



IAFL Introduction to International Family Law Conference
University of the Philippines, College of Law, Manila

Session Materials Pack

Monday 12 October 2026

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John Spender

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John is the President of the IAFL Asia Pacific Chapter. He was admitted as a lawyer in New South Wales in 1992 and in Victoria in 1993 and has practised in family law ever since. He has been accredited by the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) as a specialist practitioner in family law in 2003. John joined the specialist family law practice, Kennedy Partners, in 2007, and became a partner of the firm in 2012. He has expertise in all aspects of family law, including parenting and financial matters, and has worked significantly in the area of international family law.

John is an active member of committees of the Family Law Section of the LIV since 2003, including a member of the Executive Committee since 2011 and Chair of the Maintenance and Property Sub-Committee since 2011. Has written or co-authored several papers and has presented at continuing legal education seminars (both in Australia and overseas) since 2009. Is a consultant editor for precedents with LexisNexis.

Jaerey Velasco

Payne Velasco

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Profile

Jaerey is a Partner at Payne Velasco and leads the firm's Family and Matrimonial Team. She brings extensive experience in both contentious and non-contentious family law matters, often involving complex international elements. Her practice spans a broad spectrum, including divorce, pre- and post-nuptial agreements, child custody and access arrangements, international relocation, and financial settlements involving family trusts and third-party claims. In addition to matrimonial work, Jaerey advises on probate, wills, and guardianship of minors.

Jaerey is a trained family mediator, a Collaborative Practitioner, and Accredited Private Financial Adjudicator. Jaerey sits as an Executive Committee Member of the Hong Kong Family Law Association and a Committee Member of the Hong Kong Collaborative Practice Group.

Languages Spoken: English; Tagalog/Filipino

Practice Areas: Adoption, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Cohabitation, Collaborative Law, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Child Custody, Enforcement: Child Support, Enforcement: Property Division, Enforcement: Spousal Support, Finance: Capital Provision, Finance: Pensions/Superannuation/Retirement and Employment Benefits, Finance: Property Issues, Finance: Trusts, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Pre-nuptial/Post-nuptial Agreements, Relocation/Removal from Jurisdiction, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony, Succession Law

Sasha Allison

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Profile

Sasha was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in Western Australia in 2003 (non-practising), as a Solicitor in Hong Kong in 2008 and subsequently, was called to the Bar in Hong Kong in 2015. Her practice is exclusively in Family Law, both Finances and Children. Sasha is a trained family mediator, member of the Hong Kong Family Law Association, a contributor to the Hong Kong Reports & Digest and Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Reports. She also teaches Family Law at the University of Hong Kong.

Languages Spoken: English

Practice Areas: Adoption, Appeals, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Cohabitation, Collaborative Law, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Child Custody, Enforcement: Child Support, Finance: Capital Provision, Finance: Pensions/Superannuation/Retirement and Employment Benefits, Finance: Property Issues, Finance: Trusts, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Relocation/Removal from Jurisdiction, Same Sex Partnerships, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony, Surrogacy

Tomoko Takase

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Profile

Graduated from Chuo University with Bachelor of Laws, and is accredited by Japan Federation of Bar Associations in 2000. Has expertise in international and domestic family law issues and worked extensively in the field of international matrimonial law, including in relation to jurisdictional disputes, child abduction proceedings, parenting matters, child support issues and property cases. Served on the International Committee of Osaka Bar Association and has been a vice chairperson of the committee in charge of international family law since 2016. Accepted a position as a part-time judge in Kyoto Family Court from 2010 to 2014 specialising in conciliation. Has undertaken Mediation Training for Japanese-Australian Family Disputes held by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Hague Convention Division, International Mediator Training held by Osaka University, and Cross-Border Family Mediation Training held by MiKK in Berlin. Has been a mediator dealing with cases under the Hague Convention 1980 in Osaka Mediation Centre and a panel of Cross-Border Family Mediators of MiKK.

Languages Spoken: English, Japanese

Practice Areas: Adoption, Appeals, Arbitration, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Cohabitation, Collaborative Law, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Child Custody, Enforcement: Child Support, Enforcement: Property Division, Enforcement: Spousal Support, Finance: Property Issues, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Pre-nuptial/Post-nuptial Agreements, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony

RAUL T. VASQUEZ

Senior Undersecretary

Legal Services and Liaison Cluster



Senior Undersecretary Raul T. Vasquez joined the Department after more than three decades of outstanding private practice. Prior to his assumption of office last 1 July 2022, he was the managing and senior partner of Vasquez, Bretana & Sibal-Pulido Law Offices. His areas of specialization included civil, criminal, and administrative litigation, labor law, agrarian law, election law, land titles and deeds, corporation law, construction arbitration, among others.

His academic credentials consistently show excellence and highest success. He graduated as Class Valedictorian in both elementary and high school in his beloved hometown of Bangued, Abra. Thereafter, he took up Political Science in the University of the Philippines (U.P.) Diliman where he graduated magna cum laude in 1983. A true “iskolar ng bayan”, he continued his studies at the U.P. College of Law where he graduated in 1987 as class salutatorian and cum laude.

During his law school days, Undersecretary Vasquez was a member of the Editorial Board of the U.P. Philippine Law Journal and of the Executive Board of the Association of Law Journal Editors of the Philippines. Likewise, as a testament to his exceptional debate skills, he was a member of the Philippine Team to the 1986 International Philip Jessup Moot Court Competitions in Washington, DC, USA.

Undersecretary Vasquez is a seasoned academician, having taught Local Government, Negotiable Instruments Law, Credit Transactions, Corporation Law, and Commercial Law Review at the U.P. College of Law, LPU College of Law and DLSU College of Law. He is also a distinguished lecturer and bar reviewer. He became the Bar Examiner in Mercantile (Commercial) Law in the 2017 Bar Examinations.

As Undersecretary, he oversees the Department’s Legal Staff, Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), and DOJ Legislative Liaison Office (DLLO). He is also the alternate member to the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) and the principal member of specialized units, programs and committees including Task Force West Philippine Sea (TFWPS), DOJ Rules Group, DOJ Maritime Group, International Legal Cooperation, United Nations Joint Program (UNJP), Refugees and Stateless Persons Unit (RSPPU), Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC), Indigenous Peoples Concerns, Human Rights Office (HRO), Gender and Development Special Protection Unit (GDSPU), among others.

Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines



Justice Maria Filomena D. Singh was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 2022. Justice Singh was the Presiding Judge of the Metropolitan Trial Court of Quezon City in 2002. She was promoted to the Regional Trial Court in 2007 and was appointed as an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals in 2014.

Justice Singh has had leading roles in reform initiatives, including spearheading the revision of three codes of ethics and actively contributing to Rules of Procedure revisions. She co-chairs the Committee on Gender Responsiveness in the Judiciary, was the Focal Person for the Supreme Court in the Philippine Open Government Partnership Initiative, and chairs the Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) Technical Working Group on Processes and Capacity Building. In 2025, Justice Singh became President-elect of the International Association of Women Judges.

Justice Singh earned her Juris Doctor degree (Second Honors Distinction) at the Ateneo de Manila University School of Law and a Master of Laws in International Legal Studies at the Washington College of Law of American University. Justice Singh is the first Philippine Judicial Fellow at the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, D.C.

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Profile

Admitted as a lawyer in New South Wales in 1992 and in Victoria in 1993, and has practised in family law ever since. Accredited by the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) as a specialist practitioner in family law in 2003. Joined the specialist family law practice, Kennedy Partners, in 2007, and became a partner of the firm in 2012. Has expertise in all aspects of family law, including parenting and financial matters, and has worked significantly in the area of international family law. An active member of committees of the Family Law Section of the LIV since 2003, including a member of the Executive Committee since 2011 and Chair of the Maintenance and Property Sub-Committee between 2011 and 2018 and the Courts Practice Sub-Committee from 2019 to 2023. Received a Distinguished Service Award from the Law Institute of Victoria in 2023. Has written or co-authored a number of papers and has presented at continuing legal education seminars (both in Australia and overseas) since 2009. Is the co-author of "Focus Family Law: Tenth Edition", published by LexisNexis in Australia in November 2025. Has lectured at Deakin University in Melbourne since 2021.

Languages Spoken: English, French (basic conversational), German (basic)

Practice Areas: Appeals, Child Care/Public Law, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Cohabitation, Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Child Custody, Enforcement: Child Support, Enforcement: Property Division, Enforcement: Spousal Support, Finance: Capital Provision, Finance: Pensions/Superannuation/Retirement and Employment Benefits, Finance: Property Issues, Finance: Trusts, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Pre-nuptial/Post-nuptial Agreements, Relocation/Removal from Jurisdiction, Same Sex Partnerships, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony

Linda Ong

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Profile

Linda Ong is the Deputy Managing Director of Singapore firm Engelin Teh Practice LLC.

She has an active practice in family litigation. She handles all aspect of family and matrimonial practice, including divorce and child-related disputes, division of matrimonial assets, spousal and child maintenance, family violence, child abduction as well as cross-border child and financial related matters

Linda is a trained parenting coordinator. She is an accredited mediator with the Singapore Mediation Centre SMC, the Singapore International Mediation Institute and the International Mediation Institute. She is also a certified Family Mediator with the Singapore Mediation Centre and a member of the Law Society Family Law Practice Committee.

Languages Spoken: English, Mandarin

Practice Areas: Appeals, Child Care/Public Law, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Child Custody, Enforcement: Child Support, Enforcement: Property Division, Enforcement: Spousal Support, Finance: Capital Provision, Finance: Pensions/Superannuation/Retirement and Employment Benefits, Finance: Property Issues, Finance: Trusts, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Pre-nuptial/Post-nuptial Agreements, Relocation/Removal from Jurisdiction, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony, Succession Law

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Profile

Olivia is a founding partner of Kennedy Partners. She enjoys an excellent reputation as one of Melbourne's leading family law practitioners and is highly regarded for her expertise in complex litigation her financial acumen and for excellent negotiation skills.

Olivia is recognised annually by the Doyle's Guide to the legal profession and has been described as a "real standout". She has been described by Legal Profiles as "great-excellent".

Olivia has been practising in family law for over 30 years and obtained her specialist accreditation in 1990. She has served on various committees of the Law Institute of Victoria including sub-committees dealing with family law reform. Olivia is regarded in the legal education and professional development sphere, has presented numerous papers and regularly participates in family law conferences in both the national and international arenas. Most recently, Olivia presented a workshop on ethics in multi-disciplinary family law at the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts conference in August 2019.

Throughout her career, Olivia has had the principal conduct of several landmark or ground-breaking decisions in the appellate jurisdiction of the Family Court of Australia and the High Court of Australia. She is best known for her work in *Kennon v Spry* ([2008] HCA 56), now the seminal legal authority for the treatment of discretionary trusts in family law.

Olivia is a member of the Law Institute of Victoria and the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia. She has been a Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers since September, 2016.

Expertise

Olivia's skills and experience covers every facet of family law practice including major property disputes, difficult parenting matters, technical legal argument and financial agreements. Apart from *Kennon & Spry*, notable cases include *Levy & Prain* ([2012] FamCAFC 92) and *Trevi & Trevi* ([2018] FamCAFC 173). She has worked extensively on international family law matters including multi-jurisdiction agreements, relocation and the recovery of children and property disputes including parties or assets located outside Australia.

Atty. Soledad Margarita Deriquito-Mawis

Philippines



Dean Ma. Soledad Deriquito-Mawis (LI.B., University of the Philippines, 1988) is the current Dean of the College of Law of the Lyceum of the Philippines University (Makati and Cavite campuses). She is the founder of the Mawis Law Office. She handles civil and criminal litigation. She has been engaged on various occasions to render expert opinions on marriage and family matters. She is likewise a lawyer to several notable corporate institutions.

Dean Mawis teaches Persons and Family Relations, Succession, Civil Procedure, Evidence, and Remedial Law I. Aside from the College of Law of the Lyceum of the Philippines University, she teaches at the Colleges of Law of the University of the Philippines, University of Makati and University of Sto. Tomas. She also taught in the Colleges of Law of De La Salle, Adamson University and at the John Gokongwei School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University.

She is a Bar Examinations Reviewer for Persons and Family Relations, Evidence and Civil Procedure. She was a member of the Panel of Experts for the post validation of the Remedial Law Bar Examinations of the 2011 Bar Examination and of UP Law Center's Post Validation Bar Examinations in Remedial Law for several years now. She was a member of the technical working group for the revision of the Code of Professional Responsibility. She is currently a member of the Sub-Committee for the Revision of the Rules of Civil Procedure and a member of the Sub-Committee on Pleadings.

Dean Mawis is a Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) speaker of the UP Law Center, the Center for Global Practices, and ACCESS. She is a regular contributor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer where she writes about laws on the property. On three separate occasions, she was elected as the Chairperson of the Philippine Association of Law Schools. She was also its former President, and Secretary General, and Asst. Treasurer.

Dean Mawis was a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Philippine Judicial Academy, a "training school for justices, judge, court personnel, lawyers and aspirants to judicial posts" which was created by the "Supreme Court on March 16, 1996 by virtue of Administrative Order No. 35-96, and was institutionalized on February 26, 1998 by virtue of Republic Act No. 8557." She is currently a Professor II of Philja's Corps of Professors and member of its Civil Law Department.

Dean Mawis was also a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Legal Education and Bar Matters and headed a committee that reviewed the legal aid program of schools. She spearheaded the technical working group that drafted the proposed rules of the implementation of a clinical legal aid program in all law schools. She was engaged as the Subject Matter Expert in the DOJ-IDLO Project on the Effective Prosecution of Crimes Involving Women and Children.

Dean Mawis chaired the Technical Working Group of the Legal Education Board tasked to prepare a manual for the libraries of colleges of law. She was also a member of the technical working group for the first Supreme Court Summit on Access to Justice.

Dean Mawis is a co-convenor of the Court Appointments Watch and a board of trustee of the Movement Against Disinformation.

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Profile

Partner heading up the Family Law Practice Group at OLN since and is current Vice Chairman of the Hong Kong Family Law Association ("FLA"). Associate member of Resolution (the Solicitors Family Law Association, UK) and member of the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia. Has been instructed on many leading cases in the areas of family law and trusts law. Highly recommended by Chambers and Partners as leading lawyer in Family / Matrimonial (International firms) in Chambers Asia-Pacific in 2015, details of which are available on the "What Others Say" link. Has contributed to a number of articles on Family Law for legal publications, is one of the authors of the FLA Code of Conduct and has lectured on family law. Appeared in RTHK Radio 3 Programme about the recent government consultation on child custody and access. Advisory Board Member to Butterworths on continuing education courses and a Distinguished Professional Mentor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong School of Law. Advises extensively in respect of trusts and wills, wealth protection and tax planning.

Languages Spoken: English

Practice Areas: Finance: Trusts

Simon Bruce
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Profile

At the wonderful firm Dawson Cornwell. Qualified in 1986. Member of Resolution. Author of family law textbooks and standard precedent documents. Accredited by Resolution as an expert in substantial asset cases and emergency procedures in financial relief. Qualified Mediator and Collaborative Lawyer. Served on Executive Committee of International Academy of Family Lawyers And as President of the Family Law Commission, Union Internationale des Avocats. Represented Katrin Radmacher in the Supreme Court of England and Wales, and has done five other Supreme Court cases. Also works pro bono in law clinics in London - shortlisted as best pro bono lawyer of the year 2021. Member of The Queen's Club. Reader on Parayasyougo. Member of Liverpool Football Club Supporters Club. "The ideal family lawyer thanks to his legal expertise, warmth and integrity" Legal 500.

Languages Spoken: English, French

Practice Areas: Collaborative Law, Mediation

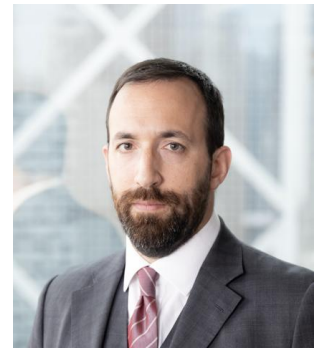
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Profile

Azan is a distinguished barrister, mediator, and former Judicial Assistant to the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. Specialising in public law and family litigation, including child custody, inheritance, and more, he is recognised as a top private client, family & divorce barrister by Doyle's, Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners. Azan also conducts Private Family Adjudications. Azan has authored several leading texts in family law and serves as a Lecturer at the University of Hong Kong. Outside of practice, Azan is committed to child protection and serves as chairman of the Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights, honorary legal advisor ship for Mother's Choice and Hong Kong Marriage Equality.

Languages Spoken: English

Practice Areas: Adoption, Appeals, Arbitration, Child Care/Public Law, Child Custody/Residence/Visitation/Contact, Child Support, Cohabitation, Divorce, Domestic Abuse/Violence/Protection Orders, Emergency Procedures/Injunctions, Enforcement: Spousal Support, Finance: Capital Provision, Finance: Pensions/Superannuation/Retirement and Employment Benefits, Finance: Property Issues, Finance: Trusts, Hague Convention/Child Abduction, Mediation, Modification/Variation: Child Custody, Modification/Variation: Child Support, Modification/Variation: Property Division, Modification/Variation: Spousal Support, Parentage/Paternity, Pre-nuptial/Post-nuptial Agreements, Relocation/Removal from Jurisdiction, Same Sex Partnerships, Spousal Support/Maintenance/Alimony, Succession Law, Surrogacy

Atty. Minerva June Ambrosio

Philippines



CAREER HISTORY

1984 – PRESENT: Private Practitioner – Ambrosio Law Office

Practice is predominantly family law, cases involving women and children, particularly domestic violence, child abuse, children in conflict with the law, adoption, involuntary commitment, civil cases such as marital nullity, legal separation, child custody, property and criminal litigation

2013 – 2015 National Director, National Center for Legal Aid (NCLA)

2017 – 2019 National Director, National Center for Legal Aid (NCLA)

Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila

As the National Director and head of the legal aid center of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the umbrella organization to which all Philippine lawyers are members, led a team of 10 deputy directors, paralegals and legal staff in overseeing the 85 IBP legal aid committees in every region and province throughout the Philippines.

As head of the pro bono program of the IBP-NCLA, has been involved in diverse issues including, but not limited to, labor and migration, the environment, human rights, extra-judicial killings due to the government's "drug war", the judicial independence and press freedom, for which various programs, fora, seminars and summits have been designed and implemented. During my term, NCLA was involved in the Kian De Los Santos case, to assist the minors who were witnesses to the killing of Kian, the case of the 3 lawyers who were illegally detained by the police, the **Save Our Schools (SOS) Network** case for the defense of teachers and students against whom the military filed trumped-up charges

Aside from the traditional legal aid, the NCLA also engaged in developmental legal aid for indigenous people (free birth registration and other legal issues), human rights victims, migrant workers, persons with AIDS/HIV and persons deprived of liberty (PDLs). The NCLA held symposia on the Impeachment of Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, the Quo Warranto Issue, the issue of Sen Trillanes' Amnesty Revocation, and the issue of Federalism.

As part of the jail decongestion program, I led a team of lawyers who conducted jail visits in various detention centers and initiated talks with the BJMP for detention prisoners who have found to have been overstaying in the detention centers and jails, including the National Bilibid Prison, Womens' Correctional Center and youth homes. As part of my professorial work, I assigned cases of detention prisoners to students who have worked on facilitating or expediting the release of prisoners who are either unjustly detained, have served their sentences or eligible for parole/release.

2011 – 2013 Senior Deputy Director, OFW Legal Assistance Unit, NCLA – IBP

1999 – 2011 Deputy Director, NCLA – IBP

2014 Speaker on The Role of Bar Associations in Supporting Pro Bono, Asia Pro Bono Conference October 2014, Singapore

2017 – 2019 Legal aid missions for Overseas Filipino Workers in Paris, France and Milan, Italy

2001 – 2011 Lecturer, UNICEF – IBP Lecture series on barangay, family, women and child laws

2003 – 2005 Lecturer, Paralegal Training for Jail Decongestion Program, IBP

1992 – 2021: Retainer Lawyer – Department of Social Welfare and Development – National Capital Region (DSWD-NCR)