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# Families in Court: A National Symposium

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### **Families in Court: A National Symposium**

On May 14-17, 1989, in Reno, Nevada, the National Judicial College organized a conference entitled "Families in Court: A National Symposium." The Conference was sponsored by the National Judicial College, the National Conference of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Center for State Courts, and the American Bar Association's Section on Family Law. In this issue, the *Pacific Law Journal* is proud to publish selected articles and the recommendations from that conference.

Specialists from a multidisciplinary field participated in the conference. The participants in the conference shared common frustrations with the family courts of the United States: Limited information and lack of services, barriers between and within many courts, and public criticism stating that going to court just does not solve the problem. Further, the participants' experience showed that the need to focus on the narrow issues of the case and to act within sometimes conflicting ethical constraints often prevented or made it difficult to deal with the underlying problems of the family. The participants' experience and expertise culminated in "Families in Court Recommendations from a National Symposium."

This issue contains the Opening and Closing Remarks of the Symposium given by Judge John F. Daffron, Jr. Judge Daffron aptly summarizes the goals of the conference when he states that the "recommendations call for a redefinition of the Court's role and a reconsideration of the distinctiveness of family issues." Professor

Jean Koh Peters, in her article entitled "Jose and Sarah's Story: The Usefulness of Roleplay in an Ethically Based Evaluation of the Present and Future Courts," vividly describes the conflicts and frustrations faced by family law attorneys and social workers in the Family Courts. Ann L. Milne, in her article entitled "Family Law from a Family System Perspective: The Binary Equation," argues that family law is a binary equation composed of two elements—legal issues and psycho-social relationships. Ms. Milne shows that current family law procedures do not balance that equation and that there is a need for a comprehensive family court which consolidates within one structure the resolution of both legal and psycho-social issues. Finally, this issue contains the "Families in Court Recommendations from a National Symposium" which outlines the participants recommended multidisciplinary approach designed to remedy the complex problems which plague our family courts.

Readers interested in obtaining the conference materials should contact Dean Lawrence M. Hyde, Jr. at the National Judicial College:

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Therefore, it is with distinct pleasure that the Board of Editors of Volume 21 publishes selected articles from the "Families in Court" Conference.

Board of Editors

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