and began mediating for the Office for Dispute Resolution (formerly PA Special Education Mediation Service). She has conducted hundreds of mediations involving children with disabilities and continues under contract to assist parents, Early Intervention programs and school districts.

Marilyn was educated at Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA (major, Psychology) and is a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators and Professional Learning Disabilities Association. She volunteers for The Office of the Victim Advocate in cases of serious, violent crime.

### **James Salem**

James Salem received a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Science degree from Gallaudet University in Education of the Deaf. He was employed at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf for 35 years, rising to the position of Assistant Superintendent. Since retirement from the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in 1989, he has been employed as an educational consultant. He has worked as a special education mediator for the Office for Dispute Resolution since 1990.

### **Janice G. Seidenfeld**

Janice G. Seidenfeld has been a mediator for 17 years. She is on the roster for Key Bridge Foundation, where she has mediated ADA cases. Ms. Seidenfeld is contracted with the Office for Dispute Resolution for whom she has mediated special education cases since 2000. In her private practice, Ms. Seidenfeld mediates family and custody disputes. She is a mediator for the ADR program of the United States District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania. In addition to her private practice she mediates cases for the Office of Victim Advocates for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Also, she volunteers for Center for Victims of Violence and Crime (CVVC) where she conducts community, business, juvenile victim-offender, and elder mediations. Ms. Seidenfeld holds a Master's degree in Special Education from Columbia University, Teachers College.

### **Kay Hennessy Seven, Esquire**

Attorney Seven has approximately 15 years experience working as an attorney with a focus on dispute resolution and a special emphasis on issues related to children and families. Attorney Seven received her Juris Doctor from Villanova University and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Lehigh University. She received initial mediation training from the Center for Mediation in Law in New York in 2004 and has had the opportunity to resolve disputes in custody, divorce and special education. Before serving as a mediator for the Office for Dispute Resolution, she had served as an Appeals Panel Officer from 2006. Attorney Seven previously worked in private practice where she represented clients in general practice and family law cases, including real estate, custody, divorce and child support. She also represented petitioners in domestic violence actions for Legal Services; represented juveniles through the adjudication and hearing process; acted as a *guardian ad litem* for approximately 30 juveniles; and handled matters for Children and Youth Services. She served as a mediator and hearing officer for the county. Prior to entering private practice, Attorney Seven worked as a law clerk for the Honorable James R. Cavanaugh of the Pennsylvania Superior Court and for the Honorable Katherine B.L. Platt of the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County.

### **Joseph G. Skelly, Esquire**

Mr. Skelly has engaged in the general civil practice of law in the Harrisburg area for the past number of years, handling both litigation and transactional matters. In 1999, he opened his own firm, the Skelly Dispute Resolution Center, to concentrate his practice in conflict resolution, primarily mediation and arbitration in a number of areas including business matters, organizational disputes, divorce and family law, and special education. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and his Juris Doctor from the Villanova University School of Law. He is a member of the Association for Conflict Resolution; the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators; and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committees of the American, Pennsylvania, and Dauphin County Bar Associations. Mr. Skelly is an adjunct professor of law in Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Widener University School of Law, and is a frequent lecturer on the subjects of dispute resolution, ethics and professionalism. He is a certified/approved mediator for, inter alia, the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania; the Pennsylvania Bar Association Lawyer Dispute Program; and the Dauphin County Bar Association Civil Dispute Resolution Program. He is also a Mediator and Facilitator for the Office for Dispute Resolution (Special Education), where he has also served as a Hearing Officer.

### **Marty Thomas-Brumme**

Marty Thomas-Brummé has a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Mansfield University, a Master of Education in Counseling from Millersville University, and has completed the coursework for a Ph.D. in Psychoeducational Processes at Temple University. He has extensive mediation training through the Justice Center of Atlanta (Special Education Mediation Training), Good Shepherd Mediation Center (Basic Mediation Training), US Postal Service (USPS REDRESS Mediation Training), the Municipal Court of Philadelphia (Landlord/Tenant Mediation Training), Zena Zumeta (Divorce and Custody Mediation Training) and the Mennonite Central Committee (Victim Offender Mediation

Training). He also started and directed a community mediation center and has taught training sessions on basic mediation and conflict resolution skills throughout the state. Mr. Thomas-Brumme has a variety of life experiences including managing a homeless shelter, running a training center for a national school dropout prevention organization, working in higher education, and living and traveling in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia. He has been a mediator with the Pennsylvania Office for Dispute Resolution since 1987.

### **Judy Tobe**

Judy Tobe, M.A. received her Master's Degree in Communication Disorders from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1983. In addition to diagnosing and treating various populations with speech and language disorders, she has developed and presented learning programs in the form of executive level presentations, intensive skill sessions and multi-day trainings to professional associations, hospitals and corporations both nationally and internationally. In 2000, she became a mediator and, as a mediator in private practice, has mediated over 500 cases involving educational, employment and discrimination disputes. In addition to mediating for the Office for Dispute Resolution, Ms. Tobe also serves as a mediator for the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

### **Max Wald, Ed.D.**

Max Wald, Ed.D. has served as a teacher, school principal at both the elementary and secondary school level, director of special education, college professor, hearing officer, and mediator. Dr. Wald earned all of his degrees at Temple University where he also taught and supervised student teachers. He served as a principal in the School District of Philadelphia, Colonial School District, and the Cherry Hill School District. He was a director at the Woods Schools and the Pathway School. He has taught at Temple University, Arcadia University, and at the University of Leicester in England. Dr. Wald received a research fellowship in rehabilitation psychology at the Moss Rehabilitation Hospital and is certified as a teacher and supervisor of special education. He has served as a Hearing Officer with the Office for Dispute resolution for the past nine years and is currently a trained mediator. He is certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a family mediator.

### **Okima Williams Amaya, Ph.D.**

Okima Williams Amaya, Ph.D. has a Master's degree in Psychology from West Chester University and a Master's degree in Education from American Intercontinental University. She recently graduated with a Ph.D. in Education from Capella University. Ms. Amaya has over 30 years experience working with consumers from diverse background and settings. Ms. Amaya's background includes working in the following facilities: Adult corrections; vocational evaluation centers; mental health residential programs; HIV/AIDS programs; outpatient counseling and therapy services; and as a Behavioral Health Consultant in behavioral health agencies. Ms. Amaya has over 19 years experience in the provision of crisis intervention emergency services and operational programming for the City of Philadelphia. Ms. Amaya has been a Special Education Mediator under contract with ODR since 1998.