

Sarah Novak Nesbitt
Family Legal Advocacy Group, L.L.C.
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EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Professor, Francis King Carey School of Law, University of Maryland, — January 2015 to Present

Teach seminar, Child Custody and the Law (formerly Children and Divorce), each academic year to prepare law students to represent minor children as court appointed counsel in contested family law cases. Course topics include infant and child development, mental health and substance abuse issues in parents, alternative dispute resolution, role of counsel for children, interview techniques, and collaboration with other attorneys and professionals.

Partner and Supervising Attorney, Family Legal Advocacy Group, L.L.C. — March 2014 to Present

Represent clients in legal matters relating to children and families, including but not limited to divorce, custody, child support, adoption, guardianship, child welfare, and education cases through litigation, negotiation, mediation, and collaborative approaches. Prepare pleadings, discovery, mediation statements, separation agreements, subpoenas and proposed court orders and conduct depositions. Represent clients and assist other attorneys with issues related to retirement assets, including preparing Qualified Domestic Relations Orders and similar orders, drafting of language related to retirement assets for separation agreements, reviewing orders prepared by other attorneys, and testifying as an Expert Witness. Appointed by the Court to represent children as Best Interest Attorney. Assist with firm management, including long-term planning for the firm and staffing decisions and supervision of associate attorneys and staff.

Associate Attorney, Weinberg & Schwartz, L.L.C. — August 2009 to February 2014

Represented clients in divorce, custody, child support, complex property division, alimony, child in need of assistance, modification, and step-parent adoption cases through litigation, negotiation, mediation, and collaborative approaches. Prepared pleadings, discovery, mediation statements, separation agreements, subpoenas and proposed court orders and conduct depositions. Appeared before the Circuit Court in seven Maryland counties. Appointed by the Court to represent children as Best Interest Attorney. Volunteered in the Family Law Assistance Program in Howard County. Assisted partners with firm management.

Law Clerk, Weinberg & Schwartz, L.L.C. — May 2008 to May 2009

Observed attorneys in court appearances, mediations, collaborative meetings, and client meetings. Assisted attorneys and staff with the preparation of discovery and pleadings.

Law Clerk, The Law Offices of Ria P. Rochvarg — May 2008 to August 2008

Assisted attorneys and staff with the preparation of pleadings, subpoenas, trial exhibits, and case notes. Attended client meetings, including home visits as court appointed counsel in custody cases and adult guardianship cases, and observed mediation sessions and court appearances.

Rule 16 Student Attorney, University of Maryland School of Law — September 2007 to May 2008

Represented clients in children in need of assistance cases and special education cases. Assisted with service learning program at Baltimore Freedom Academy, a charter high school.

Law Clerk, Project HEAL — May 2007 to August 2007

Reviewed case files, prepared law pamphlets for clients, and drafted legal documents in family law, special education, landlord tenant, and collection cases. Observed client meetings, IEP meetings, court appearances, and home visits as court appointed counsel in custody cases. Assisted with presentations to Johns Hopkins Children's Center staff.

Volunteer Teacher, St. Ignatius Loyola Academy — June 2004 to July 2006

Taught English, reading, and religion. Organized approximately fifty volunteers per year to assist in various school programs including the after school program. Coached lacrosse team, served as advisor for students, and assisted in various school projects at full scholarship school for low-income middle school boys. Coordinated other full-time volunteers in the AmeriCorps program during second year.

EDUCATION

University of Maryland School of Law, Baltimore, Maryland — Juris Doctorate, May 2009.

Graduated *cum laude*. Started partnership between Project HEAL and the School of Law. Volunteered with House of Ruth domestic violence hotline. Interned for the Honorable Diane O. Leasure, Circuit Court for Howard County, Spring 2008.

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana — Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology, May 2004.

Graduated *magna cum laude*. Focused on infant and child development, family dynamics, and community involvement in education.

CERTIFICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Admitted to the Maryland Bar in 2009, to the United States Supreme Court Bar in 2012, and the US District Court, District of Maryland in 2015. Certified to serve as Court Appointed Counsel in 2008. Certified in Collaborative Law in 2009. Howard County Bar Association, member 2010 to present. Howard County Chapter of the Maryland Women's Bar Association, member 2011 to present; Board Member At Large 2012 to 2014; Vice-President 2014 to 2015, President 2015-2016, Past President 2016-2017. Howard County Collaborative Practice, Member 2010 to present; Chair of Ethics Committee 2013 to 2014. International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, Member 2010 to present. Maryland State Bar Association, Member 2010 to present. Divorce Roundtable of Montgomery County, 2014 to present. Collaborative Project of Maryland, Board Member 2015 to present, President of the Board 2017 to 2018. Maryland Healing Network, Member 2018 to present.

Panel Member at National Family Resiliency Center's "Family Transitions: Issues, Solutions, and Policies" Conference in October 2015 (as highlighted in the Daily Record's Family Law Update). Speaker on media panel on "Fact vs. Fiction" hosted by Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service in May 2015. Panel Moderator on "Challenges and Trauma Informed Responses to the Needs of Foster Children & Youth & Others At-Risk" at Court Appointed Special Advocates Maryland Conference in April 2015. Presenter for "Divorce 101" on multiple occasions. Presented "Introduction to Retirement Orders" in 2019 and 2020. Frequent speaker at various panels at University of Maryland School of Law and University of Baltimore School of Law and at community organizations on issues related to divorce, family law and special education.

Volunteer with There Goes My Hero (organizing drives to register potential bone marrow donors to the national registry), volunteer with the Family Law Assistance Program in the Circuit Court for Howard County (providing free legal guidance on family law matters to self-represented litigants with limited financial resources), and board member of two (2) Parent Associations at children's schools.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Super Lawyers, Rising Star, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Pro Bono Student of the Year, Maryland Public Interest Law Project, 2008.

Leadership Scholar and Merit Based Scholarship, University of Maryland School of Law, 2006 to 2009.