

PRESS RELEASE

LOCAL ATTORNEYS UTILIZING "COLLABORATIVE LAW" APPROACH FOR DIVORCE

Several local attorneys have begun utilizing "collaborative law" to resolve domestic relations cases. The collaborative law process encourages the attorneys and their clients to emphasize cooperation as opposed to litigation in resolving their marital difficulties. The collaborative law process was originally developed in the 1990's by a Minnesota attorney named Stuart Webb. Mr. Webb was attempting to allow his clients to terminate their marriage without destructive byproducts of a traditional divorce and litigation. Mr. Webb's collaborative law approach has now gained international acceptance.

According to recent statistics, at the present time, one out of every two marriages ends in divorce and separating couples are looking for alternatives to traditional litigation. In hopes of avoiding hostile, lengthy and expensive court battles, spouses are turning to the collaborative law process as a way to protect post-divorce relationships. There are presently more than 20,000 collaborative professionals trained in the United States and the movement is quickly expanding. Collaborative divorces tend to be more civil, efficient and interest-based. Generally, a collaborative divorce often takes much less time, subsequently making the divorce less expensive.

The primary goals of the collaborative law approach to resolving family law disputes are as follows:

1. To promote interest-based alternatives for resolving family conflicts, including divorce.
2. To protect children from the destruction of court-centered litigation.
3. To provide divorcing people and people experiencing a family crisis with information as to options.
4. To educate trained professionals to help people resolve family disputes in a non-destructive way.
5. To foster a more humanized framework for the divorce process.
6. To advance viable alternatives to litigation.
7. To provide clients with a choice of the process.
8. To afford clients control over their future.

Before the process begins, the client is presented a collaborative contract which will be reviewed and executed by both parties and their counsel. The contract indicates that if the collaborative law process is unsuccessful, the attorneys involved are contractually obligated not to represent the clients in any litigation. This unique provision typically acts as an additional incentive to the parties to continue good faith negotiations. Alternatively, if the collaborative law approach fails or reaches impasse, the clients will then be required to seek the assistance of new counsel. Many times, parties are reluctant to start over with a new litigation attorney and as a consequence, great effort is made to make the collaborative approach successful.

The attorneys practicing in "collaborative law" are required to receive specialized instruction. The local attorneys from the Northwest Ohio area trained in the collaborative law approach are:

J. T. Stelzer jstelzer@nwohiolaw.com
Karen Gallagher kgallagher@nwohiolaw.com
Daniel Michel dmichel@lawbuilding.com
Janet Ferguson janetferguson9@aol.com
Jeff Robinson jrobinson@bkrs.org
Tennille Newton tbn@prshlaw.com
Glenn Troth gtroth@pauldinglawfirm.com
David Newcomer dnewcomer@nsslawoffice.com
Christine Smith Christine.smithlawoffice@gmail.com
Michael Shaffer mshaffer@nsslawoffice.com
Brian Gorrell bgorrell@pauldinglawfirm.com
Michael Jones black99@bright.net
Michael Spangler mspangler@nsslawoffice.com

For additional information on the "collaborative law" approach, go the following website: [The Center for Principled Family Advocacy](#) and link to Northwest Ohio Family Law.