International Academy of Family Lawyers
IAFL
Canadian Chapter

IAFL INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY LAW MEETING

EDUCATION PROGRAM

LAVERY, 1 PLACE VILLE-MARIE, 35TH FLOOR, MONTREAL, QC H3B 4M4

FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026

Friday 12 June 2026

08:30 – 09:00: Registration

09:00 – 09:30: Welcome and Introduction to the IAFL

Caroline Harnois, IAFL Canadian Chapter President, Oren Weinberg, IAFL Canadian Chapter Immediate Past President and Heather Hostetter, IAFL President

09:30 – 10:30: Why Practice in International Family Law

This panel will explore why practicing in international family law is not only intellectually engaging, but increasingly essential in today's mobile and interconnected world. The panelists will discuss the practical realities that make cross-border family disputes distinctive—multiple legal systems, competing jurisdictions, forum shopping, urgent interim measures, and significant challenges around recognition and enforcement.

Drawing on their own experience, the panelists will share concrete examples of memorable, unusual, and sometimes unexpected cases they have handled.

Chair: Kenneth Fishman (Canada)
Speakers: Oren Weinberg (Canada), Elizabeth Carson (England), Mudita Chawla (New York, USA)

10:30 – 11:00: Coffee break

11:00 – 12:15: **Hague Convention on the Civil Aspect of International Child Abduction**

This panel will focus on the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, with an overview of its core objectives, guiding principles, and the exceptions to return. It will then turn to practical challenges in its application, including issues arising from time-limited stays abroad, and mirror orders, undertakings and protective measures upon return, the interaction with asylum and refugee protection frameworks (including the Refugee Convention) as well as other overlapping legal regimes. The discussion will also consider

procedural and evidentiary questions, and recent trends in jurisprudence across jurisdictions.

Chair: Andy Hayher KC (Canada)
Speakers: Sonia Heyeur (Canada), Rahima Nato-Kalfane (France), Richard Min (New York, USA)

12:15 – 13:45: Lunch

13:45 – 14:45: Pre-nuptial and separation agreements in international cases

This panel will explore pre-nuptial and separation agreements in cross-border family matters, with a focus on how to plan, draft, and litigate these agreements effectively in an international context. It will address key strategic and technical issues such as jurisdiction and forum selection, applicable law, and the recognition and enforceability of agreements and separation agreements abroad.

The discussion will also compare approaches across jurisdictions—particularly regarding financial disclosure requirements, procedural safeguards (independent legal advice, notarization, translations), and substantive review standards (fairness, needs-based claims, public policy).

Chair: Caroline Harnois (Canada)
Speakers: Kim S. Kieller (Canada), David Allison (England), Jaison Naimi (Nevada, USA)

14:45 - 15:15: Coffee break

15:15 - 16:15: Jurisdictional Differences

This panel will examine jurisdictional requirements in divorce and other family disputes, including the factors courts use to assume jurisdiction and the practical implications of choosing one forum over another. It will also address the recognition and enforcement of foreign divorces and related family orders, including common grounds for refusal.

The discussion will cover the operation of lis pendens and parallel proceedings, as well as the doctrine of forum non conveniens, with a focus on how courts manage competing proceedings and conflicting outcomes. Panelists will highlight strategic considerations for advising clients when multiple forums are available.

Chair: Richard Diamond (Canada)
Speakers: Karon C. Bales (Canada), Rachael Kelsey (Scotland), Heather Hostetter (USA), Ian M. Solloway (Canada)

16:15 - 17:00: Modern Families

This panel will examine the evolving landscape of modern families in an international context. Topics will include the legal recognition of same-sex marriages and families, multi-

parentage arrangements, and polyamorous unions, as well as the cross-border recognition—or non-recognition—of these family forms. The discussion will also address the resulting practical and legal challenges in areas such as parental rights and responsibilities, filiation, adoption and assisted reproduction, immigration and nationality, inheritance, and access to social benefits, with a focus on conflict-of-laws and comparative approaches across jurisdictions.

Chair: Shelley Hounsell KC (Canada)
Speakers: Ruth Kalnitsky Roth (Canada), Evan R Marks (Miami, USA), Sandra Verburgt (Netherlands)

17:00 – 19:00: Reception/Cocktail at Lavery

19:30: Dinner at a Montreal restaurant (add-on)