

About the Authors

Brittney A. Busalacchi is a partner with the Baraboo law firm of Cross Jenks Mercer & Maffei, LLP. She focuses her practice on family law and serves as guardian ad litem in various family cases, CHIPS (children in need of protection or services) cases, and guardianship and protective placement matters. Brittney received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2009 from Marquette University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2013. She is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin, the State Bar's Family Law Section, the Collaborative Family Law Council of Wisconsin, and the Legal Association for Women. Brittney also participated in developing the Sauk County Pro Se Family Law Clinic.

Victoria Davis Dávila is a partner at Davis & Pledl in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She graduated from Marquette University Law School in 2011. She has dedicated her legal career to supporting individuals with disabilities and their families regarding the spectrum of decision-making options, special education law, special needs planning, and obtaining services for high-needs children and civil rights, with a particular focus on children's issues. She has worked in private practice and in the nonprofit realm in special education advocacy. Since 2019, she and her mentor, attorney Rock Pledl, have focused on disability and civil rights and practice throughout Wisconsin on state and federal issues. Her younger brother inspired her to pursue this area of law.

Margaret V. Kaiser is a partner at Willow River Law, LLC, in Hudson, Wisconsin, where she represents the best interests of children and vulnerable adults as a guardian ad litem. She also represents clients in Social Security disability appeals, guardianships, estate planning, and probate matters. Margaret began her legal career at a New Richmond law firm where she worked on civil litigation matters and Social Security disability appeals. She then had a solo practice in Hudson where she began her guardian ad litem work. Margaret attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison for her undergraduate degree in social work, and she graduated from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Kristin Kerschensteiner was formerly the director of legal and advocacy services at Disability Rights Wisconsin, the state protection and advocacy

system for people with disabilities, and was an attorney there in various capacities for more than 25 years. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington School of Communications, and Seattle University Law School. Before coming to Wisconsin, she practiced disability law in Chicago, Illinois, for many years.

Kate A. Neugent is an associate with the Milwaukee law firm of Burbach & Stansbury S.C. She focuses her practice in family law, serving as a guardian ad litem, advocate counsel, or mediator. Ms. Neugent has an undergraduate degree in social welfare and is a graduate of Marquette University Law School. Before joining Burbach & Stansbury S.C., she was employed with the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee as a guardian ad litem in the Family Division. She is a member of the Collaborative Family Law Council of Wisconsin, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and the State Bar of Wisconsin's Family Law Section, and she is a past president of the Leander J. Foley Society of Family Lawyers.

Eric J. Ryberg is a shareholder and co-managing partner of the Madison office of Habush, Habush & Rottier, S.C.[®] He received his B.A. from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School. He is a Board-Certified Civil Trial Law Advocate by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He is a past chairperson of the State Bar of Wisconsin's Litigation Section. He is a past president of the Dane County Bar Association. He is also a member of the Wisconsin Association for Justice and the American Association for Justice. He has represented many children in personal-injury-related matters.

Jeffrey Spitzer-Resnick graduated from Boston College Law School in 1985, cum laude. He is the principal and owner of Systems Change Consulting. For more than 41 years, he has engaged in effective systems change advocacy, initially on behalf of older adults and for the past 31 years on behalf of children with disabilities, including in the areas of special education and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. He has done this in nearly every forum and method possible, including individual litigation and class actions, state and federal lobbying, grassroots organizing, consumer and professional training, and producing publications. As he moves toward full retirement, he is no longer taking new cases.

David W. Thompson, Ph.D., ABPP, is a forensic and clinical child psychologist in private practice at Clinical Psychology Associates, LLC in Burlington, Wisconsin. Dr. Thompson was formerly the deputy director of

the Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services, and he consults frequently with attorneys, courts, and governmental agencies on child-related topics.

Samantha S. Wagner was appointed in September 2024 as the circuit court judge for Branch 4 in Brown County. Before this appointment, she was the lead assistant corporation counsel for Brown County, primarily prosecuting cases in children’s court. She completed her B.A. degree (with honors) in international relations and with a minor in peace and justice studies at the University of San Diego. She received her J.D. with a concentration in civil litigation and a certificate in health law from Saint Louis University. While at Saint Louis University, she was a lead editor for the *Journal of Health Law and Policy*. She also received a graduate certificate in clinical health care ethics from the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics. She has served on the executive board of the Wisconsin Professional Society on the Abuse of Children since March 2015 and is the current president. Judge Wagner has conducted many trainings and seminars on the children’s court and how to facilitate a working relationship with a multidisciplinary team for child-abuse and child-neglect matters. She is on the faculty for the Child Welfare Law Orientation for Judicial Education, and she is a member of the Wisconsin Judicial Committee on Child Welfare. She presides over Brown County’s Family Recovery Court and Drug Treatment Court.

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