# Can I Get a Witness: Evidentiary Issues in Family Law
## 2013 Family Law Section Annual Meeting

## Table of Contents

### I. CASE LAW UPDATES

Lee Hawley – High Point

- EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION ................................................................. I-1
- UNPUBLISHED EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OPINIONS .......I-10
- ALIMONY AND POSTSEPARATION SUPPORT ..................I-11
- UNPUBLISHED ALIMONY OPINIONS .............................I-13
- ALIENATION OF AFFECTION .................................................... I-13
- UNPUBLISHED ALIENATION OF AFFECTION OPINIONS ............I-14

### II. HE SAID WHAT?! HEARSAY (AND NOT HEARSAY) JUDICIAL NOTICE OF ADJUDICATIVE FACTS HEARSAY AND EXCEPTIONS

Evan B. Horwitz – Raleigh

- RULE 201 JUDICIAL NOTICE OF ADJUDICATIVE FACTS ...........II-1
- CASE LAW .............................................................................................II-1
- HEARSAY AND EXCEPTIONS .....................................................II-4
- CASE LAW .............................................................................................II-4
- RULE 802 HEARSAY RULE ..........................................................II-6
- RULE 803 HEARSAY EXCEPTIONS; AVAILABILITY OF DECLARANT IMATERIAL ..................................................II-6
- CASE LAW .............................................................................................II-9
- RULE 804 HEARSAY EXCEPTIONS; DECLARANT UNAVAILABE ..................................................II-12
- CASE LAW .............................................................................................II-13
- RULE 805 HEARSAY WITHIN HEARSAY ..............................II-14
- RULE 806 ATTACKING AND SUPPORTING CREDIBILITY OF DECLARANT ..................................................II-14

### III. KIDS SAY THE DARNEDEST THINGS - LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILD WITNESSES IN FAMILY LAW LITIGATION

Justin L. Mauney – Raleigh

- INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE ....................................................... III-1
- COMPETENCY AND DISQUALIFICATION OF CHILD WITNESSES ..................................................III-2
  - Step One: Is the Child Competent to Testify? ................ III-2
Step Two: Is the Child Testifying about His/Her Living Preferences in a Custody Proceeding? .......................................................... III-4

SETTING FOR CHILD’S TESTIMONY ........................................ III-5
Step Three: Should You Consent to the Court Taking the Child’s Testimony in Chambers (or Other Alternative Setting)? .......... III-5
Step Four: Should the Testimony in Chambers be Recorded? .......... III-8

EXCLUSION OF WITNESSES .......................................................... III-9
Step Five: Can the Court Exclude Litigants from the Courtroom During a Child’s Testimony or Otherwise Control the Method in Which Testimony is Received? .............................................. III-9

SPECIAL EVIDENTIARY RULES FOR CHILD WITNESSES ........... III-12

CONCLUSION .................................................................................. III-16
APPENDIX ....................................................................................... III-18

IV. EXPERTS VS. LAY WITNESSES - LAY AND EXPERT TESTIMONY, A MODEST PROPOSAL, AND PRESUMPTIONS WITHIN FAMILY LAW

Kevin L. Miller – Winston-Salem

INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. IV-1
WHY EVIDENTIARY CONSIDERATIONS MATTER IN BENCH TRIALS .................................................................................. IV-2
LAY WITNESSES ............................................................................... IV-4
The Determination of Questions Preliminary to the Admission of Lay Witness Testimony ............................................................. IV-6
RE Rule 601 Witness Competency [Incompetency], RE Rule 602 Testimonial Competence, and The Ground Rules for “Vigorous Cross-Examination” and “Presentation of Contrary Evidence” (RE Rules 607-611; 613 and 615) ........................................ IV-8
G.S. Chapter 8 Evidence, Article 7 Competency of Witnesses [and Blood Tests] ....................................................................... IV-9
Relevancy: RE Rules 401 and 402; and Its Limits, Rules 403-405 and 407-413 ................................................................. IV-14
Reliability—Is There a Reliability Requirement for the Admission of Lay Witness Testimony? ................................................ IV-14

EXPERT WITNESSES ..................................................................... IV-15
Most likely, North Carolina is Now a Daubert Jurisdiction .......... IV-18
Rule 702(a) and Daubert Require That Before Admitting Expert Testimony, the Judge Satisfies ................................................ IV-23
Daubert’s Admissibility Requirements ....................................... IV-25

A MODEST PROPOSAL ................................................................. IV-37
PRESUMPTIONS IN FAMILY LAW .............................................. IV-40
Child Custody/Paternity ............................................................... IV-40
Index of Appended Materials

V.

CASE LAW UPDATE

Mariana G. Russell – Raleigh

CHILD CUSTODY ................................................................. V-1
CHILD SUPPORT ................................................................. V-8
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ......................................................... V-13
ADOPTION/TPR ................................................................. V-14

VI.

DOCUMENTS, RECORDINGS, AND OTHER EXHIBITS

Katherine Frye – Raleigh

AUTHENTICATION ................................................................. VI-1
ILLUSTRATIVE/DEMONSTRATIVE EXHIBITS ............................ VI-5
REAL/ORIGINAL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ..................................... VI-5
THE BEST EVIDENCE RULE ................................................ VI-6
OTHER ARTICLE 10 USES ................................................. VI-9
HOW TO INTRODUCE EXHIBITS ......................................... VI-10
OFFERS OF PROOF ............................................................. VI-10
ETHICS ........................................................................ VI-11

VII.

CHARACTER EVIDENCE – WHEN AND HOW IS IT ADMISSIBLE?

Katherine W. Fisher – Rocky Mount

CHARACTER EVIDENCE GENERALLY ..................................... VII-1
EXCEPTIONS TO INADMISSIBILITY OF CHARACTER EVIDENCE .... VII-3
RULE 405(a)-REPUTATION AND OPINION TESTIMONY ............. VII-3
SPECIFIC ACTS-RULES 405(b), 608(b) AND 609 ........................ VII-8
FAMILY LAW APPLICATION ............................................. VII-11

VIII.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

David Holm – Raleigh

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ....................................................... VIII-1
HOW A LAW IS MADE ...................................................... VIII-3
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE ................................................ VIII-5