

IAFL is FORTY



IAFL IS FORTY

Connecting colleagues | Cultivating knowledge | Creating solutions





Foreword

- *Heather Q. Hostetter*

On October 10, 1986, family lawyers gathered in London, England to hold an organizational meeting of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. The minutes of that meeting include a list of the founding Fellows of the IAML - 46 lawyers from five countries: England, United States, Ireland, France, Sweden and Germany. Fast forward 40 years and our association is now 1,114 Fellows from 83 countries, 128 jurisdictions, and we are steadfast in our commitment to growth in areas of the world where we are unrepresented or underrepresented to be a truly worldwide organization. The breadth of our organization will be on full display at the Annual General Meeting in Dublin where we will have more than 300 Fellows from over 41 jurisdictions gather in September of 2026, at which time we will present this wonderful book to the Fellowship.

The IAFL's mission to improve the practice of law and the administration of justice in family law throughout the world remains as relevant now as it did in 1986, and we gather in community and collegiality four times a year all over the world to advance our objectives.

The pages that follow provide insight into the development of the IAFL over the past 40 years. Our reach has expanded, not just in the number of Fellows but through our efforts to provide education, training, and advocacy. Our reputation has grown not only with individual family lawyers, but with the judiciary, academics, and other international organizations. I pay tribute to the 20 Presidents who preceded me in leading this preeminent organization as well as everyone who has contributed to our excellence by volunteering to lead or coming forward with ideas and suggestions to improve our community.

The camaraderie and genuine affection that we have for each other and our organization is what makes it so special. I hope that you enjoy taking this trip down memory lane and it provides vision and renewed energy for us to steer the organization with ever-increasing success through the next 40 years.

Heather Q. Hostetter

(Bethesda, Maryland, USA)

IAFL President, 2025 - 2026

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Founding of the IAFL

by Miles Preston

GEOFFREY CHAUCER WAS RIGHT.

It began with a phone call by two US attorneys to Peter Grose-Hodge, a family law solicitor practising in London, in the Spring of 1986. These attorneys were in London attending an IBA Conference.

Their reason for ringing was to ask Peter to have a drink that evening. Peter agreed but, for reasons unknown to me, asked if it would be alright if he brought another solicitor with him. They agreed and Peter rang me. So the four of us met.

We had a very friendly conversation. The attorneys said that they were doing more international work and wondered whether it might be worth creating some sort of group of specialist family lawyers. We immediately said that our work load was becoming more international too and this sounded like an excellent idea.

That led, soon after, to the gathering together of a few English lawyers at a subterranean bar called Scribes in an area of London where many solicitors and barristers are based.



Things progressed to the point where a meeting was called for October 1986 in the Parliament Chamber in the Inner Temple (one of the main centres of barristers in London) at which the Academy was formed. 46 lawyers attended the meeting of which 27 were English, 14 were American and 5 were from mainland Europe and Ireland.



As well as agreeing to the founding of the Academy, it was decided to set up a USA Chapter and an English Chapter as it was thought that regional sections which could have at least 25 Fellows who practised in their jurisdiction would justify the creation of a Chapter.

Officers of the Academy were elected. Gerald Nissenbaum (USA) was elected President of the Academy, Robert Johnson QC (England & Wales) was elected President-Elect and subsequently became President of the English Chapter. Peter Grose-Hodge (England & Wales) was elected Vice President. Philip Schwartz (USA) was elected Secretary, and subsequently was elected the President of the USA Chapter.

In the weeks following the inaugural meeting, the creation of a governance structure was discussed, including the need for a constitution. This created the first interesting moment as the USA Fellows were very keen to have a long and comprehensive written constitution, while the English Fellows, coming from a jurisdiction without a written constitution, felt that the document should be short and more general in its content. To progress this, a group of about eight of us (four USA Fellows and four English) had a meeting in Bern in Switzerland in June 1987.

Very quickly after the Academy was up and running, the shape of Academy and Chapter meetings was established, with a reception on the Wednesday evening, education on the Thursday and Friday and the AGM and education on the Saturday morning. The meetings would then be rounded off with a President's dinner on the Saturday so that Fellows would be free to return home at their leisure on the Sunday. This pattern has held good throughout the forty years that the Academy has been in existence.

The other characteristic of the Academy that was, and remains, outstanding has been the determination to create and maintain a very friendly and welcoming environment for all Fellows. The introduction of the 'buddy' system for new Fellows coming to their first meeting has been a fantastic way to continue this really important element in making the Academy ever more successful and attractive to family lawyers the world over.

Thus, the Academy came into existence. Little did any of us think, when the idea first came to mind, that over the next forty years the number of Fellows would grow to 1,114 spread over 128 jurisdictions with four Chapters, the USA with 432 Fellows, the European with 357 Fellows, the Canadian with 60 Fellows and the Asia Pacific with 177 Fellows.

In 1374, Geoffrey Chaucer, the famous English author and poet, wrote the poem 'Troilus and Criseyde'. In it he wrote 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow'. He was right.

Miles Preston (London, England & Wales)
Founding Fellow, President English Chapter, 1989
European Chapter Past President, 1989 - 1992
IAFL Past President, 1994 - 1996





Beyond Fabulous

- Cheryl Hepfer

And so it was 40 years ago that some of the finest family lawyers from the United States and Europe gathered for a meeting and drew up the Charter for the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, patterned after the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Although the name changed to the International Academy of Family Lawyers, the warmth, friendship and collegiality remained.

The IAFL is, without a doubt, the best organization in the world. I say that without hesitation. Not only are we now comprised of the best family lawyers from around the world, but we do the best work on behalf of families.

The IAFL was formed in 1986, to improve the practice of law and the administration of justice in the area of divorce and family law throughout the world, and we have done just that.

Our Fellows are able to reach out to each other to gain information, and the Fellows are generous with the exchange of their knowledge and expertise.

But most important is that we are truly colleagues. We support each other as Fellows, but also as individuals. We are there for each other. We are truly like family.

The more often we attend our fabulous Meetings, the more we get to know each other, and the very best part of this organization is getting to know each other.

We have Meetings in the very best venues around the world. And we have the best time at these meetings. The educational programs and the events are always top drawer, and we have the opportunity to share the moments with each other, which is truly the best thing that the IAFL has going. Our sense of community is amazing — truly the best!

I can only describe the IAFL as “*beyond fabulous*,” and the Academy is only getting better, as we expand into more areas of the world. We all look forward to many more years of fellowship, great education, and the sharing of knowledge.

Cheryl Hepfer (Bethesda, Maryland, USA)
USA Chapter Past President, 2002 - 2004
IAFL Past President, 2012 - 2014

Forty Years

– Suzanne Todd

IAFL Expansion in the last 4 decades; the growth of the IAFL from 1986 – 2026

The IAFL archives provide us with the Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers that was held on 10th October 1986 in London. The meeting was attended by 46 family lawyers from 6 countries. The largest cohorts were from England (27 lawyers) and USA (14 lawyers). The annual subscription fees were set at 100 British pounds and, having elected the first officers for a two-year term and the inaugural Board of Governors, the meeting continued to form four Committees: Bylaws, Meetings, Membership and Admission Standards. The meeting was called to order at 10.45 am and adjourned at 12.30 pm.

A couple of years later, under the presidency of Miles Preston, the English Chapter changed its name to the European Chapter and the Academy then had 2 Chapters until the birth of the Canadian Chapter in 2004. In December of that year, there were 394 Fellows (USA Chapter had 223 Fellows; European Chapter 106 Fellows, Canadian Chapter 22 and ROW 23). The Asia Pacific Chapter was officially formed in 2018. The archives show that there were many meetings to lay the groundwork so that the Chapter got off to a successful start. And what a flying start the Chapter has had. Notwithstanding the impact of the global pandemic, the Asia Pacific Chapter is the largest growing part of the Academy and currently has 173 Fellows from 14 jurisdictions.

1986-2026

What is clear from the archives is that expansion of the IAFL has been on the agenda of Presidents and officers since the Academy's inception. Equally clear is that the Executive Committee has always been strongly of the opinion that expansion and growth should not be undertaken at the expense or dilution of the Admissions criteria. Protecting the integrity of the criteria of the admissions remains of as much importance in 2026 as it was in 1986 when the Organizational meeting formed the Admissions Standards Committee.



In July 2026, with 1,114 Fellows from 128 jurisdictions on the Academy's rolls, the current Executive Committee has agreed that expansion cannot be a one size fits all policy. Regional subcommittees will be formed so that we can ensure expansion is undertaken in an appropriate way for each region, while ensuring Fellows are "one of the most experienced and skilled family law practitioners in the jurisdiction in which they practice".

With the provisional African Chapter about to come to fruition, and opportunities for more regional participation in the Middle East, South America and the Caribbean, these are exciting times for the expansion of the IAFL.

The Presidents and the Meetings

Under the watchful eye of Cheryl Hepfer, Suzanne Kingston and I undertook a project post-Covid to interview many of our Past Presidents with a view to collating our IAFL history for future Fellows.

We were able to interview more than half of our past Presidents which was great in terms of knowledge sharing.

We are sharing excerpts from their interviews in this book.

The Academy has benefitted from having amazing and dedicated global Presidents over the last 40 years. Their support and commitment to the Academy has gone a long way to make it the organisation that it is now.

Suzanne Todd (London, England & Wales)
IAFL President Elect 2025 – 2026



The Quotations from the Past Presidents in the following pages are excerpts from the extensive interviews carried out by Suzanne Todd and Suzanne Kingston.

Their interviews have been uploaded on the IAFL website and are accessible by scanning the QR codes on the following pages.

First Decade

1986-1996

– *Miles Preston*

Following the founding of the Academy in October 1986, the process of getting it up and running got under way.

The first President was **Gerry Nissenbaum** from Boston, Massachusetts. He remained in post for four years. Over that time the annual meetings were in London, Warwickshire, Rome and Dublin. The meeting in Dublin was particularly interesting because Mary Robinson, who became President of Ireland shortly after and had a very long and successful career in human rights work, gave an excellent keynote speech to open proceedings.

It quickly became a priority to work out a sound governance structure for the Academy. In June 1987, about four US attorneys and four UK lawyers (three senior barristers and me (a solicitor)), met in Bern, Switzerland. Two draft constitutions and bye laws had been prepared in advance, one by the US contingent and one by the Brits. They were noticeably different in length and complexity, which highlighted the difference between the US lawyers' familiarity with a written constitution and the Brits, who have never had a written constitution (perhaps excepting the Magna Carta in 1215!).



Serious discussions took place over several hours but, thankfully, by the end of the meeting we had very largely agreed a document which, if I remember rightly, was about twelve pages long. At the annual meeting in Rome, the draft was finalised and the Constitution and Bye-Laws were ratified.

Gerry was succeeded by **Peter Grose-Hodge** who served what was then established as the regular term of two years. His meetings were in Boston (1991) and Lisbon (1992).

Throughout this first six years the Academy was settling down and the numbers of Fellows were growing steadily. What could possibly go wrong?

Arthur Berman picked up the baton in 1992. He continued the development of the Academy with meetings in London (1993) and Paris (1994). Many fellows seemed to particularly enjoy the President's dinner in London which was held on a boat on the Thames as it travelled from Westminster to the Thames Barrier and back. The Paris meeting was also great fun but, for the first time in the Academy's history, included a contested election at the AGM. The contest was between Werner Martens from Munich and Philip Schwartz from Virginia for the position of President Elect. The election was won by Werner.



I became President at the end of the AGM and returned to London thinking that everything was running smoothly. It, therefore, came as a surprise to be served with court proceedings on Christmas Eve alleging that there had been irregularities in the process leading up to the election in Paris. The Academy was based in Westchester County, New York State so the proceedings were filed there. There followed several months of exchanges on the merits, or otherwise, of the application. This was all before the advent of emails and I had to carry the Governors with me as I tried to resolve matters. This involved my secretary regularly having to send about thirty individual faxes to the Governors. To my delight they always responded within a couple of hours so I could keep progressing the negotiations. Eventually, at the subsequent European Chapter meeting in Seville, we reached an agreement. In order to resolve matters, Werner agreed that his term as President would only be one year and Philip agreed to be President for a year. Werner let Philip serve the first year and he served the second.

That resolved, I was able to focus on growing the fellowship and making my meetings fun, the first being in Istanbul and the second in Hong Kong. The timing of the Hong Kong meeting was particularly fortuitous as it took place only a few months before the UK handed over control to China. Chris Patten was the last Governor and his wife, Lavender, who was a family lawyer, gave an excellent keynote speech to open the meeting and they hosted a reception for us at Government House, something which even some of the lawyers practising in Hong Kong hadn't experienced before.

My term came to an end in September 1996, and I was succeeded by Philip Schwartz and then Werner Martens.

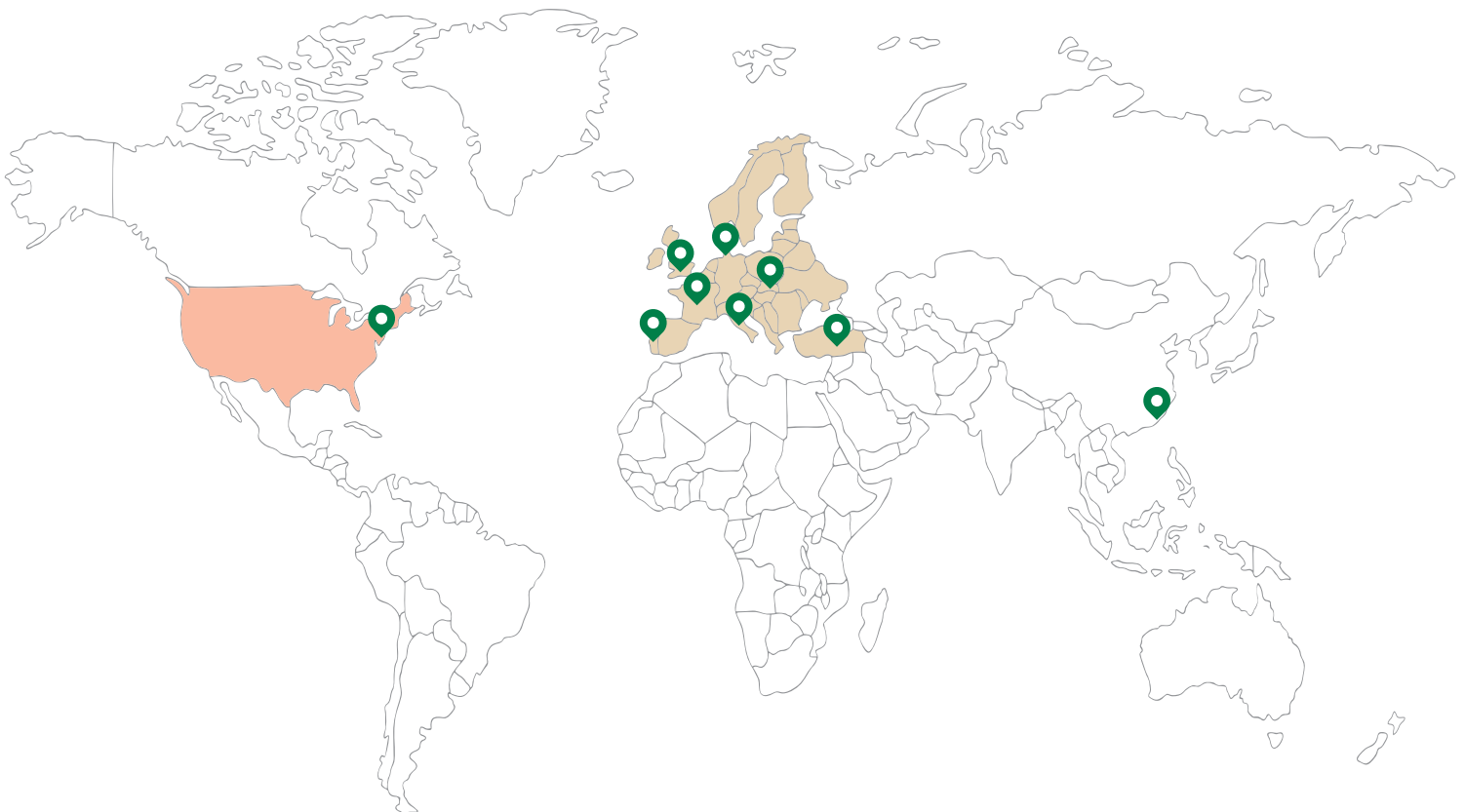
There were moments during the first half of my term as President when the future of the Academy seemed very shaky. I am pleased that we found a way to resolve things satisfactorily. Thankfully, the Academy then settled down and has gone from strength to strength ever since.

Miles Preston (London, England & Wales)

Founding Fellow and President of the English Chapter, 1989

European Chapter Past President, 1989 - 1992

IAFL Past President 1994 - 1996



1986-1990

Gerard Nissenbaum (Boston, USA)

Meeting locations:

- 📍 1986 - London, England
- 📍 1987 - Bern, Switzerland
- 📍 1987 - London, England
- 📍 1988 - Copenhagen, Denmark
- 📍 1988 - Warwickshire, England
- 📍 1989 - Rome, Italy
- 📍 1990 - Dublin, Ireland

1990-1992

Peter Grose-Hodge (London, England)

Meeting locations:

- 📍 1991 - Boston, USA
- 📍 1992 - Lisbon, Portugal

1992-1994

Arthur Berman (Chicago, USA)

Top tips:

“Do a good job. I find that the more reasonable you are, the easier it is to settle the case and not have to go to trial. Trial is very punishing. Don't forget to spend time with the things you like and with your family and children - I spent too much time at the office - you've got to balance life and enjoy things outside the law. I loved learning about the customs, meeting the lawyers and getting useful tips as to how they practiced, it was completely different from what we did in the United States. It helps people practice as you get ideas of how to handle clients and other issues that you don't think about because you're coming from different viewpoints when you go out of the United States.”

Meeting locations:

- 📍 1993 - London, England
- 📍 1994 - Paris, France

1994-1996

Miles Preston (London, England)

Miles was responsible alongside Werner Martens for the creation of the European Chapter. The Chapter's first meeting was held in Paris in 1989.

Vision for the future:

“The best practitioners around the world communicate, focus on professional work and are involved in issues that affect society.”

Top tips:

“Do the very best on every case - it is really good to do good work for people who spread the word about you. You have about a minute/a minute and a half to establish a rapport with a client...”

Meeting locations:

- 📍 1995 - Istanbul, Turkey
- 📍 1996 - Hong Kong, China

Second Decade 1996-2006

– *Jacqueline Leong*

The Second Decade encompassed the period 1996 to 2006 and was a period that began in reconciliation, evolved into settled familiarity and ended in turmoil and upheaval. It also opened with a novel involvement in world affairs for the IAML (as it then was) – in 1996 Miles Preston's second annual Meeting was held in Hong Kong, which included a private reception at Government House hosted by the last Governor, Chris Patten, and his wife, Lavender, herself a former family law barrister in London. Just a few months later IAML Fellows watched, during intense worldwide coverage of the 1997 change of sovereignty in Hong Kong, some of the personalities and special venues that they had so recently personally experienced.

The Second Decade began with the implementation of the compromise secured by Miles Preston. A consequence was that the opening Presidents of the Second Decade each served only one-year terms.

The Second Decade also finally saw the activation of the long-awaited Canadian Chapter after long years of discussion and planning and marked the first extension of the IAML's reach beyond its initial US and European Chapters.

Philip Schwartz from Virginia, USA served from 1996-1997 with his annual meeting in Florence, Italy. **Werner Martens** (a subsequent Presidential Medal recipient) from Munich, Germany served from 1997-1998 with his annual meeting in San Francisco, USA.

The next global President was **Richard Barry** from California, USA who served from 1998-2000. His annual meetings were in St Tropez,

France in 1999 and Edinburgh, Scotland in 2000 with the President's Dinner held on the dramatic ramparts of Edinburgh Castle. Richard brought on board a new Executive Director, Philippa Johnson, who brought a refreshing level of efficiency to the organisation's administration.

With the usual pattern now re-established, the next global President was **Douglas Alexiou** from London, England, who served from 2000-2002. His annual meetings were in Montreal, Canada in 2001 (the first meeting to be held in Canada) and in Berlin, Germany in 2002, with entertainment that included musical excerpts from Berlin's colourful historical past.

The next global President was **Charles Shainberg** from Pennsylvania, USA, who served from 2002-2004. His annual Meetings were in Barcelona, Spain in 2003 and Sydney, Australia in 2004, which included the President's Dinner in the iconic Sydney Opera House. This was the Academy's first Meeting in the Antipodes and included the introductory annual Audrey Ducroux Memorial Lecture (delivered by Lord Justice Alan Ward, a Founding Fellow and subsequent recipient of a President's Medal).

This was followed almost immediately by a prolonged period of turmoil and chaos for the Academy, which resulted in ensuing years of administrative churn and financial disruption.

Amongst the immediate consequences was that the burden of both administering and funding the Academy and its activities, including its next two annual Meetings, fell completely upon the incoming President, thereby requiring the

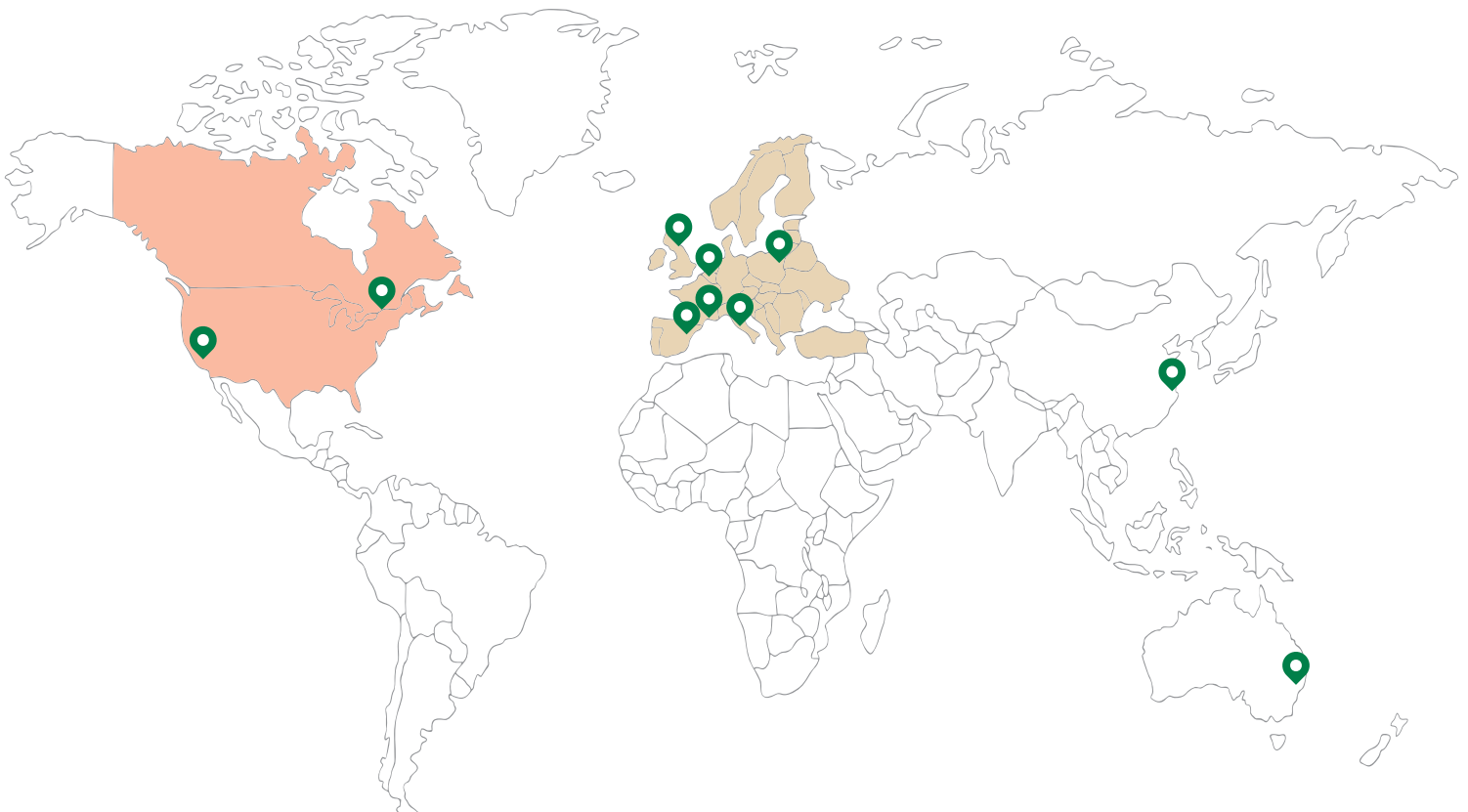
President to advance a considerable sum to fund the 2 Meetings. The amount was not fully reimbursed until about half a year after the end of her presidential term.

The absence of viable administrative support throughout her term led to the then President introducing Judy Lane Consulting to assist with the Brussels and Shanghai annual meetings which has resulted in their continued involvement in the IAML to date. The disturbing events of 2004-2006 were the catalyst leading to the overhaul of the organisation instigated by **Ian Kennedy** in the Third Decade.

2004 also marked landmark changes for the Academy and truly emphasised its international credentials and nature. For the first time since the IAML's creation, it elected a global President who was not a member of either the USA or European Chapters (until then the presidency had strictly alternated only between members of those Chapters), someone who came from

one of those parts of the world quaintly and collectively referred to by the IAML as ROWs (an acronym for Rest of the World), and someone who became its first woman president. It marked a coming of age and recognition of reality for the IAML. In 2004 the IAML elected **Jacqueline Leong** from Hong Kong who served as global president from 2004-2006. Her annual Meetings were in Brussels, Belgium in 2005 and Shanghai, China in 2006.

Jacqueline Leong (Hong Kong, China)
IAFL Past President, 2004-2006





1996-1997

Philip Schwartz (Fairfax, USA)

Meeting locations:

📍 1997 - Florence, Italy

1997-1998

Werner Martens (Munich, Germany)

Meeting locations:

📍 1998 - San Francisco, USA



1998-2000

Richard Barry (Edmonds, USA)

Meeting locations:

📍 1999 - St Tropez, France

📍 2000 - Edinburgh, Scotland



2000-2002

Douglas Alexiou (London, England)

Top tips:

Never stop learning, be a good listener, do full attendance notes, work hard but make sure you enjoy yourself and have fun doing what you are doing.

Reasons to join the IAFL:

International practice gives you contacts in countries where you have cases and there are genuine friendships worldwide.

Meeting locations:

📍 2001 - Montreal, Canada

📍 2002 - Berlin, Germany

2002-2004

Charles Shainberg (Philadelphia, USA)

Meeting locations:

📍 2003 - Barcelona, Spain

📍 2004 - Sydney, Australia



2004-2006

Jacqueline Leong (Hong Kong, China)

Jacqueline was our first global president based outside the USA or Europe.

Tips for young lawyers:

It is important that young people broaden their horizons beyond their immediate jurisdiction and they should not be too inward looking.

Today's world offers so many opportunities, and many have a direct impact on family law.

Force yourself to do something outside your comfort zone as it will open many doors.

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2005 - Brussels, Belgium
- 📍 2006 - Shanghai, China



Third Decade

2006-2016

– *Ian Kennedy*

The third decade was a period of transition, consolidation and expansion.

The Academy had been growing but still retained something of a club-like character emanating from its foundation, subsequent history and the by-then 20-year collegiality of its senior members.

The decade commenced under the presidency of **Don Sasser** from West Palm Beach, Florida from 2006 – 2008, with two memorable meetings in St Petersburg (involving palaces) in 2007 and Cape Town (involving cheetahs) in 2008.

Ian Kennedy from Australia, the first President from the Southern Hemisphere, succeeded Don and served from 2008 to 2010 at a time when the Academy was at a crossroads in terms of its development, growth and future direction and its finances were in a very shaky state. Ian embarked on a series of initiatives, building on what as President - Elect he had commenced with Don, to stabilise and secure the financial position, (he appointed Tom Sasser to support long-serving treasurer George Stern with a view to him transitioning into the treasurer role). He re-invigorated the administration (appointing Donna Goddard as Executive Director). He redrafted and modernised the bylaws to better reflect the changing nature and optimal structure and objectives of the Academy. He encouraged greater member involvement and outreach.

Ian implemented the Academy's first major strategic planning meeting in San Antonio, Texas in 2009 and undertook the first comprehensive survey of Fellows to obtain

feedback about their views of the Academy, its purpose and their relationship with it and to test responses to options for future changes, many of which were implemented (although the proposal to change the name of the Academy to International Academy of Family Lawyers did not initially find in favour). He also, rather controversially, re-introduced and built on the concept of sponsorship for meetings and activities of the Academy pioneered by Jackie Leong for her Shanghai meeting, and placed a greater emphasis on the educational component of meetings.

Ian's two meetings (Vancouver, Canada 2009 and Queenstown, New Zealand 2010) were designed to make them affordable and, with sponsorship, cost-effective, to encourage attendance by younger Fellows, and firms to send their Fellows to participate.

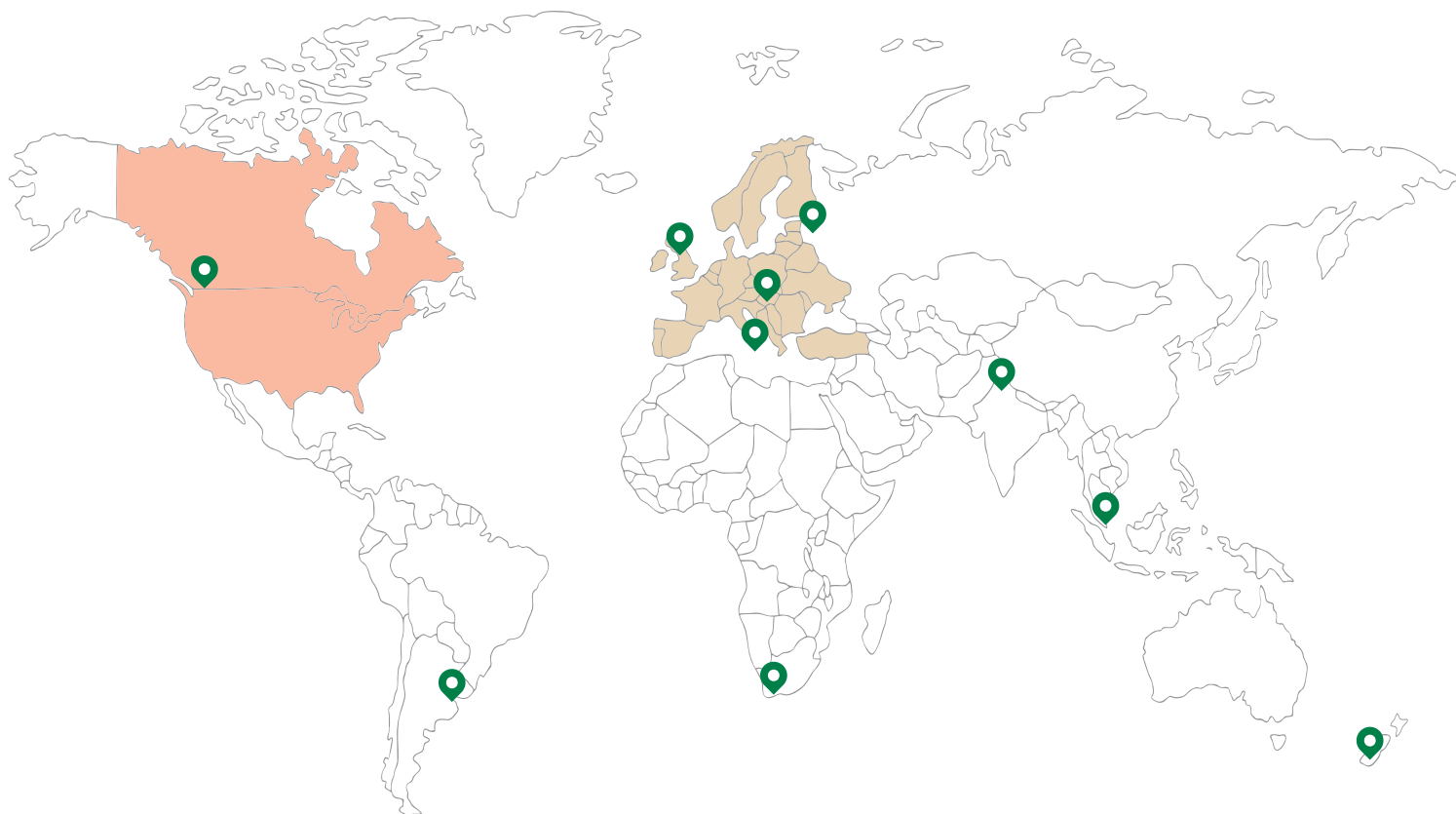
David Salter from England succeeded Ian in 2010 and continued the implementation of the initiatives and changes, drawing on the responses to the Fellows Survey and raising the profile of the Academy in the international arena. His term was highlighted by the 25th Anniversary meeting in Harrogate, England in 2011 and the continued expansion of the Academy to new jurisdictions, with the meeting in Singapore in 2012 drawing in participants from South-East Asia and surrounding areas and further increasing the geographic footprint of the Academy, as well as increasing membership from already-represented jurisdictions in the region.

Cheryl Hepfer from Bethesda, Maryland took the reins from David. In her term as President from 2012 – 2014 Cheryl developed and implemented significant initiatives including a focus on and involvement of the Academy in important international work around the challenging issues of surrogacy and the scourge of forced marriage, while continuing the outreach of the Academy into new jurisdictions in Central and South America and Central and Eastern Europe, facilitated by meetings in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2013) and Budapest, Hungary (2014), and raising the profile of the Academy as an important force in international family law.

The decade was completed by **William Longrigg** from England, with meetings in Taormina, Sicily in 2015 and New Delhi, India in 2016. In his presidential term from 2014 - 2016, William built on the expansion and outreach initiatives developed with Cheryl Hepfer during her term. He implemented the concept

of highly successful mini-meetings in a broad range of unrepresented or under-represented jurisdictions throughout Europe to introduce the Academy to practitioners. They also helped identify prospective Fellows. He initiated the very popular annual Introduction to European Family Law meetings which still continue. He extended outreach into Asia with the New Delhi meeting, and also (with Rachael Kelsey) took initial steps towards expansion into Africa. 2015 saw the name of the Academy change from IAML to IAFL (the culmination of a process commenced by Ian Kennedy) and the creation of the new website, laying the launching pad for the Fourth Decade.

Ian Kennedy (Melbourne, Australia)
IAFL Past President, 2008 -2010





2006-2008

Donald Sasser (West Palm Beach, USA)

Advice for young lawyers today:
Be prepared for every event.

Why it's important to join the IAFL:
To participate in international actions and to get to know the best lawyers around the world encourages you to become a better lawyer and enjoy yourself while doing it. Participate and become active in family law organisations.

Vision for the future:
Expand membership to other countries and encourage other countries to become members of The Hague Convention.

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2007 - St Petersburg, Russia
- 📍 2008 - Cape Town, South Africa



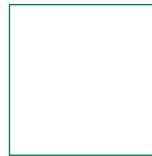
2008-2010

Ian Kennedy (Melbourne, Australia)

"My career highlights include involvement in local, national and international bodies and enhancing the profession in the family law arena"

Top Tips for Younger Lawyers:

"Don't lose sight of the fact that we are professionals, we owe duty to our clients, other lawyers and courts. Acknowledge that none of us know everything. Have the courage to think creatively. Never forget that you are members of the profession: act collegiately, share your knowledge. Communicate effectively and productively"



Meeting locations:

- 📍 2009 - Vancouver, Canada
- 📍 2010 - Queenstown, New Zealand



2010-2012

David Salter (Harrogate, England)

Top tips:

Find out what interests you and become the best at it, have confidence in your own judgement.



Meeting locations:

- 📍 2011 - Harrogate, England
- 📍 2012 - Singapore



2012-2014

Cheryl Hepfer (Bethesda, USA)

Top Tips for Young Family Lawyers:

Put family first, we have to juggle - clients come and go but you will remember your child's soccer game. Celebrate everything you can. Be sure you get paid for your time - you decide when you volunteer not your client.

Three reasons to join the IAFL:

The knowledge, the wisdom, the willingness to make the world a better place, the people are first rate. Most important is the knowledge, not just about family law, we learn about each other.

Vision for the future:

We will continue to affect the world for the better. This small organisation is rich in value and knowledge, we will impact the world for the better.

Highlights of
the interview

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2013 - Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 📍 2014 - Budapest, Hungary



2014-2016

William Longrigg (London, England)

Vision for the future:

"...is to make the organisation a household name."

Reasons to be involved:

"...camaraderie, making a difference and referrals and creating the first young lawyers conference in New York."

International work is extraordinary and an amazing intellectual challenge.

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2015 - Taormina, Sicily
- 📍 2016 - New Delhi, India



Fourth Decade

2016-2026

– Corinne Remedios

On the heels of the name-change during William Longrigg's Taormina Meeting in 2015, the Fourth was a Decade of consolidation and new Chapters.

Nancy Zalusky Berg (2016 – 2018) the 16th IAFL President, presided when the Asia Pacific Chapter underwent its gestation and birth: there was a gathering of Fellows in Hong Kong in 2017, following which the decision was made to launch the new Chapter. Nancy's Meetings were in Reykjavik, Iceland (September 2017) and Tokyo (May/June 2018), the latter in partnership with Nigel Nicholls, the inaugural AP Chapter President. The turnout and sentiment of the Tokyo Meeting confirmed that the fledgling was ready, willing and able to fly. When Covid struck, Nancy was Immediate Past President. In a heartbeat, she introduced informal online Chats, the forerunners of the webinars that held us together when we could not meet in person.

Mia Reich-Sjogren (2018 – 2020) held her only Meeting in Melbourne (February 2019), in partnership with Max Meyer, the then AP Chapter President. With Covid preventing her second Meeting, Mia and team focused on the important task of ensuring the special causes of IAFL continued to be promoted and developed through active multi-jurisdictional Committees under proactive leadership. This was important work in core-strengthening.

Marlene Eskind Moses (2020 – 2021) had the unenviable task of reigning with no in-person Meetings. It was, however, a time of review and change, including the start of the IAFL Executive Directorship handover from Donna Goddard

to Annie Dunster, and the greater involvement of the Judy Lane team – Marc Pursals et al. This was an important transition as it has re-shaped the way the Academy has operated.

Tom Sasser (2021 – 2023) took over as IAFL President, having been Treasurer for many years. Despite Covid, Tom left the coffers in a healthy position. There was more core-strengthening during Tom's term: tighter controls over the venues and the expenses of 4 Meetings a year, with September reserved for the "Global" Meeting. He initiated the review the IAFL Bylaws and in particular, the introduction of 1-year Presidential terms, and the "PED" (the President Elect Designate). Consistently with the future emergence of Provisional Chapters, Tom held his 2 Meetings in Africa and South America respectively: in Marrakech, Morocco (November/December 2022), and Santiago, Chile (September 2023).

Rachael Kelsey (2023 – 2025) will be remembered for governance, relationships, expansion and Africa. Rachael's Meetings were in Boston, USA (June 2024) and Nairobi, Kenya (September 2025), the latter being the culmination of her passionate contributions to embracing Africa. Internally, Rachael stressed the importance of strong governance. She created regular communication between the Chapters' leaders and the "Exec". Externally, strides were made to attract Fellows from under- and unrepresented jurisdictions: 12 new jurisdictions were added. Travelling extensively (more than 30 IAFL trips), she encouraged 16 other organisations to hold meetings or events with IAFL. Other initiatives like the Early Career

Award, the Institute for Further Learning, and the Law Student Symposium in Nairobi will help future proof IAFL.

Heather Q. Hostetter (2025 – 2026), the 21st IAFL President, more than stepped into the big shoes left for her to fill. The first President to serve after the institution of one-year terms, she will hold her meeting in Dublin, Ireland (September 2026) – with the largest attendance to date of 461 participants. However, her work as a leader was started long before her ascension. She ably supported Rachael in revamping the admissions process (which included making the application available online) and creating a step-by-step Meeting planning guide. She has involved PED, Suzanne Todd, in her role as head of the expansion committee. As President, Heather has continued to encourage expansion, (with four Introduction to Family Law meetings held in Pennsylvania, Montreal, Albania, and the Philippines, and a regional meeting planned for Kuwait), to promote the IAFL. She

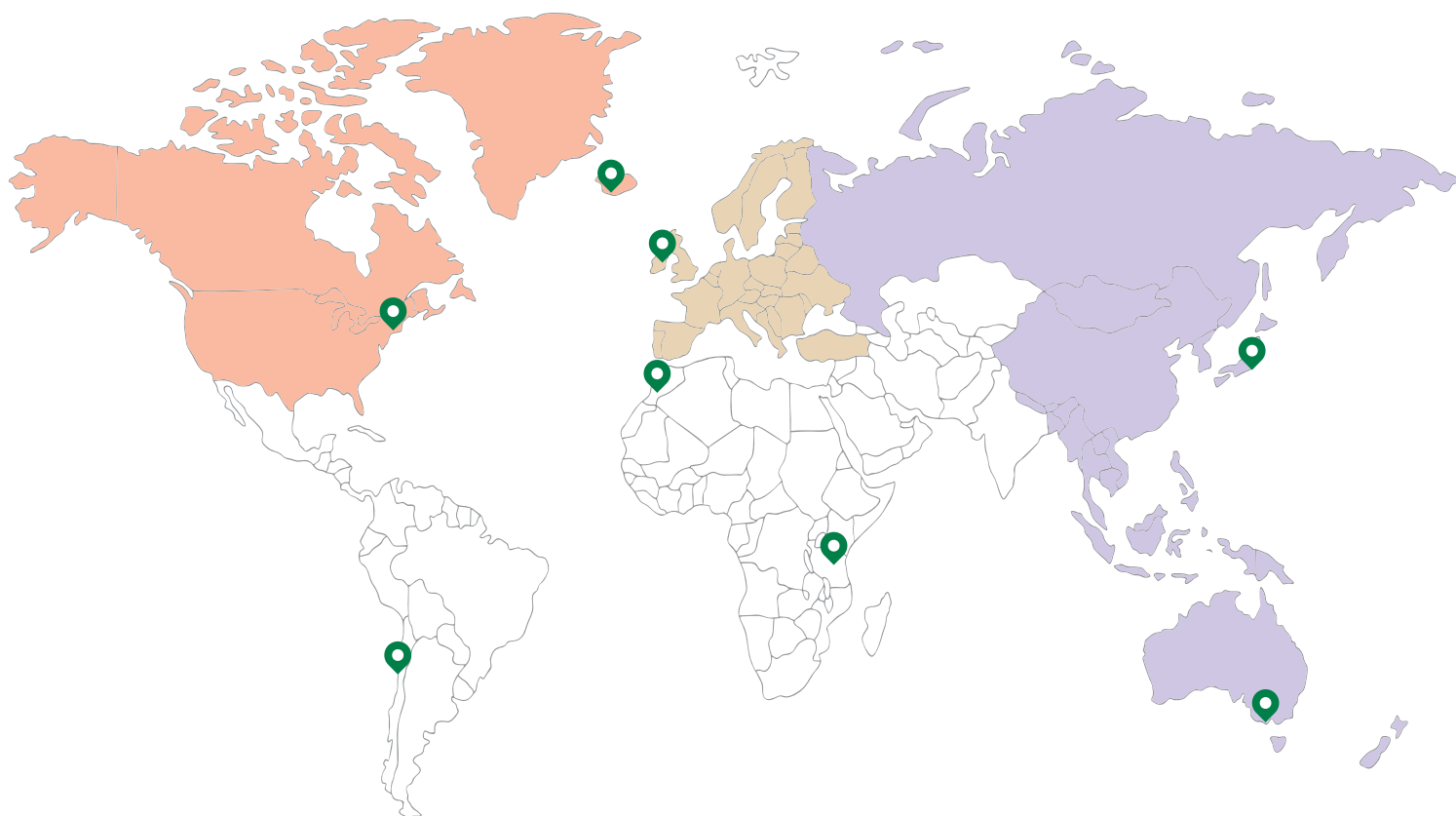
has created and implemented missing policies and procedures to bring the IAFL into full compliance with sound governance. Heather and Suzanne will mark the end of Heather's term in Dublin, with a strategy meeting, inviting all the Chapter and Global Presidents, President-elects, and President-elect Designates to contribute to and approve a three-to-five-year Strategic Plan drafted by them for the Academy.

It is fitting that the Fourth Decade, which started with the launch of the Asia Pacific Chapter, will finish (in all likelihood), with the establishment of Africa, as a new Provisional Chapter. In Dublin, **Suzanne Todd** will take over as the first IAFL President in the Fifth Decade.

Corinne Remedios (Hong Kong, China)

Asia Pacific Chapter Past President, 2020 - 2022

IAFL First Vice President, 2025 - 2026





2016-2018

Nancy Berg (Minneapolis, USA)

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2017 - Reykjavik, Iceland
- 📍 2018 - Tokyo, Japan



2018-2020

Mia Reich-Sjögren (Göteborg, Sweden)

The Academy has meant a lot to me. I got into international family law, lots of fun, fantastic travel, it has been a great part of my life over the last 15 years. Friendship is a big thing. We aren't there to travel, we are there to meet. I have never been disappointed with a referral.

Highlights of
the interview

Meeting locations:

- 📍 2019 - Melbourne, Australia
- 📍 2020 - Virtual – Covid



2020-2022

Marlene Eskind Moses (Nashville, USA)

Top tips to younger lawyers:

"It is important to create good relationships at all levels. In your family so that you have the ability and structure to help others. In your law offices, be positive with judges and their staff in your relationships. You can do it with grace, purpose and direction. The more positive they are, the greater the quality of your life: it is all about relationships"

Advice to young Marlene:

"Be more forgiving and ease up a bit. Be kind to yourself"

On the IAFL:

"This organization is my heart. I love the IAFL. It doesn't get better than creating relationships all over the world. The IAFL is an extended family internationally"

Meeting locations –

📍 2021 - Virtual - Covid



2022-2023

Tom Sasser West Palm Beach, USA

Top tips to younger lawyers:

"Get involved early in your local bar. Strive to be the best. The more you do to improve yourself, whether it is writing articles, giving speeches the better quality of client and case you will get"

"One of my favourite trips of all time was New Zealand in 2010. Great experiences which have shaped me as a person not just as a lawyer"

"The Presidency is a wonderful thing. It was one of the best things I have done in my professional career"

Vision:

"Growth will accelerate in the Academy as we continue to be more connected, not less. We started small and we now have 4 Chapters with the possibility of additional provisional Chapters in the near future"

Reasons for joining:

"Friendships and connections you make both professionally and personally. Enhance your practice. Learning; knowledge and interpersonal growth. I have grown in ways I could never have imagined because of the minds of Fellows I have been able to explore over breakfast or an informal dinner. We are dealing with some of the brightest minds!"

Meeting locations:

📍 2022 - Marrakesh, Morocco

📍 2023 - Santiago, Chile



2024-2025

Rachael Kelsey *Edinburgh, Scotland*

Top Tips for Young Lawyers:

Get involved and be curious. Wherever you practice, you will get more out of your work if you put more in. In relation to the IAFL, the same principles apply- and don't think that just because you are inexperienced, or young, or shy, or don't have perfect English, or are from a small jurisdiction that you won't have something to offer. We are a broad church and there is a place for everyone to participate and contribute.

Vision for the Future:

My personal vision for IAFL is centred on Africa- we are, I hope, on the cusp of the creation of a Provisional Chapter, which will deliver so many opportunities for the fellowship: increased learning from spectacular practitioners and judges who have a depth of knowledge and wisdom in legal pluralism that is so much further advanced than in so many of our own jurisdictions; individual benefits for fellows who will be better able to access advice in the fastest growing part of the world and opportunities for the fellowship to have more fellows from the continent involved in our leadership and governance.

Meeting locations:

📍 2024 - Boston, USA

📍 2025 - Nairobi, Kenya

2025-2026

Heather Q. Hostetter *Washington DC, USA*

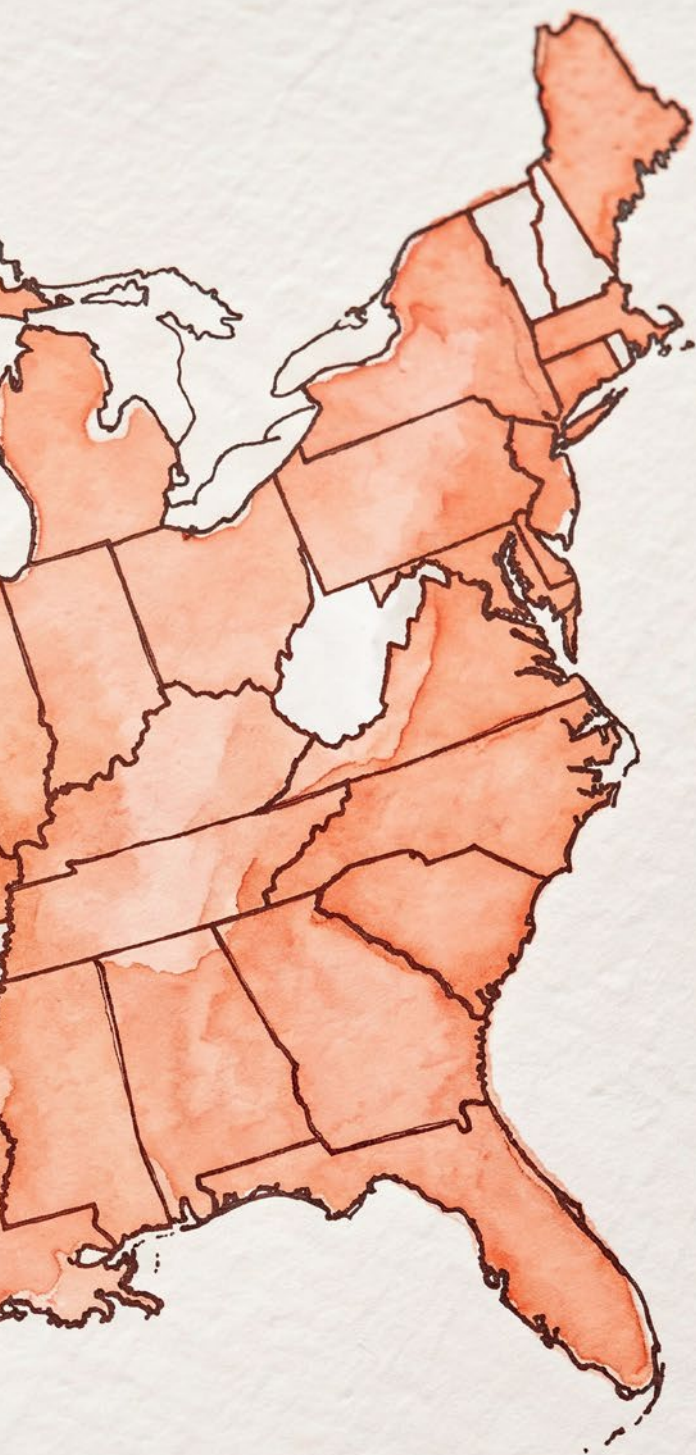
“As family lawyers, we are in the business of personal service. Our clients want and deserve individualized attention and excellence when the matters at hand are access to their children and their financial security. In an increasingly mobile society where clients live and work around the world, it is essential to have lawyers I can call upon in other countries who I personally know in order to make correct strategic decisions and/or ensure my counterpart in another country can and will provide the same level of service as I will to our client. I would also note that in a world that feels more fractured and in turn, isolates countries and their citizens more, having the opportunity to gather with others from around the globe and communicate across differences and learn from one another is the best antidote to alienation. My compassion for our clients, my fellow family law lawyers, and the fragility of humanity has increased tenfold since joining the IAFL.”

Meeting locations:

📍 2026 – Dublin, Ireland







USA CHAPTER

The Long and Winding IAFL Road of the USA Chapter

– Joy Feinberg and Jorge Cestero

In 1962, a group of rambunctious Chicago divorce lawyers formed a professional association to bring much needed prestige and power to a legal landscape few respected. Soon the AAML went national. As our cases grew to include children abducted around the globe and property and assets being held globally, how convenient it was to have local contacts to assist and reference. The concept became a reality with the formation of the IAML in about 1986, later to be renamed, “IAFL” – International Academy of Family Lawyers. Need I say that a love of travel and the desire to improve international family law is the spiritual soul of Fellows?

As different as we are, the family and our children are central to all humans. Issues relating to property and family support issues are reflective of our nations, cultures and philosophical identities. Early years of education focused on comparative renditions of how issues are viewed in and around the world. For the USA folks, we have 50 fiefdoms and we learned what we shared and how we differed by state and nationally; and against countries bordering the USA – north and south. The impact of the massive influx of immigrants and especially the Latino population made it clear that we needed to reach further south of our borders, and indeed around the world for intelligence and reflection. America was no longer the land of white bread.

The USA Chapter is honored to have co-hosted many meetings with our northern friends, the IAFL Canadian Chapter. The partnership has been fruitful on many levels, and the USA Chapter looks forward to hosting many more successful meetings with our Canadian brethren. Although all Canadian Chapter Presidents are not named here for the sake of brevity, their contributions to the planning and execution of our joint meetings has been irreplaceable.

Phil Schwartz of Washington DC and a brilliant mind led the first USA Chapter meeting in 1987 in Boston. His second meeting was in New York. Is there a better place in the USA? I doubt it. Vitality, innovation, creativity, theatre, well, one could go on forever about that most glorious city. (Please don't miss Fred Siegel's upcoming NYC meeting.) Phil's third meeting in 1988 was in Washington, D.C. – his hometown.

As great as NYC is, our second USA Chapter President was Arthur Berman – our man from Chicago. As much as I, Joy, love NYC, Chicago will always be #1 in my heart. When IAFL Fellows come to the November Chicago AAML meeting, they tell me repeatedly how much they love my city – voted 9 years in a row as the #1 large city in the USA and the #2 most beautiful city in the world. Arthur also held meetings in San Francisco, Boston and recognizing our closeness with Canada – Vancouver, a lusciously beautiful city!

Mostly, we gather to attract business, to learn and to recognize new ideas and decide what works here and elsewhere – what alternatives exist and what we must try. Even more importantly, we have become family – sharing our joys and sorrows on personal levels and cases and concepts on the business side of this organization. We often gather 3 or more times a year just for the IAFL and more often for our own national, state and local professional organizations. We are blessed to share such love and affection across borders.



Two-year terms ensued. Sandy Dranoff held his first meeting in conjunction with Global in Salzburg and then his second meeting in NYC with a bus ride and description of his home city that remains a legend. Charlie Shainberg, hailing from Philadelphia, took us to New Orleans and his hometown of Philly where so much of USA history resides. Steve Kolodny from LA by way of NYC held meetings in Washington. DC and NYC. Don Sasser from West Palm Beach held his first meeting in Bermuda (the photo of the Bermuda shorts Fellows is a legend) and then Palm Beach, Florida where lifestyles of the rich and famous abound. Tom Stabile took us to Las Vegas, Nevada in 2001 and then the ever-gracious Charleston, South Carolina where so much beauty exists.

If the IAFL has a queen, it is a toss-up between Cheryl Hepfer and Marlene Moses. In 2003, Cheryl took us to New Orleans, Louisiana – always fabulous and outlandish. Then the following year we joined her in Washington, D.C. with a dinner at the Supreme Court – something no one who attended will ever forget. It was fabulosity itself. In 2005, Floyd Nadler, my Chicago compatriot, brought the IAFL USA Chapter to Chicago where you tasted thick pizza and Chicago dogs (NO KETCHUP!) but every other thing on earth smothers our hot dogs. And then Floyd brought us to Mickey Mouse Land – Orlando Florida. Ed Thomas tried, in vain, to outdo a Chicago dog by his helicopter landing on a US battleship and then led us around Boston on the Ducks that had tires and were amphibious. Never to be outdone by anyone, could we forget Marcia Maddox's Armadillo races on the ranch? Our visit extended to the L.B. Johnson Presidential Library where my husband found a letter written and signed by Ms. Maddox.

Nancy Berg brought us to South Beach, Florida for our 25th anniversary and then her hometown of Minneapolis, Minnesota. We walked the bridge from our hotel to the ball game – baseball being so emblematic of the USA. My dear friend, Sylvia Goldschmidt brought us to Carefree, Arizona and introduced many to the exquisite American Indian paintings and sculptures, let alone jewelry! Of course she completed her term in her hometown of NYC. Rounding out five terms of female presidents was my favorite, ME, with an exquisite trip to the gracious and elegant Quebec City and a second meeting in Beverly Hills, California. The ever-inflating cost of 2 shots of tequila purchased by Richard Crew for me – you'll have to get him to tell you the story. And then our queen of graciousness – Marlene Moses gave us two charming southern meetings – Nashville, her hometown and thereafter, Savannah, Georgia.

Jorge Cestero and his Canadian counterpart, Sarah Boulby, held a magnificent meeting in San Francisco, and we took cable cars and other transport to see this most gorgeous city. Covid came upon us and Jorge and Sarah's Toronto meeting was canceled. Covid couldn't keep Reneaux Collins from having the Kentucky Derby party of a lifetime and virtually! Kiilu's bourbon descriptions, Jane Keir, horse enthusiast supreme, talked to us about equine history. Ric Roane led us through his closet as he, a gentleman, dressed – simply one of the funniest events in IAFL USA Chapter history. In 2022, real meetings resumed with Reneaux's New Orleans' meeting.

In 2023, Peter Buchbauer held a joint meeting with Global in Santiago, Chile and then brought us to Seattle, where after wonderful educational programs, our first IAFL Cruise occurred. In 2025, Alabaman, Wendy Crew held a beautiful Charleston meeting.



We look forward to Katharine Maddox's Fort Lauderdale 2026 meeting. She, along with her late mother, Marcia, will complete the first set of mother-daughter Presidents of our Chapter. Don and Tom Sasser are the first father-son Global Presidents. We are proud that USA Chapter Fellow, Heather Q. Hostetter, is the current IAFL President.

The USA Chapter is honored to have supported the work of the IAFL in such benchmark issues as international child abduction, forced marriage, international agreements, domestic abuse and international alternative dispute resolution. We have assisted in amicus briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court and around the world. We have provided judicial training and expertise for law reform and education. We have helped educate young lawyers with our intro programs and webinars.

Due to the hard work of those mentioned here and many others, the USA Chapter now has 432 Fellows from 42 US States, Washington D.C. and the US Virgin Islands. My descriptions fail to impress upon all the high level of the educational programs provided. All of this has much to do with the love and friendship we share with our Fellows, spouses and partners. In the immortal words of Neil Sedaka, *"Love will keep us together!"*

Here's to another 40 years USA Chapter, and to all our friends around and in the world of IAFL.

Joy M. Feinberg (Chicago, Illinois, USA)
USA Chapter Past President, 2014 - 2016

With input from:

Jorge Cestero (West Palm Beach, Florida)
USA Chapter Past President, 2018 - 2020
IAFL President Elect Designate, 2025 – 2026















CANADIAN CHAPTER

History of the Canadian Chapter

– *Stephen Grant*

It is hard to believe that the IAFL, formerly known as the IAML, turns forty this year but there it is.

Invited by Fellow Tom Bastedos QC, Malcolm Kronby and I attended the IAML meeting in Boston in 1991 as guests. We were welcomed by any number of Fellows, mostly from the UK and USA. There were Fellows from European centres as well, of course, and it was a congenial group, to say the least. Those were heady days, full of a sense of purpose, underpinning a dynamic and global enterprise. The collegial possibilities seemed endless. Malcolm and I became Fellows in 1992.

Being polite Canadians, we straddled the cultural and legal divide between the energetic and voluble Americans and the more reserved Brits and Europeans, but managed to befriend Fellows in both Chapters (as they then were). It was fascinating to learn of the practices and jurisprudence of the various legal systems in the myriad countries, represented by one hundred or so Fellows all told, or even fewer, if memory serves me correctly.

The meeting venues took us often to unusual places, or at least places we weren't in the habit of visiting, Lisbon, Berlin, Harrogate, Prague, and Vienna to name a few but there were many sojourns—3 each year, in fact. For the US Chapter, the European Chapter and the annual meeting, we would gallivant off and spend a few days in professional, cultural and social engagement. The pomp and circumstance—let alone the Presidential contretemps then in full swing—of the 1997 annual meeting in Florence remain particularly memorable. That meeting was held a week after Princess Diana's untimely death (not to mention the Saturday night banquet fell resoundingly on my 50th birthday).

In addition to discussion of significant wealth cases like *White v White* in the UK, the presentations often dealt with the jurisprudential framework of the meeting host country, the “international” aspects revolving around cross-border custody and support disputes, tax treaties and tax treatments, valuation issues, and the like. There were certainly ample networking opportunities as well.

In the mid-aughts of the current century, once we amassed a critical mass of 20 or 25 Fellows, generally annexed to the US Chapter, (although, at that time, without any tariffs or threats of annexation) we ceased being IAML newcomers and formed a Canadian Chapter which I'm delighted to know still thrives today. (I was privileged to serve as the inaugural Chapter President.)

Needless to say, 40 years is essentially two generations, and, sadly, some of our stalwart forebears are no longer with us: Philip Epstein, Tom Bastedos QC, Patrick Schmidt, to name a few. Doubtless there are plenty of photos (taken with cameras then, not iPhones; how technologically savvy we've become!) around to herald these Fellows and all the rest of us.

Sandy and I found the camaraderie enjoyable and rich, and we made lifelong friends from our affiliation with the IAFL. It was always fun to catch up once or twice a year over drinks and dinners, and we are glad this aspect of the organization still endures.

Wishing the IAFL all success for the next 40 years!

Stephen Grant (Toronto, Canada)
Canadian Chapter Past President, 2005-2007

Middle Years of the Canadian Chapter

– *Sarah Boulby*

In 2012 I became a fellow of the IAFL. Like many others, I joined out of interest in developing my practice in inter-jurisdictional family law and have since enjoyed the collegiality and intellectual benefits of meeting family lawyers from around the world. I subsequently became Canadian Chapter President for 2019-2020.

In 2012 there were 39 Canadian fellows. Today there are 60 fellows. The IAFL is an organization particularly suited to Canadians given our immigrant society which is so conducive to complicated international marriage contracts and divorces. Canadian fellows, in turn, have contributed and continue to contribute to the IAFL particularly through legal education as we combine both civil and common law traditions and have some of the most progressive family law anywhere in the world. Like a number of other countries represented in the IAFL community, Canada is home to Indigenous peoples and our country has started a, at times, difficult reconciliation process. The role of family law in Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada was explored in a session at the U.S. & Canadian Chapters Meeting in Seattle in 2024. I also recall the impact of Canadian Mi'kmaq lawyer and professor, Pamela Palmater, speaking at the U.S. & Canadian Chapters Meeting in Nashville in 2017 on diversity, equality, and inclusion.



The covid pandemic prevented our planned US and Canadian Chapters Meeting in Toronto in 2020 and 2021 (yes we planned and cancelled the event twice). Our last meeting in Canada was the US & Canadian Chapters Meeting in Québec in 2015. Thanks in large part to our then Canadian Chapter President, the dynamic Pierre-Hugues Fortin, the event was a glorious showcase of Québécois culture. I have no doubt that Canadian Fellows will continue to contribute and benefit from the IAFL.

Sarah Boulby (Toronto, Canada)
Canadian Chapter Past President, 2018 - 2020

Canadian Chapter Today

– *Caroline Harnois*

After attending the Quebec City meeting in 2015, I was encouraged by Gerald Stotland and Pierre-Hugues Fortin to join the IAFL, which I did in 2016.

The IAFL was an obvious choice because an increasing share of my practice involves families whose lives and disputes cross borders. Mobility, international assets, and multinational parenting arrangements are no longer exceptional. In that context, the IAFL offers a unique forum of highly experienced family law practitioners committed to professional excellence, constructive problem-solving, and ethical cross-border practice. For me, it provides a trusted network to consult with, to refer clients to, and to collaborate with when matters span multiple jurisdictions.

Beyond the technical and professional value, the IAFL is also exceptional in the quality of the relationships it fosters. It is not simply a directory of contacts; it is a community built through repeated collaboration, shared standards, and ongoing dialogue. Over time, professional relationships developed through the IAFL frequently become long-term friendships.

I have been involved with the Executive Committee for a number of years, after being encouraged by Karon Bales to join, and have had the privilege of serving alongside outstanding colleagues and friends who are dedicated to continually strengthening our organization. Becoming involved in the Canadian Chapter was particularly important to me because Canada brings a distinct perspective to international family law. Our legal landscape is complex: a federal structure with provincial and territorial

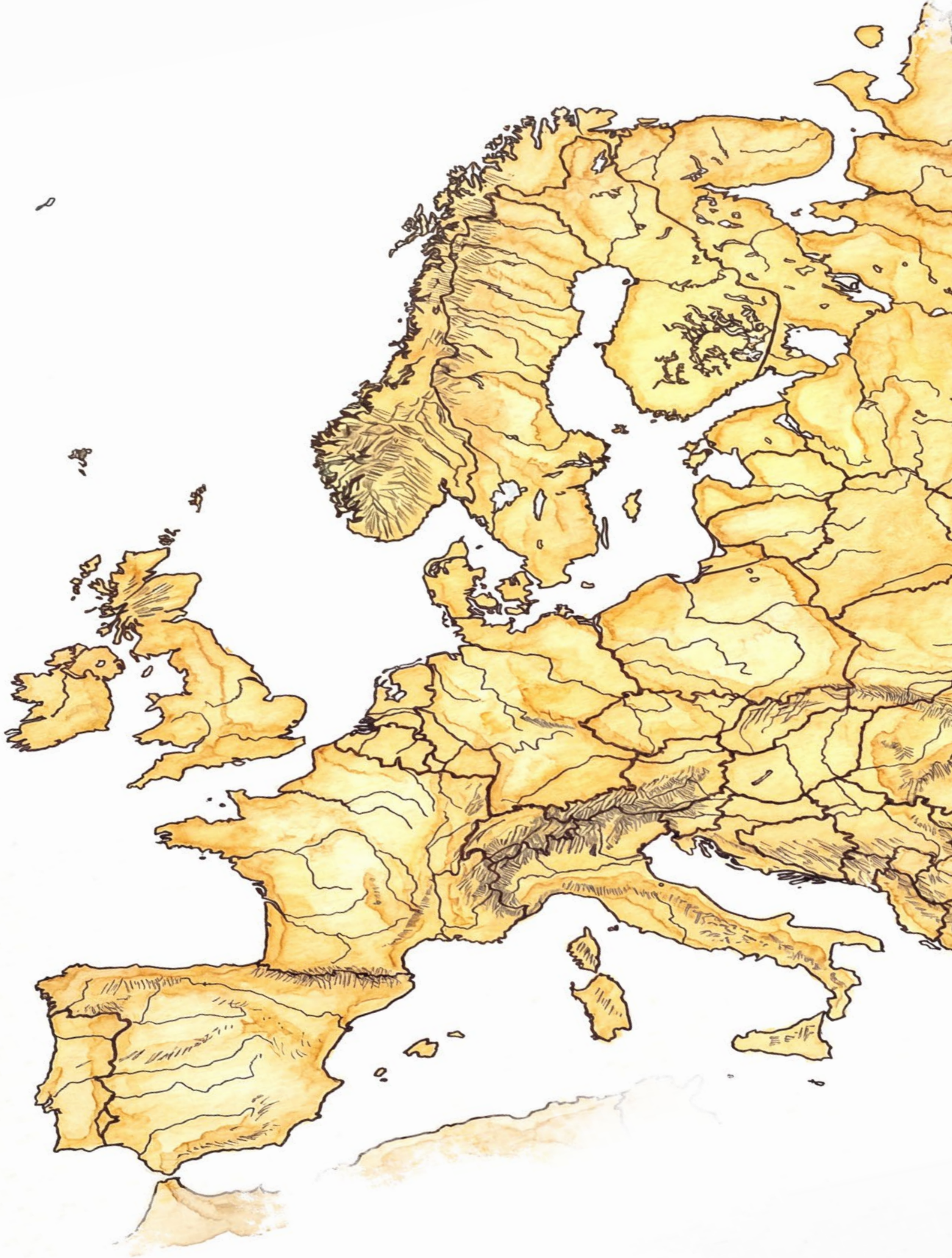
jurisdiction over many family law issues, a bijural system that includes both common law and Quebec's civil law tradition, and a bilingual environment in which some of us practise daily. A dedicated Canadian Chapter helps ensure that these realities are understood and represented within the IAFL community.

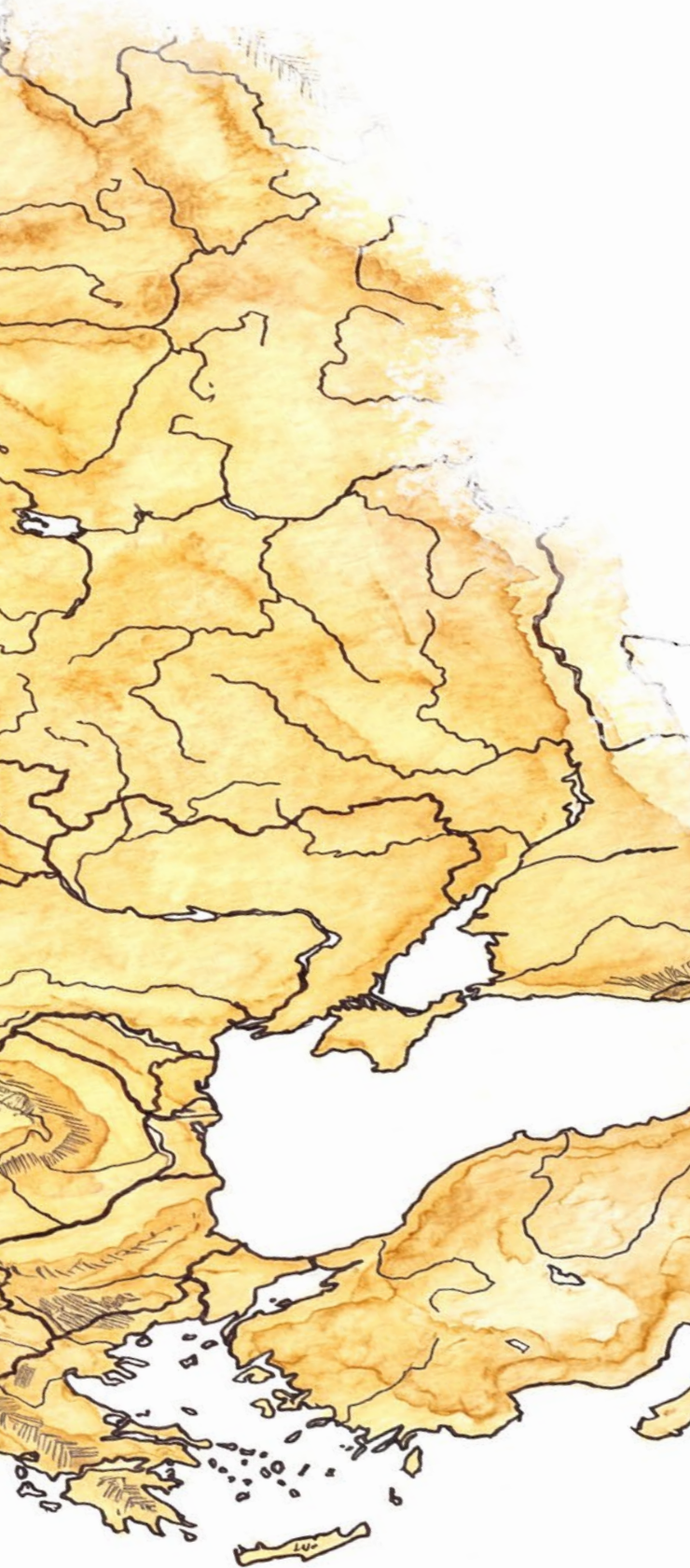
A Canadian Chapter also creates a national platform to share best practices, strengthen professional relationships across provinces and territories, and build a network that combines professional excellence with enduring collegiality and friendship.

I am particularly proud that Canada will host a joint Canada-U.S. Chapters meeting every five years, beginning with Whistler in 2028, and that we are working to expand our fellowship through various initiatives, including the Montreal Introduction to Family Law meeting in June 2026.

Caroline Harnois (Montreal, Quebec)
Canadian Chapter President, 2025 - 2026







EUROPEAN CHAPTER

European Chapter

– *William Longrigg*

At the Inaugural Meeting of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers in October 1986, it was decided to create an English Chapter for fellows practising in the jurisdiction of England and Wales. There were 46 fellows at the inaugural meeting. Robert Johnson QC, an eminent English barrister, was elected to be the first President of the Chapter and Miles Preston the President-elect.

The English Chapter, therefore, came into existence at the same time as the IAFL. In January 1989, Robert Johnson became a High Court judge and stood down from the presidency of the Chapter with Miles Preston taking over the helm.



Very shortly after taking on the role, Miles thought it might be appropriate to see whether the Chapter Fellows might be interested in converting the Chapter into a European one. He spoke informally to one or two colleagues who thought this might work so he called a meeting of all the Chapter Fellows at the Law Society in Chancery Lane in London to float the idea and see whether there was an appetite for making the change. Much to his delight, everyone liked the idea so Miles said he would organise a meeting to which not only the English Chapter Fellows but also the mainland European and Irish Fellows would be invited.

He then set about lining up a hotel venue in Paris and chose the Hotel Pont Royale in the seventh arrondissement near the Quai d'Orsay.

The meeting took place in the April 1989 with a very good turnout including some partners and children. 19 Fellows attended. There was a unanimous decision to convert the Chapter into the European Chapter with immediate effect.



It was agreed that Miles should be the President, a position he kept for the first three years with meetings in Munich, Interlaken (Switzerland) and Lyons in 1990, '91 and '92. Miles was helped by numerous fellows in setting up and establishing the Chapter. In particular, Werner Martens (from Munich) helped organise the first two meetings and Audrey Ducroux (from Lyon) the final one.

When Miles came to the end of his term his natural successor was Werner who served as President for two years. His successor should have been Audrey Ducroux but, very sadly, she got cancer and died before her turn came, although not before she had helped to organise two conferences. Audrey was held in great esteem and, still today, there is an Audrey Ducroux Lecture at the AGM. She died in 1998 having been European Chapter President from 1994-1996 and was global President-Elect when she died.



Werner's meetings were in Salzburg, Austria in May 1993 and Budapest, Hungary in April 1994. Audrey's were in Seville, Spain in March 1995 and Gothenburg, Sweden (much assisted by Mia Reich-Sjogren) in April 1996.

Rolf Steinegger from Bern, Switzerland became the European Chapter President after Audrey, and organised meetings in Athens and Ascona, Switzerland in 1997 and 1998 respectively. Douglas Alexiou from London held meetings in Amsterdam in April 1999 and in Paphos, Cyprus (he was of Cypriot heritage) in May 2000.

My first meeting – very memorable for me! - organised by President Luis Zarraluqui from Madrid, was Prague in April 2001, followed by Madrid in April 2002. Richard Sax from London became President after Luis and I assisted him with the conferences he organised in Copenhagen (May 2003) and Venice (April 2004). The secretary/treasurer at the time of the Copenhagen conference was Copenhagen lawyer Annelise Lemche who did a great deal to assist with the meeting there but sadly died not long afterwards. Her daughter Maryla Wroblewski remains a loyal and valued IAFL Fellow. Richard Sax took me on as secretary/treasurer.

Haroula Constandinidou from Athens followed (she is also a parent of a current IAFL Fellow, namely Konstantinos Stavropoulos) and arranged meetings in Vienna in May 2005 (much assisted by Alfred Kriegler and by my PA of (now) 34 years, Joanna Yiannitsarou) and Thessaloniki in May 2006. President David Salter from Leeds, England, organised meetings in Krakow, Poland and Rome in April 2007 and 2008 respectively. Mia Reich-Sjogren took us to her home country if not her home city of Stockholm, Sweden in May 2009 and then to Munich in May 2010. The Presidency came to me in Munich and I chose Strasbourg, France (which I knew well) as the venue for April 2011. I had planned to go to Athens in 2012 but the unrest in response to the measures taken against Greece by the EU was enough to persuade us to switch a few months in advance to Crete.

Alfred Kriegler from Vienna, Austria took over in Crete and chose Salzburg, Austria for his first meeting in May 2013 and then Bordeaux, France in March 2014. Mark Harper from London took us back to Seville in March 2015, exactly 20 years after the first meeting there, and then to Amsterdam in May 2016.



Daniela Kreidler-Pleus from Ludwigsburg, Germany chose Lisbon for March 2017 and Stuttgart, Germany (close to her home town) in September 2018. The last meeting pre-COVID was in Palma, Mallorca under the Presidency of William Massey from London, followed by two years of 'Virtual' meetings which would have been in Oslo (William's) and Edinburgh under Rachael Kelsey, but for the pandemic.



Rachael was president for a year only, thanks to some restructuring, and handed over to Alberto Perez Cedillo from London (and Spain) who hosted meetings in Athens in May 2022 (in the hotel Grande Bretagne which we would have been to in 2012 but for the riots) and back in Venice in February 2023 (to the Hotel Monaco and Grand Canal, much changed since hosting us at Richard Sax's meeting in 2004). Sandra Verburgt from The Hague, Netherlands had to wait until December 2024 before putting on the biggest IAFL meeting ever in Paris with 428 attendees! Her second meeting was in Istanbul in 2025. Then Emma Hatley from London arranged Barcelona in February 2026, the Chapter presidencies being a one-year term from 2025.



What can be said is that the Chapter has gone from strength to strength. It was not just about the annual Chapter meetings – all of which were phenomenal, amazing fun and which provided the very best of education. Each President left their own stamp on the IAFL as a whole but the European Chapter in particular.



When Cheryl Hepfer from Maryland USA was global President of IAFL, she realised how important it was for us to expand into jurisdictions where we were unrepresented. To that end, she organised, with the help of the late Anne-Marie Hutchinson (London) and me a meeting in Budapest where we had a connection and indeed a new Hungarian fellow Soma Kölcsényi whom Mia Reich-Sjogren had met at the Annual Presidents' Conference in Vienna (where the heads of the bar associations of Europe meet every February and where the European Chapter is always represented). This meeting made us realise the potential benefits of what were to become known as European Chapter mini-meetings.

I had also attended a number of conferences at ERA in Trier, Germany (the Europäische Rechts Akademie) on Family Law and the European Union. I felt that these conferences, whilst excellent and a really good recruiting ground for IAFL, were sometimes too academic and not sufficiently practitioner-oriented. I therefore suggested that we organise our own 'Introduction to European Family Law' meetings aimed at non-fellows and in particular younger European Family Lawyers who might aspire to be IAFL fellows. The first meeting (after Budapest which was spiritually the first) was in Berlin in November 2015 organised by William Healing and Suzanne Todd. It proved to be a great success and was followed by Madrid in November 2016, Warsaw in November 2017, Milan in March 2019, Ibiza October 2022, Bucharest November 2023, Thessaloniki April 2024 and Hamburg in November 2025. The next two are scheduled in Tirana October 2026 and Malaga June 2027. These have proved to be sell-outs and a great opportunity to introduce young lawyers to IAFL.

COVID also saw the introduction of webinars for IAFL global and the chapters, with the European Chapter webinars being particularly well attended. Lasting an hour, new fellows introduce themselves and give a short presentation on a topical family law subject from their jurisdiction. This has proved to be a great way to keep in touch and get to know new fellows.

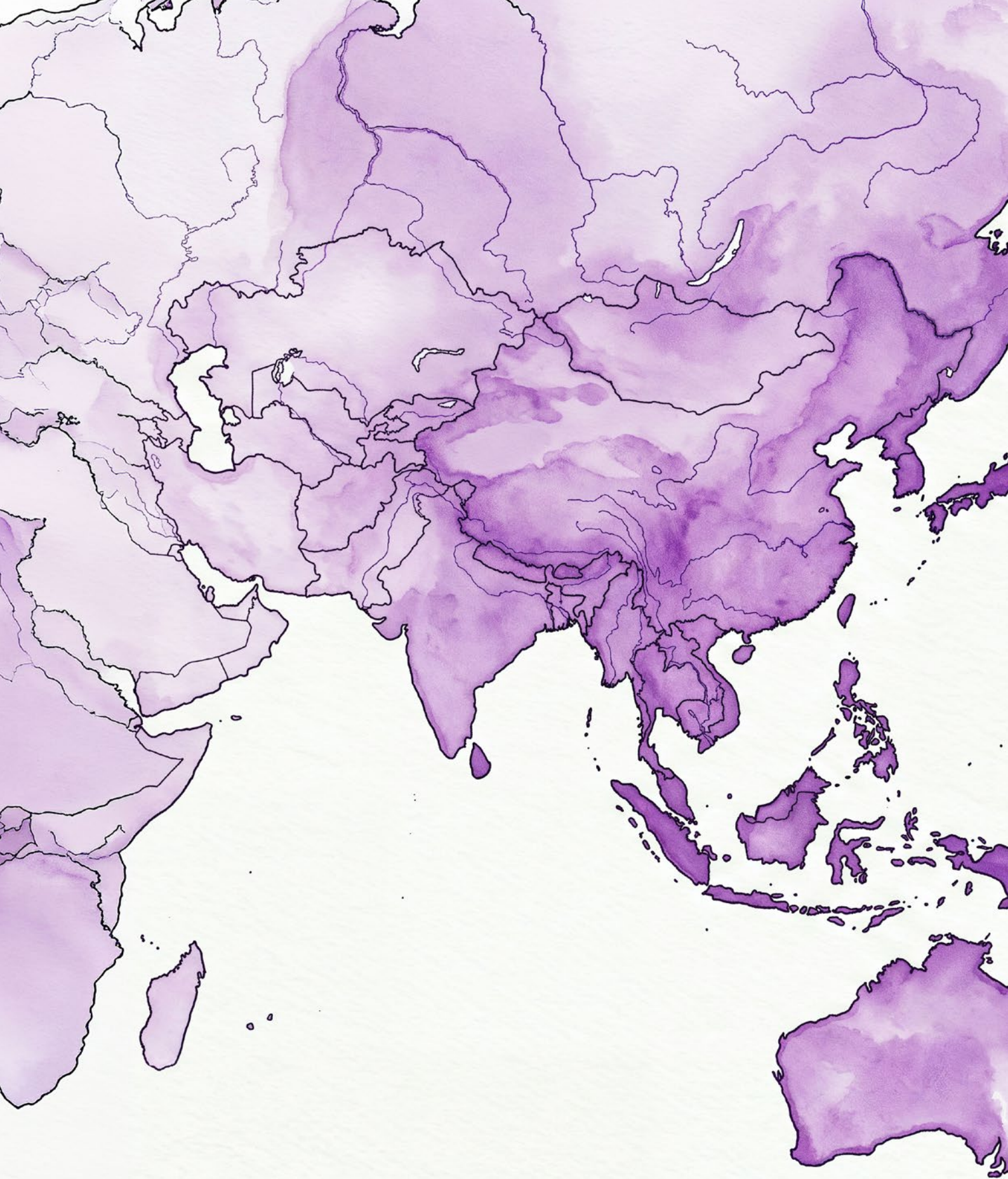
The first European Chapter Strategy Day was in November 2012 and the Chapter has benefitted enormously, evolving from a relatively small group of like-minded lawyers with an international family law practice, to a body that had serious influence in how Family Law is evolving. The European Chapter now consists of 353 Fellows from 36 jurisdictions.

William Longrigg (London, England & Wales)
European Chapter Past President, 2010-2012
IAFL Past President, 2014-2016











ASIA PACIFIC CHAPTER



Genesis of the IAFL Asia Pacific Chapter

– *Ian Kennedy*

When the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers was founded in 1986, two Chapters – USA and European, each with their own structures and bylaws – were created under the umbrella of the parent organisation. A Canadian Chapter was added in 2004. Everywhere else was designated as Non-Chapter or Rest of the World – which included Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Japan, India and various other jurisdictions in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and South America.



I chaired the Non-Chapter Admissions Committee for many years. Over time it became obvious that the Rest of the World constituted a significant and increasing body of Fellows, with Australia and New Zealand alone approaching the numbers necessary to constitute a Chapter. There had been discussions over an extended period around the concept of a Chapter better representing the interests of Non-Chapter Fellows, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. However, an Australia/New Zealand Chapter did not resolve the issues of inclusion – particularly in terms of the many jurisdictions which were either not represented or were under-represented – and attention began to turn to the idea of a broader Chapter taking in the Asia Pacific region.



Momentum built at the IAFL Annual General Meeting in New Delhi in September 2016, and feelers went out among Fellows from the region to determine the level of support for the creation of an Asia Pacific Chapter. The Executive Committee arrived at a decision to promote the concept, and a two-day meeting was convened in Hong Kong on February 17 and 18, 2017 attended by President, Nancy Zalusky Berg, Executive Committee members William Longrigg, Rachael Kelsey, Mia Reich-Sjögren and Tom Sasser, along with Fellows from Australia, Hong Kong, China, India and Singapore (with Fellows from Japan and New Zealand unable to attend but expressing support).



The meeting overwhelmingly and enthusiastically endorsed the concept of a new Asia Pacific Chapter and generated 25 petitions (well in excess of the minimum required under the IAFL bylaws) to establish the new Chapter. The wheels were put in motion to bring that about, with a working group, chaired by Nigel Nicholls, established to draft bylaws, create a leadership structure and plan for the first meeting of the new Chapter, to take place in conjunction with the 2018 IAFL AGM in Tokyo. The Chapter received formal IAFL approval in June 2017, the bylaws were approved in February 2018, and the Asia Pacific Chapter came into being.



The Chapter began with 83 Fellows. The first AGM was held in Tokyo on 31 May 2018 with Max Meyer elected as President, Nigel Nicholls as President-Elect, Poonam Mirchandani as Vice-President, Geoff Wilson as Secretary, Rita Ku as Treasurer (and custodian of the Chapter's very modest net funds of US \$5,000) and four others to make up the Management Committee.



From these small beginnings the Chapter has grown significantly, adding membership from under-represented jurisdictions such as China and Japan and previously unrepresented jurisdictions such as Papua New Guinea, with membership at 177 from 14 jurisdictions. It has also developed into one of the most active arms of the Academy, implementing numerous initiatives such as the monthly AP Hour and conducting successful meetings in Melbourne (in conjunction with the IAFL AGM) in 2019 and then, following the interruption of the Covid years, stand-alone meetings in Bangkok, Brisbane, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur.

Ian Kennedy (Melbourne, Australia)
IAFL Past President, 2008 - 2010





Coming of Age of the Asia Pacific Chapter

– *Corinne Remedios*

For the Asia Pacific Chapter, Covid-19 was the best of times and the worst of times.

It was the worst of times because on 6 February 2020 at a midnight meeting of the organisation formerly known as “Mothership”, the AP Chapter’s much-awaited first standalone Meeting in Bangkok, scheduled for 26 February 2020, was cancelled. With less than 3 weeks to go, the meticulous plans of Nigel Nicholls and Team crashed.

Bangkok was the first of the IAFL casualties. None of us on the Exec or in the Chapter had anticipated the far-reaching consequences of the pandemic. On 2 June 2020, I succeeded Nigel as President of the Chapter which was barely 2 years old. With the rest of the world, we faced years of social distancing, lockdown, working from home, virtual teaching of school children, border closures, travel bans, quarantine, cessation of in-person court hearings, and the ascendancy of Zoom and Teams.

Into this dire setting danced the AP Management Committee of 2020-22. This was the AP’s Rock Band of which I (in Hong Kong) was the lead singer, belting out the songs of the infant Chapter so it would be heard. Close by were the Band’s 2 guitarists. On my right, on rhythm guitar, was soft-spoken AP Immediate Past President Nigel Nicholls (Sydney), always there when needed, bringing institutional knowledge and strumming consistency in our developing policies and in the steps we took forward. On my left on bass guitar, was cool-headed AP President Elect Geoff Wilson (Brisbane), picking out the riffs of things-to-come.

On drums, mega-methodical AP Secretary John Spender (Melbourne) drummed the beats to keep us in line and on time. Piping up the Chapter’s notes was AP Treasurer Rita Ku (Hong Kong). Rita and I opened the Asia Pacific Chapter’s first bank account in Hong Kong. Into that account IAFL Global paid a small part of our dues, so that, like a teenager, we had some funds to manage our day-to-day expenses. More importantly, we could pay Daphne da Rosa, who Nigel and I had engaged on 2 June 2020 as the AP’s first Assistant Executive, based in Hong Kong.

Two important objectives directed us: Inclusivity and Expansion; and Education was the key to both. As the region is widely diverse in ethnicities, language, culture, religion, and legal systems, we embraced diversity as a strength. Therefore, on keyboards, hammering out the melody of expansion, was AP Vice President Poonam Mirchandani (Singapore). We had ample support for this and other important initiatives from our backing vocals: Anita Chan (New Zealand - our voice of reason), Catherine Por (Hong Kong – the AP’s welcomer of new Fellows), Kai Yun Wong (Singapore - our link to Law Asia and beyond), and a youthful Jason Walker (Melbourne – tasked with keeping the Chapter in touch). The entire Committee met on the first Wednesday every month as each member had a specific responsibility, and we pitched in as and when needed.

Jason Walker was our main man on Education. He and I brainstormed. With Hong Kong Fellow Karen Lam's help, 2 education platforms were swiftly launched: our first AsPacEd newsletter went "to print" in June 2020; and our first monthly virtual meeting, AP Hour, went live less than a month later on 13 July 2020.

At the AP Hour on 19 October 2020, the Chapter marked the death of Anne-Marie Hutchinson (on 2 October 2020) by joining virtually to raise a glass (or a cup of tea) to an absent friend. On 11 October 2021, to mark the anniversary of her death, we ran a webinar in conjunction with Law Asia, featuring the causes dearest to Anne-Marie's heart. It was entitled: Remembering Anne-Marie Hutchinson: Keeping the Flame Alight. Accordingly, at each live Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting since then, we have had a Lecture in her memory, to keep the flame alight.

Whereas it was the Rock Band that ushered the Chapter from childhood through its trying teens, it was the hugely appreciative and interactive circle of Asia Pacific Fellows that shaped the maturing Chapter. In the course of the transition, a distinctive AP "personality" became palpable – unassuming, collegiate, friendly, at times even effusive. To name but a few of the regulars at AP Hours: Ian Kennedy, Kay Feeney, Eleanor Lau and William Sloan from Australia; Linda Heathfield and Winnie Chow from Hong Kong; Lay Lian Kee and Ivan Cheong from Singapore; Keiko Imazato and Ayako Ikeda from Japan; Inger Blackford from New Zealand; and Jason Tien from China. We were even joined by night owls from the other side of the Pacific, notably Evan Marks, who turned up in his pyjamas.

When at last, the Asia Pacific Chapter met in real time, what incredible events they were – rising from its ashes, a re-incarnated Bangkok in 2023, Brisbane in 2024, Hong Kong in 2025 and Kuala Lumpur in 2026.



At the start of Covid in 2020, the Chapter comprised about 120 Fellows from 10 jurisdictions. By 2022, we had grown to about 135 Fellows, and to the delight (and perhaps surprise) of many, we welcomed Fellows from 3 new jurisdictions - Taiwan, Thailand and South Korea. Since then, under the inspiring leadership of Geoff Wilson, Kai Yun Wong and John Spender, we now have 177 Fellows from 14 jurisdictions.

With hindsight, Covid was for us the best of times. In its wake, this young Chapter came of age and along the way, many lifelong friendships have been made.

Corinne Remedios (Hong Kong, China)

Asia Pacific Chapter Past President, 2020 - 2022

IAFL First Vice President, 2025 - 2026

Keeping in Touch in the Asia Pacific Chapter

– *Jason Walker*

Critics would say that the IAFL is a glorified travel club. It is perhaps true that when first established in 1986, IAFL Fellows may have attached a greater importance to the meeting destination, rather than professional development and legal education. That has long changed. Each meeting has for many years included a substantial educational program on family law, in which Fellows and guest speakers of the highest quality present papers and run workshops on international aspects of family law.

Meetings have always been and continue to be a valuable opportunity to establish and renew professional contacts. That they occur in some of the most amazing cities in the world is an added bonus.

Pre-COVID, the last in person meeting occurred in Palma de Mallorca in September 2019. It would be almost 2½ years until the next meeting in New Orleans in February 2022, and as a symptom of the times, those of us unable to travel, participated online.

But in those COVID times, how could we foster the sense of fellowship which is the very heart of the Academy? The challenge was felt even greater for the Asia Pacific Chapter – newly established in 2018.

AP Hour

The Asia Pacific Chapter, led by then President Corinne Remedios (Hong Kong) and I brainstormed as to how we could reach out to Fellows and encourage expansion, despite the absence of any face-to-face meetings. We resolved to hold a mid-month Monday online meeting – an AP Hour (the so-called “Appy Hour”) – which would combine professional development with an opportunity for Fellows to connect and welcome new Fellows. The concept was simple. We started the Zoom before the due commencement time, with Corinne and then AP President Elect Geoff Wilson (Brisbane, Australia) hosting, and whoever came online spent the next 10 minutes meeting and mingling. Catherine Por would then introduce new Fellows and invite them to say a few words about themselves. That done, the educational session would commence. In the early days, each session was led by 2 persons, one from the Pacific and the other from Asia, with Speakers from the Region and beyond.



Some of the AP Hours included: What a Family Judge Really Really Wants; Tech and the Art of Family Maintenance; Trusts in the Context of an International Family Law Practice; Tech and Tact Talk - Parenting Co-ordination and Technology.

When faced with the disappointment of Bangkok being cancelled (yet again), in December 2020, we put on a Christmas Quiz, which famously became a highly competitive trivia competition, with wine tasting notes from the cellar of Geoff Wilson, with bonus points for the best dressed (which I usually won, hands down).



AsPacEd

We wanted a vehicle to keep our Fellows updated. Therefore Corinne and I brainstormed and we decided to launch a newsletter, which we named AsPacEd. Again, the concept was simple, deliberately so that it could be produced on time every month. The content included a summary of the previous month's AP Hour, the announcement of the following month's AP Hour; a short article of educative value; and a round-up of newsworthy legal developments from the Region and beyond. AsPacEd was initially edited by Karen Lam (Hong Kong) and me. We were ably assisted by the late Daphne da Rosa. We had no experience in desktop publishing, but, presented with a challenge by Corinne (and who could possibly say no to her?), we took it on and delivered, at times having to harass our colleagues for content and photographs, but we always made the deadline of the end of each calendar month.



It was perhaps a mark of success of those two initiatives that they were soon embraced (and copied) by other chapters, with equal success.

My home city of Melbourne had the unenviable distinction of being the longest locked down city in the world during the pandemic. Six years on, the pandemic conditions are hard to fathom. The AP Hour and AP Chapter newsletter live on, a testament to our collective resilience.

Jason Walker (Melbourne, Australia)











AFRICA



Road to an African Chapter

– *Rachael Kelsey*

Significant work has been undertaken in the last decade to grow our presence and profile in Africa and it has been a privilege, and one of the great joys of my professional career, to be part of that work, and latterly to lead our efforts to create an African Chapter. I hope that we will see the birth of a Provisional Chapter at my last Executive Committee meeting in Dublin 2026- I have my fingers, toes and tentacles crossed!



There have been many African Chapter champions in the IAFL, from within and outwith the continent - Zenobia reflects here on the history of the African Family Law Conference, as was, now the Global Family Law Conference. That annual meeting in Cape Town, now in its 28th year, has been the hub of our work to grow in Africa as a consequence of the generosity extended to us by Zenobia and her co-organiser and Fellow, Prof Emeritus of UWC, Julia Sloth-Nielsen. Past Presidents Cheryl Hepfer, Nancy Berg and William Longrigg all made the trip to Cape Town and felt the energy, professionalism and innovation, leaving with a commitment to grow our Fellowship in the region.

My first trip beyond South Africa was in 2016 to Botswana. At that stage we had only 8 Fellows in Africa, all of whom (other than Narghis Bundhun SC from Mauritius), were from South Africa. There was an opportunity to meet local practitioners, in part as a consequence of introductions from Zenobia, and in part because a friend of mine, a Scottish Judge, who was also one of the Justices of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of Botswana, was sitting (there are significant legal connections between Botswana and Scotland and until very recently, Scottish judges sat on the Court of Appeal). William Longrigg and I had an amazing evening meeting local practitioners (two of whom went on to become Fellows) and spent a day in Court watching a seminal case in the journey to LGBTQ equality in Botswana - AG v Thuto Rammoge and ors.



In those early days a small number of committed Fellows, including Nancy Berg, William Longrigg and Adelaide Benneh Prempeh, travelled with me to meet potential Fellows and to spread the word about the Academy and our work. Many more trips have followed to all points of the compass - Senegal in the west, to Kenya in the east, Morocco in the north and lots more in between!



The culmination for me of the previous decade's work was bringing the Fellowship to Nairobi for our AGM in 2025. We had an incredible week, with a day supporting local law students, organised by Fellows Juliet Nyambura and Patricia Mundia, and supported by Pam Sloan, which has birthed the Aalborg and Nairobi student exchange which will take place this summer. Fellows from around the world are supporting 5 students to travel to Prof Jens Scherpe's International Family Law Summer School in Denmark. They will attend a symposium for local practitioners, members of the judiciary, academics and members of civil society organisations, held with the East Africa Law Society and Commonwealth Lawyers Association. They will then attend the meeting itself, which was dedicated to the memory of our first Kenyan Fellow, the late Judy Thongori.

Our keynote speaker in Nairobi was the Honourable Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of Kenya, Martha Koome KC. As we stand on the verge of the creation of an African Chapter in our 40th year, I cannot do more than repeat her words:

“The International Academy of Family Lawyers should expedite the establishment of an African Chapter. This will be critical to building a movement of African family law practitioners, judges, and academics towards promoting progressive reforms and uniting voices in advancing equality, dignity, and child protection within families in Africa.”



Ten years on, we now find ourselves with 39 Fellows in 11 jurisdictions across Africa. Our Fellowship gains much from the engagement, enthusiasm and wisdom of our African Fellows and I look forward to the creation of the Chapter which will raise the profile of the work they are doing in their own jurisdictions, and facilitate greater opportunities for them to be at the heart of our leadership in the years to come.

Rachael Kelsey (Edinburgh, Scotland)
IAFL Immediate Past President, 2023 - 2025





Interdisciplinary Annual Global MDT/UWC Family Law Conference

– *Zenobia du Toit*

The interdisciplinary annual Global MDT/UWC Family Law Conference, now in its 28th year, conceived by Anne-Marie Hutchinson, Zenobia du Toit and Professor Julia Sloth-Nielsen, with a special interest in Africa, facilitates developing family law, innovative practices, networking opportunities and excellence, presenting an inclusive thrust across the world in family law in order to build relationships and the exchange of ideas with dynamically solution driven approaches, extending the boundaries of family law and presenting a unique and interactive perspective from Africa.



It has shaped regional jurisprudence and been instrumental in expanding the IAFL's footprint across Africa, transcending diverse legal systems and cultures and the intersection between customs, religion and constitutionalism. It promotes strategic partnerships, diversity and inclusivity. The uniquely African landscape, its influence on international human rights and child law and the energetic passion for family law in Africa are crucial for an expert international lawyer network and the unification of Africa issues with global issues.

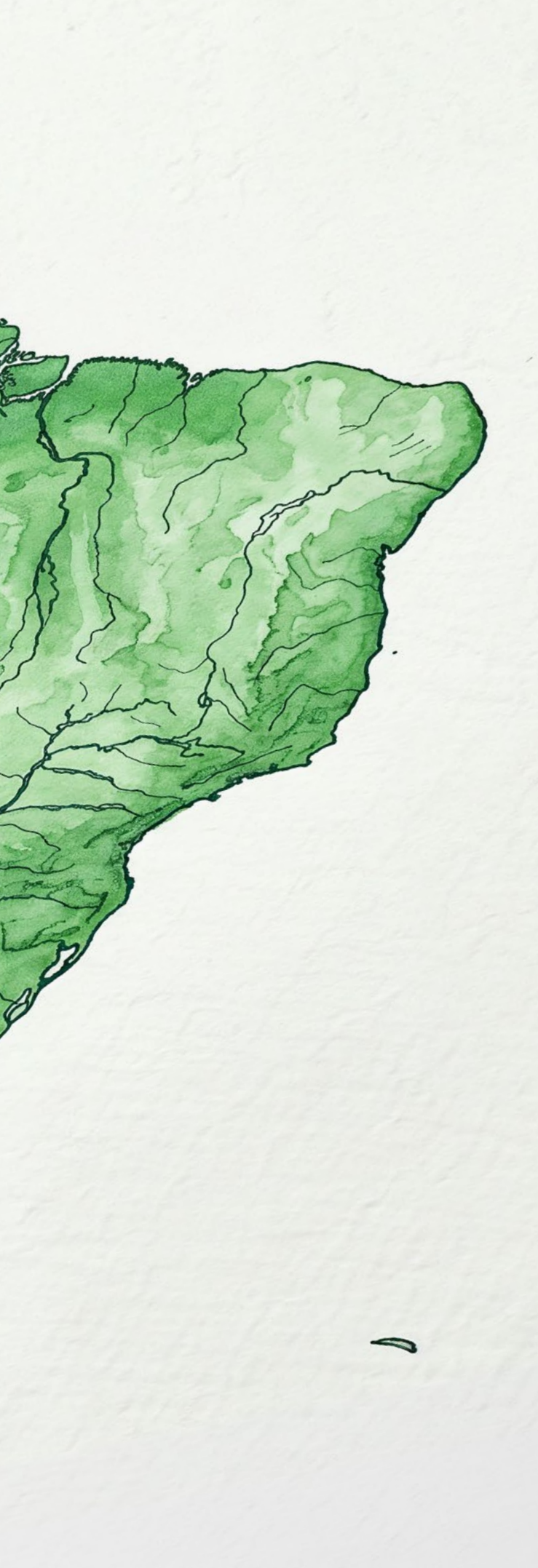
Connections, mentorship and trust have been built amongst colleagues, with the growth of the number of fellows in Africa expanding. So far IAFL's collaboration with the Hague Conference, Commonwealth Lawyers Association, East Africa Law Society Family Law Committee as well as the Annual Global MDT/UWC Family Law Conference and others has created spaces for colleagues to discuss, share ideas and look towards a provisional Africa Chapter of the IAFL.

Zenobia du Toit (Cape Town, South Africa)
IAFL Vice President (2025 – 2026)









SOUTH AMERICA



From Initial Inspiration to Institutional Presence - the IAFL in South America

- *Daniela Horvitz Lennon*

The development of IAFL in South America cannot be understood without acknowledging the pioneering contribution of Paulo Lins e Silva from Brazil, likely the first Latin American from the region to join the Academy. I had the privilege of meeting him in 2011 during a Family Law Commission meeting in Miami, where I also met Simon Bruce. Both became early mentors, generously introducing me to the professional world of international family law and to what was then the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (IAML).

One year later, I was honoured to be invited to apply for membership. As a non-native English speaker, this step involved both excitement and apprehension. Membership in IAFL represents not only professional excellence but also the challenge of participating in high-level legal discourse in a second language. Yet, from the outset, the Academy proved to be an inclusive and supportive environment.

My first broader engagement with IAFL took place in Buenos Aires, where I attended pre-conference seminars and encountered leading figures such as Bob Arenstein, known in Chile for his involvement in *Abbott v. Abbott*. That case, which addressed the legal significance of “non-exit permission” under Chilean law, exemplifies the complex and evolving nature of international family law. Since then, both Chilean and regional legal systems have

undergone significant transformation, with increasing reliance on instruments such as the 1980 Hague Convention—a cornerstone of IAFL practice.



Inspired by that experience, I developed a strong commitment not only to participating actively within IAFL but also to encouraging other Latin American practitioners to join. This effort became a shared mission with Carolina Marín Pedrenos, whom I also met in 2011. Together, we worked to connect Spanish-speaking lawyers with the Academy, demonstrating that language—while sometimes a challenge—should never be a barrier to professional collaboration. Through conferences, networking, and outreach, we gradually expanded Latin American representation within IAFL. It is particularly gratifying to see colleagues such as Patricia Kuyumdjian (Argentina), Adriana Hapner, Cassio Namur and Marina Dinamarco (Brazil), Gonzalo Gross (Uruguay), and others

assume active roles within the Academy. Their contributions reflect the growing strength and visibility of our region.

A key figure in this “Latin American process” has been Peter Buchbauer, who, despite not speaking Spanish, played a fundamental bridging role. By attending AIJUDEFA meetings—the International Association of Family Jurists, which we later founded, inspired by IAFL—he actively identified and encouraged potential members. His openness and commitment helped many Latin American lawyers feel welcomed into IAFL and facilitated meaningful integration.

Parallel to these developments, IAFL itself has demonstrated a genuine interest in expanding its global reach. This was evident when a meeting initially planned for Peru was ultimately held in Santiago, Chile—a milestone that allowed us to showcase our legal system and deepen engagement between civil law and common law practitioners. The exchange of perspectives proved both enriching and professionally transformative.



Beyond its academic and professional benefits, IAFL has offered something equally valuable: a community. Over the years, I have encountered not only outstanding lawyers but also remarkable individuals whose mentorship and friendship have shaped my career. Figures such as Cheryl Hepfer—a true inspiration—among many

others, exemplify the leadership, generosity, and excellence that define the Academy.

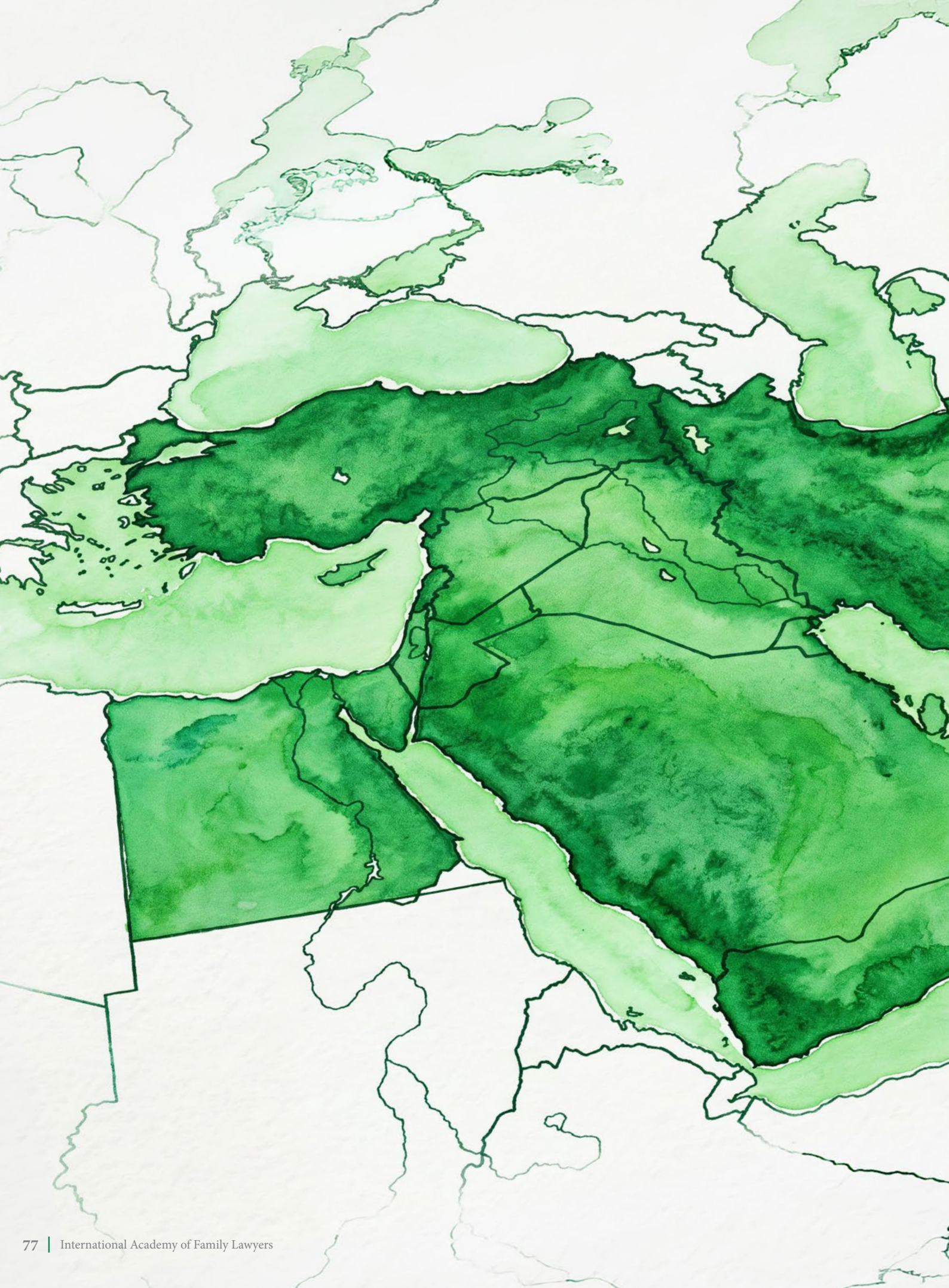
Today, my commitment extends beyond personal participation. I am deeply invested in strengthening South America’s presence within IAFL—not only by increasing membership in countries already represented, but also by ensuring that every country across South and Central America has a voice within the organization. Expanding our regional network will allow us to contribute more effectively to the global dialogue on family law.



We now stand at an important moment of institutional development. The anticipated creation of the South American Chapter represents not only recognition of the region’s growth within IAFL, but also an opportunity to consolidate our efforts, enhance collaboration, and project our work more effectively on the international stage.

From initial inspiration to institutional presence, the journey of South America within IAFL reflects dedication, collaboration, and a shared vision. The future of the region within the Academy is not only promising—it is already taking shape.

Daniela Horvitz Lennon (Santiago, Chile)





MIDDLE EAST



The Middle East Meets the IAFL

– *Hassan Elhais and Mukhtar Gharib*

Few regions have reshaped the landscape of international family law as rapidly as the Middle East, which has evolved into one of the world's most dynamic and complex jurisdictions. This development is closely linked to the region's exceptional diversity, particularly in the Gulf, which is home to more than 200 different nationalities. This multicultural reality has created a unique legal environment in which many family disputes involve international dimensions extending beyond a single jurisdiction. Differences in nationality, legal systems, and cultural backgrounds frequently require the interaction of multiple laws and legal frameworks within one dispute.

The region's dual legal system, accommodating both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, further adds to this complexity. As a result, understanding domestic laws alone is no longer sufficient. Family practitioners increasingly require familiarity with legal systems and frameworks from jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United States, and beyond.

Within this evolving landscape, the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) has played an important role in supporting and advancing international family law practice. Established in 1986, the Academy today includes more than 1,000 Fellows across over 120 countries and has maintained a presence in the Middle East since the 1980s.

Its relationship with the region strengthened significantly through the United Arab Emirates, which became the first Gulf country to join the Academy. Another important milestone came in November 2018 when Dubai successfully hosted the Academy's first conference in the region. In addition, the expansion of membership criteria to include legal consultants beyond court practitioners widened the Academy's professional reach and enhanced the exchange of expertise.

Historically, international family law matters in the region focused largely on foreign judgment enforcement and issues connected with the Hague Conventions, while Islamic Sharia principles predominantly shaped the legal landscape and codified options for non-Muslims remained limited.

However, the 2020s marked a major legal transformation, particularly within the UAE through significant reforms, including Federal Decree-Law No. 41 of 2022 and subsequent legislative developments governing non-Muslim family law. IAFL Fellows were among those at the forefront of interpreting and applying these reforms, helping international families understand their practical implications.

As expatriate communities continue to grow and diversify across the Middle East, family law matters have become increasingly international and complex. Issues such as mixed-nationality marriages, international asset division, parental relocation, cross-border custody arrangements, and enforcement of foreign judgments now require highly specialized expertise.



The Academy's contribution has extended beyond supporting its own members. It has also had a meaningful impact on individuals and families around the world. People from South America and other regions have reached out regarding family disputes before Dubai courts, including situations where maintenance and child support payments had been interrupted, placing families in difficult circumstances.

In such cases, Academy Fellows provided legal guidance, assistance, and continued support throughout proceedings. In some instances, this support was provided entirely without financial compensation, reflecting not only professional dedication but also a broader commitment to justice and assistance for families facing hardship.

Today, the Academy serves as an important bridge between domestic legal systems and international family law principles. Its Fellows increasingly assist both courts and clients in navigating legal questions that cross jurisdictional boundaries and contribute to more effective and practical outcomes.

As the Academy continues to expand across the Middle East, including jurisdictions such as Lebanon, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, its role in strengthening international family law practice within the region is expected to continue growing.

Over the years, the International Academy of Family Lawyers has helped shape and internationalize family law practice across the Middle East. As the region further establishes itself as a global hub for expatriates and multinational families, the Academy continues to provide a strong international voice and a valuable framework for legal cooperation across borders. Its mission of "Connecting Fellows, Developing Knowledge, and Inspiring Innovation" remains particularly relevant to the Middle East, a region that continues to evolve and increasingly requires clear, practical, and effective cross-border legal solutions.

Hassan Elhais (Dubai, UAE)

and

Mukhtar Gharib (Abu Dhabi, UAE)

IAFL Education

The Main Highlight of an IAFL Meeting : The Education Program

- *Steven Yoda*

Perhaps second only to reconnecting with old friends and making new ones, IAFL's education program is, to me, always one of the main highlights of any IAFL Meeting. Invariably, the education programs feature leading family law practitioners, jurists, and academicians from around the world engaging in thought-provoking dialogue that pushes the boundaries of orthodoxy.

A typical education program at an IAFL meeting might feature an opening lecture or presentation on local history and culture, followed by a panel of local practitioners who provide an overview of the nature of family law practice in that region. The remaining time is usually divided across a wide swath of diverse topics ranging from the "classics" like property division and support/maintenance; to more "advanced" topics like jurisdiction, premarital agreements, and child abduction; to "hot" topics like surrogacy, domestic violence, and marriage-like relationships.



These presentations—by intelligent thought-leaders from around the world—often feature question-and-answer sessions, which, in turn, allow the equally intelligent thought-leaders in the audience to engage the presenters. The dialogue that ensues regularly forces everyone in attendance to reexamine core assumptions.

Crucially, this questioning and learning does not stop when moderators call time. Naturally, it spills over into the hallways and reception areas during coffee breaks. It is over cups of coffee and tea and regional pastries that the true IAFL magic happens. The formal, theoretical concepts from the lecture hall transform into practical, real-world conversations as attendees refuel themselves and query how the concepts discussed might apply in their jurisdictions.



As a US practitioner, I am intimately familiar with the complexities that can arise from cross-state issues and the domestic frameworks that govern them. However, IAFL's education programs provide bold, expansive, and new perspectives that lift my eyes far beyond my borders. By challenging me to look at family law through a truly international lens, it changes how I think, how I practice, and how I advise clients in an increasingly interconnected world. As we celebrate IAFL's 40th anniversary, I commend it on the excellent work it has done thus far and encourage it to continue inspiring globally-minded leaders in the field of family law.

Steven K. Yoda (Los Angeles, USA)



Meetings and Flying the IAFL Flag

– Kai Yun Wong

IAFL and each Chapter hold separate Meetings with a substantial educational program at different venues each year. As promised on the IAFL website, these meetings provide a great opportunity for Fellows to update themselves on legal developments in family law throughout the world and to establish or renew contact with fellow international family lawyers.

During my term as Chapter President, the ‘AP Hour’ was repurposed to not only continue to educate and connect our Fellows both within and outside the Chapter, but also as an outward-facing tool for the Chapter to showcase our IAFL education capacities and to make ourselves known to other family law organisations. Hence, we collaborated to organise webinars with the likes of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (‘CLA’) and the Delhi Family Lawyers Association in July 2024; with the Japan Federation of Bar Associations in November 2024; and with the CLA and the Malaysian Bar Council in February 2025.



We also branded the IAFL education in person. Our Fellows from the AP and beyond selflessly took it upon themselves to incur time and costs to speak at ad hoc dedicated IAFL presentations in various LawAsia conferences - at the LawAsia annual conferences in Sydney in November 2022, in Bengaluru in November 2023, and in Kuala Lumpur in October 2024; leading to holding our own IAFL Symposium ahead of the biannual LawAsia Family Law & Children's Rights conference in Penang in June 2025. IAFL and LawAsia officially inked and entered into a Statement of Cooperation at this last conference, ensuring future continued education collaborations between the two organisations.





During this period, we made inroads into the significant family law jurisdictions where the IAFL is, as yet, relatively unknown. Kudos again to our Fellows from the AP and beyond who travelled with me (and for some, who also had to overcome challenging and somewhat curious visa applications) to present the IAFL education and to give talks to the family lawyers in China. We attended in person as well as online. To date, we have delivered such hybrid IAFL talks in Shanghai in December 2023, Guangzhou in November 2024, Beijing in May 2025, and Shenzhen in March 2026.



In the early forays to Shanghai and Guangzhou we had to attend as individuals because it was deemed that our personal reputation as international family lawyers was weightier than the IAFL branding. It was therefore heartwarming to see the talk in Beijing billboarded by the IAFL logo some 1.5 years later, with some 3,511 online attendees. Apparently this was an unprecedented record even for the organisers. Some 2.5 years later, the Shenzhen bar association and state government officials graced the IAFL talk and officially acknowledged their collaboration with us.

Many others have carried and continue to carry the IAFL education torch in underrepresented jurisdictions. My successor John Spender will be fielding a team of Fellows to deliver an IAFL talk in Manila, Philippines in October 2026. Happily too, upcoming IAFL President, Suzanne Todd will hold her Meeting in Mumbai, India in September 2027. These initiatives will greatly aid the outreach efforts not only of the AP Chapter but the IAFL as a whole.

Kai Yun Wong (Singapore)

Asia Pacific Chapter Past President, 2024 – 2025



The Substantive Committees of the IAFL

– *Caroline McNally*

A key part of the Academy’s work is carried out through its substantive committees, which bring together Fellows from different jurisdictions to exchange knowledge, develop best practices, and address emerging issues in international family law.

These committees focus on specific areas of family law and provide a valuable forum for comparative discussion and professional collaboration. Among their areas of work are international child abduction under the 1980 Hague Convention, relocation of children, parentage and surrogacy, dispute resolution, pensions on divorce, and issues affecting LGBTQI+ families. Other committees address domestic abuse and family violence, forced marriage, pro bono services, and academic engagement.

The committees play an important role in advancing understanding of cross-border family law challenges. They produce educational resources, organize presentations and webinars, contribute to law reform discussions, and facilitate information sharing among practitioners worldwide. Through these activities, IAFL Fellows are able to better serve families whose legal issues span multiple jurisdictions.

In addition, committees such as the Amicus Committee contributed directly to the development of international family law by supporting court proceedings involving significant legal issues through amicus briefs, while the Academic Liaison Committee strengthens relationships between practitioners and scholars.

By bringing together highly experienced family lawyers from around the world, IAFL’s substantive committees embody the Academy’s mission of “Connecting colleagues, cultivating knowledge, and creating solutions.” Their work helps promote consistency, understanding, and innovation in international family law for the benefit of practitioners, courts, and families alike.

Serving on a committee offers Fellows a meaningful opportunity to connect with one another on a deeper level—through regular meetings and collaborative initiatives. It provides a platform for Fellows to pursue their individual passions while contributing to the collective strength of the Academy. The IAFL truly embodies the spirit of “the more you give, the more you receive”—a sentiment I know every one of our committee members would wholeheartedly endorse. By contributing their time and expertise, Fellows not only strengthen the Academy but also enrich their own professional and personal journeys.

Caroline McNally (Hong Kong, China)

Amicus Committee

– *Edwin Freedman*

While walking to one of the program events at an Academy meeting in Crete in April, 2012, Charlotte Butruille- Cardew and I discussed the possibility of using our organization's wealth of knowledge to impact legal proceedings in jurisdictions around the world. We agreed that the Academy needed to take a more proactive approach regarding the determination of legal issues that impact family law matters internationally. At the Executive Committee meeting in June, 2012, I was authorized to form the Amicus Committee. Our initial Committee members, besides myself and Charlotte, were Gerald Nissenbaum from the US, Daniel Trachsel from Switzerland, Tim Amos, Tim Scott and Anne-Marie Hutchinson, all from the UK.

While submitting amicus curiae briefs is a recognized procedure in most common law jurisdictions, civil law countries have no provision for such briefs. In addition, the nature of amicus briefs varies according to jurisdictions. In the UK, for instance, the purpose of such briefs is to inform the courts of concerns and precedents while not taking sides. In the US, amicus briefs are generally submitted in support of one of the litigants. Some jurisdictions have no formal requirements for the appearance of the brief while others have very strict guidelines as to format, printing style and the color of the binding. In some jurisdictions we print the brief on our letterhead while in the US, for example, we are required to send it to a printer who specializes in preparing and printing amicus briefs.

The success of the Committee depends on close teamwork. Once we agree to file a brief in a particular matter, we request approval of the Executive Committee, which always responds quickly. After getting the green light, we divide the work by jurisdiction, with the various members describing how the matter is dealt with in their country. An introduction and conclusion is prepared and after all members have a chance to comment, we submit the brief. Since most countries require that briefs be submitted by a qualified member of the local Bar, we sometimes need to reach out to non-Committee members to file on our behalf in the relevant jurisdiction. We also ask for input from Academy members in the country in which the proceeding is being litigated in cases where no Committee member is familiar with the law of that jurisdiction.



The Committee becomes aware of a pending matter mostly by informal means. We rely on Academy members or associates in the field to inform us of interesting cases as they develop. Hopefully, those who read this article will remember the Committee when they learn of a case of interest. Unfortunately, members often tell me about an interesting case they had after the judgment has already been handed down.



The first amicus brief that we filed was in the United States Supreme Court, *Lozano v. Montoya*, 572 U.S. 1 (2014). The case concerned the issue of tolling in a 1980 Hague Abduction Convention matter. As there is a 12 month cutoff after which the courts may exert discretion whether or not to make a return order, the issue arose as to whether the 12 month period from the date of abduction is tolled if the abducting parent conceals the child's location, causing delay beyond the 12 months. The Amicus Committee filed a brief in support of the petitioner's position that the period during which the children were concealed should be tolled. The Supreme Court thought otherwise. As Mr. Justice Robert Jackson once said, I am not on the Supreme Court because I'm never wrong, I'm never wrong because I'm on the Supreme Court.

For reasons of which one can only conjecture, the vast majority of the cases that are referred to us concern the implementation of the Hague Abduction Convention. I assume that the international nature of all Hague Abduction matters as well as the attention these cases attract have a great deal to do with the number of cases which reach the Committee.

The Committee has filed several briefs in the United States Supreme Court and Federal Appellate Courts, as well as in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and the Cours de Cassation of France. Additional countries in which we filed briefs include Portugal, Slovakia and Bulgaria. We have also filed an amicus brief in the Inter American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica. The IACHR concerned the criminal conviction of an unmarried woman who had a natural abortion in El Salvador. Instead of treating this as a medical event, she was convicted of aborting the fetus, which is forbidden under any circumstances in El Salvador. She received a 30 year sentence which was challenged in the IACHR. Our brief was influential in having the decision overturned, although the mother had died in prison. The Court ruled that the State violated Manuela's rights to life, health, judicial protections and guarantees, freedom from discrimination and gender violence, among others. El Salvador was also ordered to make full reparations to the mother's family.



The brief which we filed in the Lisbon Court of Appeal in *Perez v. Shtark*, a Hague Abduction matter was sufficiently of impact that one of the judges quoted a full page of our brief verbatim, (Lisbon Ct. of Appeal, 11/24.OT8SCF-A.L1).

An issue which is becoming more contested is the interplay between the Hague Abduction Convention and the Refugee Asylum Convention. Asylum petitions may be filed by one parent on behalf of a couple's minor children without the knowledge of the left behind parent. The petition is processed without notice and the left behind parent has no opportunity to oppose the application. The left behind parent may have filed a petition for return under the Hague Abduction Convention in parallel to the Asylum petition and will only become aware of the asylum proceeding when it is raised in the abduction case.

This issue was brought before the UK Supreme Court in the matter of *G v. G*, [2021] UKSC 9. The questions posed were whether or not a Hague petition could proceed while an asylum petition was being considered and if it may proceed, whether the granting of the asylum application then overrides a court order of return under the Hague Convention. The Committee presented the approaches taken by the courts which had dealt directly with this issue in Canada and the United States. The principle of non-refoulement of refugees was the overriding consideration in the U.K., while in the U.S. more significance was attached to the Hague Convention and Canadian courts took an approach that attempted a synthesis of the two Conventions.

The Amicus Committee is hoping to expand its reach and become involved in legislative deliberations as well. One such opportunity has presented itself regarding a proposed bill submitted in Canada which would prohibit judges from considering allegations of parental alienation in child custody matters.

The Committee has given the IAFL a means to express the expertise of the Academy's Fellows in matters of international family law and brought its existence to the attention of courts in many jurisdictions. The scope and number of our briefs greatly depends on the information provided us by other Fellows of the Academy. We hope that we will be kept in mind whenever a case of international impact becomes known to colleagues in the Academy.

Our briefs can be found on the IAFL website.

Edwin Freedman (Tel Aviv, Israel)

IAFL Counsel, 2025-2026

IAFL Amicus Committee

Communication with Fellows Committee

– *James Carroll*

Communication is Everything — Can You Hear Us, and Do We Hear You?

Lawyers like words – we make our living from them and through their mastery. And yet, whether individually or collectively, we aren't always the best communicators.

Committee Origins

In August 2020 (at 07.46 to be precise– as we all know Rachael never stops!), I received an email inviting me to chair the newly proposed Communication with Fellows Committee. The message described it as “probably the most important committee”—which I took to be a mixture of charm and flattery, but which, with hindsight, may also have been reflective of the moment.

It was, after all, the height of the pandemic. Borders were closing (and sometimes briefly opening), travel was uncertain, and the IAFL's traditional reliance on in-person connection was no longer possible. Like everything else, the way we communicated had to change—and, adapt we did, and in many respects, that change has proved long-lasting.

The brief for the Committee was correspondingly wide: to help IAFL “communicate more effectively with our new and existing Fellows”. One of our early mantras—repeated often—was that we were “not a website committee”. Communication needed to be about engagement, not simply pushing content.

That said, our website is obviously a communication tool, in part focused on the world outside the Academy itself. One of our first practical tasks was a review of the non-Fellow referral network. Touching base with all of those listed resulted in half a dozen or so applying to join and later becoming Fellows, expanding our reach into yet further new jurisdictions.

Even in 2020, a website was the most basic form of external communication: the drive was and remains interactive engagement – so we reviewed IAFL's approach to social media, rationalising both how and where the organisation communicates externally and how Fellows themselves engage in IAFL related postings and online conversations.

Inevitably, the early focus was almost entirely online. Webinars, virtual events and informal online interactions became the primary means of engagement. Some of those initiatives have endured – whether with an educational focus or through the online ‘chats’. What is perhaps more striking, however, is that despite the acceleration in digital communication, IAFL has returned to its roots. The enduring value of the Academy lies in something technology cannot fully replicate: the connection, camaraderie and collegiality that comes from being together in person.

Put simply - Fellows like meeting Fellows.



From Communication to Connection

Recently the Committee's focus has been on engaging and welcoming new or newer Fellows, while ensuring the two-way dialogue continues with our existing and longstanding community. To support this, we have developed a structured rolling four-stage onboarding and engagement programme, designed to move Fellows from initial introductions through to active involvement, ensuring multiple touch points each led and supported through the Communication with Fellows Committee and each designed to ensure no one feels like they have wandered into a very accomplished but completely impenetrable club. The programme entails:

- 1. Initial personalised contact and onboarding:** being and feeling welcomed from day one, including early contact from Annie as our Executive Director and invitations to online onboarding sessions designed to help new Fellows quickly understand how IAFL works and how they can personally get involved.

- 2. First Meeting experiences:** a focus on the first conference experience through an online pre-meeting introduction session to hear from more seasoned Fellows, through to in-person orientation sessions, and the ever-popular Buddy Programme (which now also forms part of the wider 'comms' committee).

- 3. Ongoing outreach:** touchpoints to maintain engagement in the IAFL, such as the outreach breakfast held at each meeting, or our quarterly online sessions, "Maximizing Your Fellowship" and other activities outside of meetings: fostering a sense of being part of our community, rather than merely joining it (or 'just' attending meetings themselves).

- 4. Active engagement:** encouraging Fellows to deepen their involvement through our Committees, and seeking out speaking roles and leadership opportunities.

Taken together, the programme evidences something we know from IAFL annual surveys: we value our relationships with one another and we know there will never be a true substitute for engaging together or being in a room, learning from each other and enjoying one another's company.



Listening as Well as Speaking

Being together also reminds us that communication is a two-way thing. The Committee likewise wants to listen as well as talk.

One of our more consistent (if less glamorous) contributions has been the further development of IAFL surveys. These have evolved from periodic, larger exercises to shorter, more focused annual surveys, each exploring a specific aspect of Fellow experiences and expectations. The focus of the surveys ranges from our communication tools themselves, to our education programmes, through to gathering your views on our Meetings and virtual events. The results don't sit in a drawer: they are analysed, discussed and turned into reports and recommendations for the Executive Committee, helping to shape decisions about the direction of the Academy. An early survey also reached beyond the Fellowship seeking the views of the (then) 754 (and now more) non-Fellows who had signed up to receive communications from and wanting to know more about us and what we do.



To end on a heart-warming note, whilst the focus of each annual survey varies, it always ends with the same question as to whether your expectations of belonging to the IAFL have been met. The answer rarely varies – always over 90% of you agree (the number has been rising year on year, particularly as in person meetings have again become the norm, and satisfaction now sits around 98%). Collectively, it seems we rather like our fellow Fellows and being part of the Academy.

Final Personal Reflections

For me, that sense of connection is most clearly reflected in the Committee itself. My monthly opportunity to meet with my fellow committee members is one of the delights of being a Fellow. We have only missed three meetings in the six years we have been operating, which, for a group of busy international practitioners, is a sign that communication is not only everything, it's actually quite fun.

It has also taught me that communication matters—but connection matters more, and if the Committee has contributed in some small way to maintaining that across the Fellowship, then the last six years has been time well spent.

James Carroll (London, England & Wales)

Chair,

IAFL Communication with Fellows Committee

June 2026

Judicial Fellows Network

– Her Honour Judge Alison Burt and Her Honour Amanda Humphreys

The Judicial Network has been set up as a friendly and practical way for judicial officers with an interest in international family law to connect with each other, exchange ideas and learn from different jurisdictions. The aim is not to create another formal committee structure, but to provide a space where judges can speak openly and informally about the work we do, the challenges we face, and the different approaches taken in our courts.



During the European Chapter meeting in Paris in 2024, a number of Australian judges met informally with judges from the Cour de Cassation. We were also very lucky to be able to attend a tour of the Cour de Cassation under the guidance of President Vincent Vigneau, the Chair of the Commercial Chamber.



Our first online conversation took place on 22 October 2025. It was attended by eleven judicial officers from Australia, the United States, Jersey and Ireland. The session was led by the Hon Justice Ellen Gesmer, who spoke about her experience in creating a respectful, compassionate and effective courtroom environment. We have since then held two further conversations, one with the Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltmann from the USA and one with the Hon. Justice Williams, from Australia. All of these sessions have demonstrated how valuable it is to hear directly from judicial colleagues about the practical realities of managing courtrooms and engaging with families in difficult circumstances.



The Hong Kong meeting provided a very useful opportunity to build those connections in person. Four judges from the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia attended. The Australian judges and Dianna Gould-Saltmann were also invited to lunch with Mr Justice Coleman of the Hong Kong High Court, followed by a tour of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. It was a memorable occasion and reinforced the value of personal judicial connections across jurisdictions. The Dublin conference will include the Network's first in-person symposium.

Overall, the Network is intended to be a collegial and useful forum: a place where judicial officers can share experience, discuss issues of common concern, and strengthen professional relationships across borders.

Dispute Resolution Committee

– *Geoff Wilson and Suzanne Kingston*

The predominance of dispute resolution practices in family law since the 1990s as an alternative to traditional litigation, and its emergence in international disputes, both in parenting and financial matters, led the Academy to establish a Committee dedicated to international dispute resolution. Whilst practices differed from country to country in terms of definition or substantive practice, ultimately the important need for mediation, arbitration, collaborative practice and other DR approaches is integral to our professional practices, with the universal goal of litigation being a last resort.

The original IAML Mediation Committee set up before 2013 was chaired by Canadian fellow Stephen Grant. In 2013, successful Hague Symposia held in Minneapolis, Singapore and Buenos Aires included international mediation in its program, alerting Nancy Zalusky Berg and Cheryl Hepfer to the need for a rejuvenated Mediation Committee that would review and monitor Family Law mediations internationally. In 2013, Geoff Wilson (Brisbane, Australia) was appointed to chair the Committee, which comprised Robin Egerton (Hong Kong), Charlotte Butruille-Cardew (France), Stephen Kolodney (USA), Andrew Davies (Australia), Mikiko Otani (Japan), and Suzanne Kingston, Caitlin Jenkins, and Sarah Anticoni (the latter 3 from England & Wales).

An early project of the Committee was to prepare a general statement or protocol about

international mediations and draft a model international family mediation agreement. In 2016, the draft was circulated for review and comment. In January 2018, the Model Agreement was finalised and went live on the Academy's website on 14th June 2018.

By 2016 there was a proliferation of other dispute resolution practices. Therefore, the Committee, then comprising Geoff Wilson (chair), Suzanne Kingston, Sarah Anticoni, Winnie Chow (Hong Kong), Reneaux Collins (USA) and Sir Peter Singer and Philippa Dolan (both from England & Wales) reframed the scope to include arbitration and collaborative practice.

In 2017 Melissa Kucinski, the Secretary of the Committee as from 2024, joined the Committee, bringing fresh ideas based on her expertise in practice and education. This ultimately led to the Committee's mediation clinics for Law Students, universities programs, training, research and other education initiatives with Suzanne Kingston.



Since 2019 Suzanne Kingston and Geoff Wilson have been the co-chairs of the Committee.

In July 2019 Jeffrey Wasserman (USA) joined, bringing with him his expertise in Collaborative Practice. In February 2020, Julie Gerock (USA), and in 2023 Kim Kieller (Canada) joined.

Prior to the Singapore Meeting in 2012, Rachael Kelsey and Suzanne Kingston had undertaken a survey of IAML Fellows to ascertain how different jurisdictions dealt with out-of-court dispute resolution, with particular reference to mediation and arbitration. The survey was collated and published in various publications internationally, becoming the leading authority on the then use of alternative dispute resolution across approximately 25 jurisdictions. It was clear from this work that we could learn much from each other. This energised the Committee to share ideas and training as to all forms of dispute resolution.

Zenobia du Toit and Suzanne Kingston have worked together to undertake various webinars showcasing how different African countries deal with mediation – these webinars have been extremely engaging and have brought together a whole range of professionals, including lawyers, therapists and non-lawyer mediators across Africa.

The Committee has participated in panel discussions in most of the recent international conferences, showcasing the work that we do. At the 2026 Barcelona Meeting, Suzanne Kingston organised participants to engage in a mediation role-play. We plan more of such engagements at future conferences.

Our current projects include:

- The DR Newsletter, edited by Sarah Anticoni, is published two or three times a year,

- Melissa Kucinski leads a small group, putting together a basic training programme for university students, explaining how mediation, arbitration and collaborative practice work in a family law context. The first programme will be delivered at Durham University, England in October 2026
- Philippa Dolan leads a small working party considering domestic abuse in dispute resolution cases
- Kim Kieller is working with several fellows across America and Australia to consider a long-term project comparing mediation and arbitration in different jurisdictions
- Francesca King and Zenobia du Toit will continue rolling out webinars looking at other regions, not only Africa, with the next webinar focusing on how AI processes work in dispute resolution across the globe.

The Committee meets approximately four times a year remotely and is open to all Fellows who have an interest in dispute resolution. In addition, we try to meet up in person at every Meeting. The DR Committee has remained dynamic, capitalising upon the expertise of the leading family law dispute resolution practitioners and trainers amongst its ranks.

Geoff Wilson (Brisbane, Australia)

Asia Pacific Chapter Past President (2022 – 2024)

Suzanne Kingston (London, England & Wales)

Forced Marriage Committee

– *Shabina Begum*

When was the Forced Marriage Committee set up and the work it does

The IAFL Forced Marriage Committee was founded in 2013. The late Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE QC (hons) and former IAFL President Nancy Zalusky Berg were the first co-chairs. The IAFL (or International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers as it then was) confirmed its commitment to combat the practice of Forced Marriage and to raise awareness of the incidence of Forced Marriage within the international family law community.

Is the Forced Marriage Committee shaping IAFL and its Fellows

The goals for this committee remain as set in 2013, which is to concentrate on development of victim-focused remedies in all jurisdictions through the following initiatives:

- (i) Civil legislation and a victim-focused use of family law practice;
- (ii) Education and awareness-raising worldwide;
- (iii) The continued commitment of IAML (now IAFL) family law specialists to ensure that victims of this practice are provided assistance so as to be able to rebuild their lives;
- (iv) To support international standards and co-operation.

who were/are the driving forces

The forced marriage committee remains an ode to the late Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE QC (hons), whose passion for forced marriage work has not only shaped this area of law in England and Wales, but has caused a ripple effect worldwide. This is one of her many legacies in the international family law world.

We must also express our gratitude and recognise the commitment within this field of work of former IAFL President Nancy Zalusky Berg. She was the founding partner of Berg, Debele, DeSmidt & Rabuse, PA, an eight-lawyer firm limiting its practice to family, juvenile and adoption law, such practice limited to family law for the past 30 years.

The current co-chair Cheryl Hepfer (former IAFL President in 2013 when the Forced Marriage Committee was founded) and highly-regarded attorney who has practiced family law for more than 50 years. She is committed to keeping the issue of forced marriage live in everyone's agenda.

The other current co-chair Shabina Begum, Partner at Goodman Ray solicitors and a UN recognised expert on forced and child marriage, is dedicated to representing vulnerable adults and children at risk of forced and child marriage. She was part of the pro-bono legal team who drafted the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022.

Is IAFL effecting a change worldwide

The co-chair of the committee, Ms Cheryl Hepfer states that child marriage is alive and well in the United States: 34 states still permit child marriage. Cheryl is trying to end child marriage in all of the US states. Cheryl recently worked to formulate a coalition in Maryland to pass a law that will not permit children to marry before the age of 18, with no exceptions. Cheryl continues to work with Fraidy Reiss of Unchained At Last to address the issue across the USA.

A global highlight of the Forced Marriage Committee leading up to the big “40”!

Shabina, the co-chair of the IAFL's Forced Marriage Committee was invited to participate in an expert workshop on Child, Early & Forced Marriage & Unions (CEFMU) titled 'Towards a rights-based approach to CEFMU laws' on 17th and 18th November 2025. The event was convened by The Child, Early & Forced Marriage & Unions and Sexuality Working Group and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The event took place in Geneva, Switzerland. It brought together around 50 participants whose work focuses on CEFMU, sexuality, and/or women's and girls' rights and bodily autonomy – from civil society, UN agencies, human rights mechanisms, academia, Member States, donors, with expertise in law, policy, research, programming, and advocacy, engaging them with the evidence on how laws and policies affect child marriage and the broader connections with adolescent agency and sexuality. She was also invited by the OHCHR to speak about human rights-based responses to forced and child marriage at the 'OHCHR's Guidelines on Preventing and Responding to Child and Forced Marriage' held at the United Nations on 19th November 2025.

At the end of 2025 the IAFL Forced Marriage Committee members contributed to the report produced for the United Nations “Child and forced marriage specific laws, factors to consider when legislating for harmful cultural practices”. The report provides an international overview of the legal landscape regarding forced and child marriage legislation, (or lack of such legislation), in various jurisdictions. In the data provided by the IAFL Forced Marriage Committee legal practitioners, the responses focussed on the legislation which set out the minimum age of marriage. Notably not all countries have set the age of marriage to 18. The focus seemed to also be placed on criminal sanctions to deter forced and child marriage. Responses were received from Europe, North America, South America, Australia, Asia, and Africa

The topical issue of forced and child marriage

At the IAFL Conference Kuala Lumpur 2026, there was a panel discussion on “Legislative Responses to Child and Forced Marriage”. This was chaired by Sally Nicholes, (Australia), the speakers were as follows: Mrinalini Sen Gupta, (India), Shabina Begum (United Kingdom) Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) Sala Sihombing (Hong Kong) and Tahera Hasan (Pakistan).

What's next?

There will be a panel discussion on forced marriage at the IAFL Dublin conference – please come and show your support! And let's keep talking about it, so make sure that all victims remain protected and know that there is an International Academy of Family Lawyers on standby to help.

Shabina Begum (London, England & Wales)
Co-Chair, IAFL Committee on Forced Marriage
June 2026

Hague Convention Committee

– *Sandra Verburgt*

A Shared Journey: The IAFL and the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)

1. Introduction

Anniversaries are ultimately about people. Institutions endure, but they do so because of the individuals who invest their time, energy and conviction in them. The story of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) is no exception—and neither is its long and fruitful collaboration with the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).

Since its founding in 1986, the IAFL has grown from a small group of eminent practitioners into a global network of specialists united by a shared commitment: improving the practice of family law across borders. What began as a professional association has evolved into a community—one defined not only by excellence, but by generosity, collegiality, and a willingness to engage internationally.

The relationship with the HCCH grew out of that ethos. It reflects a shared belief: that international family law must be shaped not only by governments, but also by those who apply it daily in practice.

2. Early Encounters:

Practice Meets Policy

Long before the IAFL formally participated in HCCH processes, its fellows were already living the reality of the Hague Conventions.

William Longrigg, who would later serve as President of the IAFL from 2015 to 2017, belonged to a generation that recognised the growing internationalisation of family law. Increasing cross-border mobility brought with it new complexities—child abduction cases, jurisdictional conflicts, and difficulties in enforcement—that demanded more than domestic solutions.

Within the IAFL, these developments were discussed with energy and candour. Fellows compared approaches across jurisdictions, tested each other's assumptions, and gradually built a shared understanding of the practical challenges posed by international cases.

It became clear that the development of international instruments could not be divorced from their application in practice. The IAFL, with its unique composition of highly experienced practitioners, was ideally placed to contribute that perspective. At this stage, however, engagement with the HCCH remained informal—driven by individuals rather than institutional structures.

3. From Informal Influence to Structured Engagement

The transition to more structured engagement took shape during the presidency of Cheryl Hepfer (2013–2015). Cheryl recognised that the IAFL's considerable expertise needed to be channelled more effectively within the HCCH framework. In 2013, she asked Sandra Verburgt to reform and revitalise the IAFL Hague Committee—an initiative that marked a defining moment in the Academy's engagement with The Hague.

This was not merely organisational. It reflected a shift in mindset: from ad hoc participation to coordinated contribution. Under Cheryl's leadership, the IAFL began to articulate its role more clearly as the collective voice of international family law practitioners.

In the years that followed, the Hague Committee increasingly returned to its core purpose: strengthening ties between the IAFL and the HCCH. At the same time, as the work within the Academy deepened, several substantive committees emerged as natural spinoffs of the Hague Committee, including the IAFL 1980 Hague Convention Committee, the IAFL Parentage Committee, and the IAFL Relocation of Children Committee. This development reflected both the growing complexity of international family law and the increasing specialisation within the IAFL.

William Longrigg, who succeeded Cheryl as President (2015–2017), played a vital role in consolidating and strengthening that foundation. Under his presidency, the Academy's engagement with the HCCH gained coherence, continuity, and increased visibility.

Between approximately 2016 and 2019, coordination of IAFL engagement with the HCCH was carried out by Sandra Verburgt

together with Past Presidents Mia Reich Sjögren and William Longrigg. This collaborative approach reflected the ethos of the Academy itself: shared responsibility, shared expertise.

During these years, the annual IAFL lunches in The Hague became a highlight—informal yet purposeful gatherings where fellows in town for HCCH meetings could connect, exchange insights, and strengthen the personal relationships that underpin effective international cooperation.

4. Becoming an Observer: A Natural Evolution

The granting of observer status to the IAFL within the HCCH marked an important stage in this evolving relationship. While the precise date is not easily pinpointed, the development was clearly part of a broader recognition by the HCCH of the importance of practitioner input.

By this time, the IAFL had demonstrated—through the initiatives begun during Cheryl Hepfer's presidency and strengthened under William Longrigg—that it could contribute in a structured, thoughtful, and constructive way.

Observer status enabled IAFL fellows to participate consistently in Special Commissions and working groups, bringing with them the practical insights that have always defined the Academy.

5. At the Table: The Life of an IAFL Delegate

Participation in HCCH meetings lies at the heart of the collaboration.

IAFL delegates bring a distinctly practical voice to discussions. They highlight how conventions operate in real cases: the delays encountered, the procedural challenges faced, and, most importantly, the impact on families.

Jorge Cestero—Vice President of the IAFL and Past President of the USA Chapter—exemplifies this engagement. His participation in the Special Commission on the 1965 Service Convention and the 1970 Evidence Convention reflects the Academy’s recognition that procedural cooperation is essential for effective cross-border family law.

Ed Freedman is another fellow whose long-standing involvement reflects the Academy’s commitment to the practical operation of Hague instruments. Having attended multiple Special Commission meetings concerning the 1980 Hague Child Abduction Convention, he has brought to those discussions a wealth of experience drawn from decades of handling international abduction cases. His contributions have consistently emphasised the realities faced by practitioners and litigants alike, ensuring that the voice of practice is clearly heard.

Alberto Perez Cedillo has also contributed to IAFL discussions, including moderating sessions on the 2007 Maintenance Convention, bringing together comparative insights from different jurisdictions in a clear and accessible way.

Fellows such as Rachael Kelsey have added intellectual clarity and a strong commitment to dispute resolution, helping shape IAFL contributions in a thoughtful and forward-looking way.

6. Beyond the Formal Agenda: Relationships that Matter

The importance of personal connections in this collaboration is perhaps best illustrated by the relationship between the IAFL and the HCCH Permanent Bureau, and in particular by the involvement of Philippe Lortie.

Philippe Lortie, First Secretary of the HCCH, first spoke at the IAFL European Chapter’s 25th anniversary meeting in Bordeaux in 2014. For

many fellows, this marked an important moment: the HCCH was no longer simply an institution, but was present in person, engaging directly with the IAFL community.

For Sandra Verburgt, then Vice President of the European Chapter, that meeting is remembered not only for its substance but also for a moment of quiet symbolism—travelling back to Amsterdam on the same flight as Philippe. Conversations that began in Bordeaux quite literally continued in the air, reflecting how professional engagement so often evolves into personal connection.

That connection deepened in 2016, when Philippe attended the European Chapter meeting held in Amsterdam and The Hague—his home city. On that occasion, fellows gathered for a conference day at the Peace Palace, where Philippe spoke in the HCCH auditorium about the work of the HCCH in a way that resonated directly with IAFL practitioners.

If the HCCH had not already lived in the hearts and minds of IAFL fellows, one might say that the seeds were firmly sown there.

His engagement continued across continents. He spoke at the New Delhi AGM in 2016 during William Longrigg’s presidency, and later at the Boston meeting in 2024 and the Nairobi meeting in 2025 under Rachael Kelsey’s presidency.

A further milestone was the co-organisation by the IAFL and the HCCH of the conference on the Washington Declaration, held in April 2025 in Washington, D.C.—a clear illustration of how the relationship has matured into genuine partnership.

Alongside these institutional developments, there were also quieter, more personal moments. In the years when Anne Marie Hutchinson was still among us, Sandra would often have dinner with her—or share a glass of wine (and,

characteristically, a cigarette or two on Anne Marie's part)—after long days of HCCH working group meetings in The Hague. Those moments provided a necessary release after the intensity of the discussions and offered a glimpse of the human side behind the legal work. They remain cherished memories of a colleague whose influence extended far beyond the meeting room.

7. Continuity, Renewal and Leadership

Following the deeply felt loss of Anne Marie Hutchinson, work in the HCCH Parenting and Parentage context has continued with dedication. Rachael Kelsey, together with Jemma Dally, has actively contributed to the relevant working groups, ensuring continuity in this important field.

Since 2022, Rachael Kelsey has also taken on a coordinating role in nurturing contacts between the IAFL and the HCCH—restoring cohesion after the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, when many informal structures were inevitably interrupted.

8. Impact: Subtle but Significant

The IAFL's contribution to the work of the HCCH is not always visible, but it is deeply meaningful.

It lies in the refinement of legal instruments, in clearer understanding of their application, and in the growing alignment between legal frameworks and practical realities. It also lies in the shared professional culture that has developed between practitioners, judges, and policymakers.

9. Looking Forward

As the IAFL celebrates forty years, its collaboration with the HCCH remains one of its defining achievements.

The challenges ahead — technological developments, evolving family structures,

and increasing global mobility—will require continued cooperation. But the foundations of this relationship are strong: shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to practical solutions.

10. Conclusion

The collaboration between the IAFL and the HCCH is, at its core, a story of people.

It is the story of Cheryl Hepfer recognising the need for structure and direction; of William Longrigg consolidating that vision; of Anne Marie Hutchinson bringing complex issues to the global agenda; of Sandra Verburgt, together with Mia Reich Sjögren and William Longrigg, strengthening the Academy's engagement; of Rachael Kelsey and Jemma Dally continuing that work; of Alberto Perez Cedillo contributing to discussions on maintenance; of Jorge Cestero contributing across conventions; and of colleagues like Ed Freedman grounding discussions in practical reality.

The presence of figures such as Philippe Lortie at IAFL gatherings over more than a decade serves as a reminder that institutions are ultimately defined by the relationships they cultivate—and that the IAFL–HCCH partnership is, at its core, a human one.

Together, these contributions have ensured that the IAFL is not only a community of excellence, but also a meaningful and enduring partner in the development of international family law.

Sandra Verburgt (The Hague, Netherlands)
European Chapter Past President, 2023 - 2025



Parentage Committee

– *Colin Rogerson*

The IAFL Parentage Committee was the initiative of the late Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE (England) and the Executive Committee approved its establishment in December 2016, which coincided with the “Parentage / Surrogacy Project” being undertaken at the time by the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

A decision to convene an Expert’s Group was made in 2015 and the Academy was fortunate to be awarded Observer Status on the Experts Group. Anne-Marie attended Expert Group Meetings on behalf of the Academy until she passed away in 2020. Thereafter, the baton was passed to Rachael Kelsey (Scotland) and Jemma Dally (England). Other Fellows were instrumental in the Hague’s Parentage/Surrogacy Project, including Margaret Casey KC (New Zealand), and Michael Wells-Grecco (Switzerland).

The Experts’ Group published its final report in November 2022 and a Working Group was established in March 2023. The Parentage Committee continued to contribute on behalf of the Academy to the Working Group. That work concluded in November 2025 and in March 2026, the Council on General Affairs and Policy decided not to advance to a Special Commission to draft a possible Convention at this stage.

In recent years, the Committee has co-organised “The International Surrogacy Forum”, first held in June 2019 at the University of Cambridge and followed up in Copenhagen in 2023 and in Cape

Town in 2025. The International Surrogacy Forum in Cambridge was the largest gathering of experts in the field of surrogacy, including academics, legal practitioners, NGOs, judges and medical practitioners.

What’s next for the Committee?

The work of the Parentage Committee will continue to primarily focus on issues arising from cross border surrogacy arrangements and legal issues that arise from them. Many “international surrogacy destinations” emerge in jurisdictions where there is a lack of any regulatory framework at all. Experience has taught us that some of these destinations have seen swift introductions of restrictive laws seeking to close down those markets (for example Thailand and India).

International recognition of legal parentage is expressly excluded from the remit of the 1996 Hague Convention and the March 2026 decision at the Hague Conference not to progress the Parentage/Surrogacy Project at this stage means that a solution to the challenges relating to recognition of legal parentage is unlikely to be resolved any time soon. The Committee will continue to monitor domestic and international legislative changes and trends and provide a forum for Fellows interested in this niche but increasingly important area of family law practice.

Colin Rogerson (London, England & Wales)
Co-Chair of the Parentage Committee

Pensions Committee

– *Sarah Hoskinson, Frances Goldsmith and Jacky Campbell*

The IAFL Pensions Committee was first created in the summer of 2020 by Sarah Hoskinson and Philip Way. They quickly brought on two people known for their passion for pensions, Jacky Campbell and Frances Goldsmith. From there, they began building a more formal working group around an existing pensions survey resource. Its purpose has remained consistent: to improve knowledge of how pensions are treated on divorce across IAFL jurisdictions and to create an accessible comparative tool for fellows dealing with cross-border family law issues. By January 2026, the committee was operating with a broad international membership and a clear relaunch objective for the pensions resource in Barcelona, with a view to making it a practical and complete living reference tool for the organization.

How we work as a committee

The committee works as a collaborative international network. Its principal project has been the development and updating of a comparative pensions schedule covering more than 80 jurisdictions. The work has been organized by region, with committee members acting as regional leads to verify existing entries, identify gaps, and contact fellows or suitable non-fellows in unrepresented jurisdictions. The committee regularly holds calls to catch up and divide work, review the spreadsheet, agree timelines, and discuss how to improve visibility of the resource. As we are all pension nerds, the calls are typically enjoyed by all.

Memorable moments and where the committee is now

Several moments stand out in the committee's short but energetic history. A long phase from 2020 to 2025 was spent diligently collecting data and information on how pensions are treated across jurisdictions. We had a rejuvenation of the committee and an incredible uptick in information in early 2025. We immediately started setting broader ambitions such as a book project and a webinar. By late 2025, the committee had developed a clearer regional allocation model and was actively pursuing missing jurisdictions..

We have evolved from a technical working group into one of the IAFL's visible knowledge-sharing initiatives, with the prospect of a more permanent written legacy.

Sarah Hoskinson (Bristol, England & Wales)

Frances Goldsmith (Paris, France)

Jacky Campbell (Melbourne, Australia)



Pro Bono Committee

– *Sarah Higgins*

The Pro Bono Committee was set up in 2024. The aim of the Committee is to share information about pro bono needs and provision in different jurisdictions; to provide a database of fellows willing to act pro bono; to champion pro bono initiatives, in particular local initiatives, at IAFL meetings, including during the Introduction to International Family Law events, aimed at future IAFL Fellows.

It was set up with Sarah Higgins (England) and Geoff Wilson (Australia) as Co-Chairs, and Karen O’Leary (Northern Ireland) as Secretary. We currently have 25 fellows on our Committee, from 17 different jurisdictions.

We are currently working on a database to set out the legal aid provision in different jurisdictions, in order to assist Fellows with legally aided clients who have cross border matters.

One of our main aims is to set up a database of Fellows who are willing to undertake pro bono work, always subject to capacity, so that those of us who are acting pro bono can find easily and quickly those fellows who are willing to assist either with one-off advice or representation.

The charity or pro bono partners for meetings have proved a great success, and the Committee is keen to assist the organisers of the meetings to find pro bono local partners, particularly those who undertake pro bono family work.

We were given a slot at the meeting in Barcelona in February 2026 to introduce the work of the Committee.

What I hope for the future is to expand our Committee, and to increase the data base of Fellows who are willing to undertake pro bono work, even if they do not feel that they have time at present to join the Committee. The IAFL is in a unique position to promote access to justice by linking up Fellows across the world who are able, alongside their work for paying clients, to do some pro bono work. International pro bono cases are often legally complex and demanding, and early advice from a Fellow in the right jurisdiction can make all the difference in accessing rights for the most vulnerable.

Sarah Higgins (London, England & Wales)
June 2026

Relocation of Children Committee

– Anna Worwood



The Relocation of Children Committee was originally set up in February 2020. Originally, certain IAFL Fellows who were known to practise in this area, were invited by the IAFL to join the Committee but in 2020, the structure of the committees changed and membership became open to all IAFL fellows.

Anna Worwood has been involved in the Committee since its inception and she has co-chaired the Committee with Dr Hassan Elhais since August 2024, which was when Anil Malhotra was appointed as Secretary to the Committee. Anil, Hassan and Anna have been the Committee's driving forces over the last few years. The Committee's membership has grown substantially during this time and it now has more than 100 members from all over the world.

Relocation of Children cases continue to be the most difficult family cases to resolve. The decision is binary and it is vital when working on a relocation case, to take advice from a specialist, experienced family lawyer in the proposed destination country. The Committee draws together the expertise and experience of Fellows who practise in this area, and strives to inform Fellows and improve relocation law and practice.

The importance of the Committee's work is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that in April 2025, Anna Worwood, on invitation, represented the IAFL at a joint meeting of the IAFL, the

Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) and the Canadian Government, which took place in Washington, to mark the 15th Anniversary of the HCCH 2010 Washington Declaration. The other attendees were leading judges, practitioners and academics. Anil Malhotra attended this meeting and gave a presentation on the Indian perspective. In preparation for the meeting, Anil, Hassan and Anna circulated a Survey initially to the members of the Relocation of Children Committee to collate information about the differences in relocation law and practice across the world, common challenges and difficulties experienced in the various jurisdictions and suggestions for improvement. The findings of this survey were shared at the Washington meeting.

The Relocation of Children Committee holds remote meetings at which committee members give short presentations and exchange ideas. At the forthcoming IAFL Meeting in Dublin in September 2026, the Committee will be giving a panel presentation based on a case study which will hopefully encourage an interesting and informative discussion on a number of important, challenging issues.

Anna Worwood (London, England & Wales)
Co-Chair, Relocation of Children Committee

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Committee

– *David Allison, Nigel Nicholls*

The Committee (then the LGBT Committee) was created as a sub-committee of IAFL in 2016 with English Fellow Mark Harper as its Chair. The original committee members were Nigel Nicholls (Australia), Larry Ginsberg (California), Ric Roane (Michigan) and Charlotte Butruille-Cardew (France).

One of the first accomplishments of the Committee was the publication in 2015 of a survey of IAFL Fellows who answered a series of questions about LGBT parenting issues. There were 60 responses from 12 jurisdictions. It is fascinating to see how the law has moved on since then in many jurisdictions. That survey was expanded and updated in 2019 and 2025, with the latest edition including detailed analysis of the laws impacting on LGBTQ+ people in 56 jurisdictions.

The Committee from the outset has been determined to comment on and call out failures by national jurisdictions to protect and promote LGBTQ+ validity, equality and recognition and has been active in supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ people internationally. We have drafted numerous press releases that have been issued by the IAFL including:

Support for LGBTI Rights in India (September 2018) in which we said

“The International Academy of Family Lawyers supports the legal progress of decriminalisation

of gay sexual relations and the repeal of section 377 of the India Penal Code. We further reaffirm our support of efforts towards full equality of the LGBTI community in issues concerning marriage, families, parenting and domestic violence in India and throughout the world”. and

After Mark Harper stood down from the Committee, Nigel Nicholls chaired it until he became the President of the (then newly formed) Asia Pacific Chapter in 2019.

“The International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) in conjunction with its Asia-Pacific Chapter condemns the introduction of the Brunei revised penal code, which stipulates the death penalty for offences including adultery and extra marital sexual relations and homosexual acts..... There is no place in any penal code to criminalise sexual acts between consenting adults and the cruel and inhuman and degrading punishments contained in the Brunei legislation have no place in any modern legal system. This legislation is an affront to international human rights and the IAFL strongly condemns its introduction”. The IAFL joins other international voices to urge the Brunei government to revisit this legislation and to remove these penalties from its statute books”.

The Committee drafted a policy statement that was adopted by the IAFL in May 2019. That policy requires IAFL to consider the position of legislation relating to gay, lesbian, transgender

people and the status of their families in the jurisdiction of proposed meetings. This has had a significant impact on how the IAFL makes decisions on meeting venues but also the support that we have given to LGBTQ+ people in many of the jurisdictions we visit. This has included press releases issued in conjunction with local activists in places like:

Morocco - (December 2022)

“The International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) supports the legal progress of decriminalisation of gay sexual relations and the repeal of Article 489 of the Penal Code of Morocco. We further reaffirm our support of efforts towards full equality of the LGBTI community in issues concerning marriage, families, parenting and domestic violence in Morocco and throughout the world”



Kenya - (September 2025)

“The International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) affirms its support for the protection of fundamental human rights of LGBTIQ persons in Kenya and the region. We welcome the ongoing steps toward the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex/gender relations”.

Hong Kong - (December 2025)

“The IAFL applauds the Hong Kong Judiciary and Government for affirming the fundamental human rights of same-sex couples. We welcome the ongoing efforts to introduce legislation to recognise such relationships. We encourage the Hong Kong Government to consider the introduction of marriage equality for same-sex couples, as the best mechanism to protect families”.

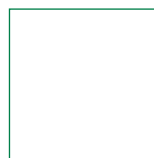
The Committee has not shied away from more difficult issues and in 2022 drafted a policy position statement on gender identity that was adopted by the IAFL (May 2022) that makes clear IAFL support for competent adults to change their gender and in all respects to be recognised in their acquired gender.

Otherwise, the Committee has been instrumental in ensuring the education programmes at meetings do consider the position of LGBTQ+ people and we have presented several webinars for the benefit of IAFL fellows.

Mark Harper stood down from the Committee when he became European Chapter President in 2014. Nigel Nicholls was then chair until he similarly became President of the (then newly formed) Asia/Pacific Chapter in 2019.

The SOGI Committee now includes 45 IAFL fellows which has required a smaller steering committee to organise the committee work. The Committee is now co-chaired by David Allison (England) and Stephen Page (Australia). It is one of the most active in the IAFL.

David Allison (London, England & Wales) and
Nigel Nicholls (Adelaide, Australia)
May 2026



2015 survey

2019 and
2025 survey

policy position
statement



Our Luminaries

Audrey Ducroux

- *Mia Reich-Sjogren*

I became a Fellow of the IAFL (IAML) in the early 1990s. I came to my first Meeting in Lyon a bit late. I did not know anyone at that stage. The first one I met was Audrey Ducroux. She very kindly took me around to meet most of the Fellows. Everyone was very welcoming. I remember Audrey came up to me and introduced herself with a lovely smile. Being a new Fellow I did not at all know how to act, but the friendly welcome from her and the others helped and I very soon felt that this organization was not only what I had hoped for, but in fact a lot more.

Very soon Audrey and I became friends. She convinced me to arrange her European Chapter Meeting in my home town of Gothenburg. She said that the reason for her to choose Gothenburg was that Lyon is the second largest city in France and Gothenburg was the second largest city in Sweden.

Audrey was a young, highly regarded rising star. She had spent a period working in London. She was chic and very good-looking and she charmed all of us. Apart from her professional skill, she was able to engage and share from her own experience. She had a very open, engaging and inclusive personality. She also had a strong focus on developing young talents.

Audrey was European Chapter President from 1994 until 1996. She became a very close friend with Lady Helen Ward. I very clearly remember Lady Helen Ward presented a lovely piece of jewellery to Audrey when she finished her presidency.



Audrey was supposed to take up the role as the first woman President of the Academy. Sadly she died before that happened. The last time I met her was during the Meeting in Switzerland. She was sunbathing by the pool. I spoke to her for a while and she just said that she was tired but gave no reason for it.

Her death really was a great loss not only for family and friends but also for all of us Fellows. She would have been the perfect President.

Mia Reich Sjogren (Gothenburg, Sweden)
IAFL Past President, 2018 – 2020

Anne-Marie Hutchinson: Pioneer, Mentor and Friend

– Carolina Marin Pedreños

“There are sorrows too deep for words”

- Federico Garcia Lorca

To many within the international family law community, Anne-Marie Hutchinson was a pioneer, an innovator and one of the most respected family lawyers of her generation. Her work transformed the landscape of forced marriage protection, international child abduction and cross-border family law. She was fearless in advancing legal arguments others considered too uncertain or too ambitious, and she helped shape a more humane and internationally minded approach to family justice.

Over the course of her career, Anne-Marie became one of the most influential figures in modern international family law. She was appointed OBE in 2002 for services to international adoption and the prevention of international child abduction, and in 2016 she was granted the rare distinction within solicitors of honorary Queen’s Counsel in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the law. She was twice named The Times “Lawyer of the Week” and later received an honorary doctorate from the University of Leeds. Her work protecting victims of forced marriage helped establish groundbreaking legal precedents long before statutory protections existed, and her influence extended across multiple jurisdictions and international legal organisations. To many practitioners around the world, Anne-Marie represented the very best qualities of the international family lawyer: intellect,

courage, creativity, humanity and unwavering commitment to justice.

To me, however, she was all of those things, but also my mentor, my closest professional colleague for nearly twenty years and ultimately part of my family.

I first met Anne-Marie in 2003, when I joined Dawson Cornwell for what was intended to be a six-month placement funded by the European Commission. At the time, arriving in England as a young Spanish lawyer felt daunting. The legal profession in England and Wales in 2003 was still highly traditional and, as a foreign lawyer with a strong accent, I was deeply conscious of being different. Many of my contemporaries were British solicitors who seemed entirely at ease in a professional world that, to me, still felt difficult to access.

Anne-Marie changed that from the very first day.



Although Dawson Cornwell at that stage consisted entirely of British practitioners, she immediately made me feel welcome, included and respected. She never treated me as an outsider. Instead, she introduced me proudly to international colleagues, encouraged me to participate fully in professional discussions and, most importantly, helped me understand that being different was not something to hide, but something to value.

Those first six months eventually became nearly twenty years working side by side, but I still remember the day my internship ended. I had said goodbye to Anne-Marie and was travelling home on the bus to South London when my phone rang. It was Anne-Marie asking whether I would stay and work with her as her paralegal. I did not hesitate. I did not ask about salary or conditions. I simply said, “Yes!”



During those early stages, I learned more than I had in five years studying law in Spain and Italy combined. Through Anne-Marie, I discovered the extraordinary pragmatism and humanity of English law at its best. She approached every case with creativity, courage and an unwavering determination to protect vulnerable people.

At that stage of her career, Anne-Marie was deeply involved in forced marriage litigation, long before statutory protections were introduced by Parliament. It was extraordinary to witness the strength with which she argued that young British girls facing forced marriage deserved the protection of the High Court under its inherent jurisdiction. These were legally uncertain and often controversial cases. The judiciary itself was grappling with difficult questions concerning procedure, jurisdiction and the extraterritorial reach of the court's powers.



Anne-Marie confronted those challenges with remarkable bravery and imagination. She believed profoundly that the law could and should evolve to protect those who had no voice. Looking back now, it is impossible to measure how many young women's lives were transformed because she was willing to push legal boundaries when others hesitated.

Her determination in child abduction cases was equally extraordinary. Long before international family law became as interconnected as it is today, Anne-Marie was travelling across jurisdictions to secure the return and protection of vulnerable children. Stories of her retrieving children from airports, negotiating in unfamiliar legal systems and working tirelessly across borders became legendary within the profession.

Alongside those groundbreaking forced marriage cases, we worked on major international child abduction and high conflicted contact and jurisdictional matters involving courts and tribunals across multiple jurisdictions, including interventions before international courts and appellate tribunals. For a young foreign lawyer, it was an extraordinary education.

What made Anne-Marie truly exceptional, however, was not only her brilliance as a lawyer, but the generosity with which she shared her thinking and her contacts. Every case became a collaborative endeavour. She openly discussed strategy, concerns, legal arguments and difficult decisions with the entire team. She never created distance between herself and those working alongside her. Instead, she made each of us feel personally invested in the pursuit of justice for our clients. Friday evenings, at her desk with a pack of cigarettes and bottles of cava in Sainsbury's bags made the best combination to come up with the most brilliant ideas in each case. We used to have some eminent visitors like Barbara Connolly KC and Rachael Kelsey. These evenings were magical. Those three minds together could truly change the world for a client, an association or for someone who needed visibility and support.



Anne-Marie was brilliant company. She was exceptionally clever, wonderfully witty and possessed a sense of humour that could instantly dissolve tension in even the most stressful situations. She also had a remarkable sense of style, one that, in my view, still has not been matched within the profession. Whenever she travelled to Hong Kong and spent time with her dear friend Winnie Chow, I knew she would return with the most extraordinary fashion pieces.

Looking back now, some of my happiest memories are not only of the cases themselves, but of the many journeys we shared together attending international conferences around the world.

For Anne-Marie, being a Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers was one of the greatest honours of her professional life. She belonged to many organisations and attended countless conferences, but the Academy occupied a unique place in her heart because of the immense respect she held for her fellow practitioners.

Our first international conference together was an International Bar Association meeting in Buenos Aires. That trip remains one of my fondest memories and marked the beginning of a friendship that extended far beyond the workplace. Anne-Marie loved travelling, especially throughout Asia, and she passionately supported the development of international family law networks in that region long before global collaboration became commonplace.

Her support for me extended far beyond the office. She attended my wedding in Spain, visited my newborn children and encouraged me as a young mother trying to build a career in a foreign country. Whenever I doubted myself, she pushed me beyond my comfort zone. She encouraged me to stop apologising for my accent and instead recognise that what made me different also made me valuable.

That lesson has remained with me throughout my professional life.

The final years of Anne-Marie's life brought her many richly deserved honours. I remember attending Westminster with enormous pride when she received her honorary Queen's Counsel appointment. Later came her honorary doctorate from the University of Leeds, and one of the most moving moments of all was the medal awarded to her by the International Academy of Family Lawyers.

Somehow, Cheryl Hepfer, Catherine Hutchinson (Anne-Marie's daughter) and I, with much effort kept the award entirely secret and persuaded her to attend the meeting in Budapest without suspecting anything. Watching her slowly realise what was happening in the room, seeing a woman who had dedicated her entire life to advocating for others suddenly become the recipient of such profound admiration from her peers remains one of the most emotional and joyful memories of my life.

I often think how proud Anne-Marie would be today to see the strength and growth of the Asia-Pacific Chapter and to witness her dear friend Corinne becoming president of the global organisation. International collaboration and friendship within family law meant so much to her, and she would undoubtedly have taken enormous joy in seeing those relationships and networks continue to flourish.

Over time, our professional relationship evolved into something far more personal. I became close to her family, remaining good friends with her daughter and son, and I later had the privilege of becoming godmother to her two beautiful granddaughters, Emmeline and Florence. That enduring connection says much about the way Anne-Marie approached relationships: colleagues became friends, friends

became family and professional loyalty was always grounded in genuine human warmth.

Even now, years after her death, I continue to encounter former clients, lawyers from other jurisdictions, judges, court clerks, academics and former colleagues who remember her vividly. Few people leave such a lasting impression across so many different corners of the legal world. Whenever someone mentions "Anne-Marie", there is rarely any doubt about who is being discussed. She occupied a singular place within the international family law community.

Her professional brilliance was undeniable: her courage, creativity and determination transformed countless lives and helped shape modern international family law. But those of us who had the privilege of working beside her will remember something more than her legal achievements. We remember her generosity, her irreverence, her fierce loyalty, her humour, her elegance and the extraordinary energy with which she embraced both her work and the people around her.

Anne-Marie was, quite simply, a joy: a joy to work with, a joy to learn from and a joy to call a friend.

Carolina Marin Pedreños (London, England & Wales)

The President's Medal

- *Ian Kennedy and Jacqueline Leong*

As the Academy grew and expanded, the importance of capturing and preserving its history, and in particular recognising and recording significant contributions made by individuals to its development both as an organisation and in the international legal community, became an issue of increasing importance.

Discussion about how this might best be achieved led to the creation of an award, known as the President's Medal, as the highest honour the Academy could bestow, to be presented to Fellows or persons outside the IAFL in recognition of exceptional contributions to the Academy or to international family law deserving of that high level of recognition.

The inaugural President's Medal was awarded to Richard Sax from England in 2010, acknowledging his extraordinary commitment to the IAML (as it then was) in leadership of the European Chapter, the development of the international aspects of the family law within and beyond England and Wales, and cross-fertilisation of knowledge and expertise through the Chapter and its activities.

That was followed by George Stern from Georgia, USA in 2011, in recognition of his work as IAML Treasurer and an anchor of the Executive Committee from 1991 to 2011; and the Rt Hon Sir Alan Ward from England, a Founding Fellow, in 2012 for his continuing and active involvement in and support for the Academy and contribution to international family law both prior to and following his appointment to the High Court, and then the Court of Appeal, of England and Wales.



Subsequent recipients are a rollcall of Fellows who, through their vision and commitment, have been instrumental in making the Academy what it is today.

2014

Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE QC (Hon) from England, whose extraordinary contributions, tireless leadership and fearless advocacy in the international arena in relation to forced marriage, surrogacy and human and children's rights have left an ongoing legacy recognised by the annual IAFL Anne-Marie Hutchinson Memorial Lecture.

2016

Two President's Medals were awarded at the annual meeting in New Delhi in 2016.

Ian Kennedy from Australia, who served on the Executive Committee for 14 years from 1996 to 2012 as Governor, Secretary and, from 2008 to 2010, as President, a pivotal period for the Academy during which he introduced numerous initiatives reflecting his vision for what the Academy could be, restructuring and professionalising its administration; implementing steps to move it from its perpetually shaky financial position to a firm financial foundation; re-writing and modernising the bylaws; placing a major emphasis on the importance of high-quality education programmes at meetings; introducing the concept of sponsorship to defray the cost of meetings and make them more accessible, particularly to younger Fellows and those from disadvantaged jurisdictions; identifying and mentoring the next generation of leaders including a succession of Presidents; and laying the foundation for a period of growth in both the size and influence of the Academy and the regard in which it is held in legal, government and non-government circles around the world which continues to be built on.

Cheryl Hepfer from USA, who during her Presidency from 2014 to 2016, built on Anne-Marie Hutchinson's work by adopting surrogacy and forced marriages as key initiatives of the Academy in the international arena, expanding the Academy's remit and bringing these issues to international attention. Through pursuit of her philosophy that the way to raise the profile and impact of the Academy and increase engagement was to go out and meet people and show them what IAFL does, Cheryl brought a new focus on younger Fellows and the development of membership from under-represented parts

of the world including Central and South America and Central and Eastern Europe, bringing in Fellows from new jurisdictions, and further cementing the Academy as the go-to organisation for international family law issues.

2018

Again, a year of two medals – fittingly to Werner Martens of Germany and Miles Preston of England, both Founding Fellows, recognising their crucial contributions to the foundation of the Academy and the European Chapter.

Miles served as Academy President from 1994 to 1996. He was one of the key conveners of the inaugural meeting of English, US and other practitioners (including Werner) in London in October 1986 which established the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and created US, and what was initially English, Chapters. Upon becoming Chapter President in 1989 Miles convened a meeting in Paris to convert the English Chapter into a European Chapter, with Werner assuming responsibility for the organisation of its first two meetings, before assuming the Chapter presidency at the end of Miles's term and the IAFL presidency in 1997 - 1998. Both remained committed beyond their terms in office to ensuring the continuation of the spirit of collegiality between Fellows and the importance of welcoming new Fellows into the IAFL family, a legacy which remains fundamental to the ethos of the Academy.

2022

The first global meeting in Marrakesh after the isolation of the Covid years provided the opportunity for two more Fellows to be recognised for their exceptional contributions.

Ed Freedman from Israel for his inspirational leadership of and dedication to one of the IAFL's most dynamic and influential arms, the Amicus

Committee, which pursues the Academy's objective of promoting consistency among contracting States in the application of the provisions of and their obligations under international conventions dealing with family law issues by seeking leave to intervene and to file submissions in matters of internationally important principle in the superior courts of numerous jurisdictions including the Supreme Court of the United States (on eight occasions), the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and the French Cour de Cassation (each in several matters) and a range of jurisdictions as disparate as Portugal, El Salvador and Bulgaria.

William Longrigg from England for his contributions in various roles as a member of the Executive Committee from 2006, President of the European Chapter from 2010 to 2012 and Global President from 2014 to 2016 in the course of which he created new bylaws for the European Chapter; supervised the redraft of admissions criteria; oversaw expansion and outreach initiatives in new jurisdictions (including, with Rachael Kelsey, Africa); initiated highly successful mini-meetings in parts of Europe where IAFL was unrepresented or under-represented, introducing the Academy and its work to prospective Fellows; instituted the very popular Introduction to European International Law meeting (now an annual event held in various parts of Europe); fostered and developed relationships with other international organisations whose objectives were compatible with those of the Academy; authored the Guide for New Fellows; oversaw the change of the Academy's name from IAML to IAFL and redevelopment of the website; and maintained a strong focus on successfully promoting the objectives of the Academy to make a difference in the international arena by improving the practice of family law while maintaining and fostering its culture of inclusion and collegiality.

2024

Corinne Remedios from Hong Kong for her outstanding leadership of the Asia-Pacific Chapter, particularly from 2020 to 2022, in the course of which she procured the appointment of administrative support and independent banking facilities for the Chapter, which she then led successfully through the challenges of pandemic-created isolation, maintaining the active involvement and enthusiasm of Fellows by instituting the regular AsPacEd Newsletter and the monthly online AP Hour (both of which became templates for other Chapters). These enabled Fellows to retain a sense of involvement, remain in contact with each other and actively participate in Chapter activities. At the same time she managed to continue expansion of the Chapter, including in unrepresented and under-represented jurisdictions, from 120 fellows in 10 jurisdictions to 135 in 13 jurisdictions.

Ian Kennedy (Melbourne, Australia)

IAFL Past President, 2008 - 2010

and

Jacqueline Leong (Hong Kong, China)

IAFL Past President, 2004 – 2006



Richard Sax
2010 · Queenstown
President : Ian Kennedy



George Stern
2011 · Harrogate
President : David Salter



Alan Ward
2012 · Singapore
President : David Salter



Anne-Marie Hutchinson
2014 · Budapest
President : Cheryl Hepfer



Ian Kennedy
2016 · New Delhi
President : William Longrigg



Cheryl Hepfer
2016 · New Delhi
President : William Longrigg



Werner Martens
2018 · Stuttgart
President : Mia Reich-Sjögren



Miles Preston
2018 · Stuttgart
President : Mia Reich-Sjögren



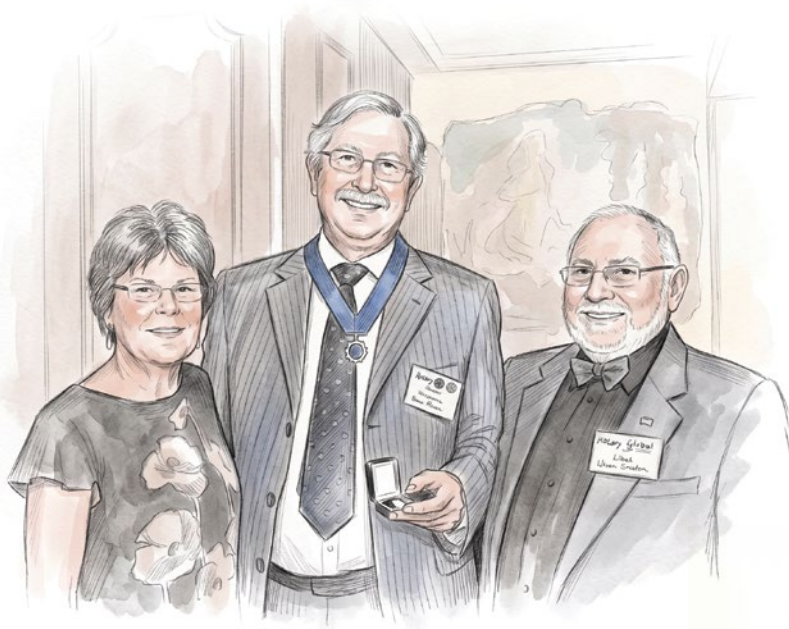
Ed Freedman
2022 · Marrakech
President : Tom Sasser



William Longrigg
2022 · Marrakech
President : Tom Sasser

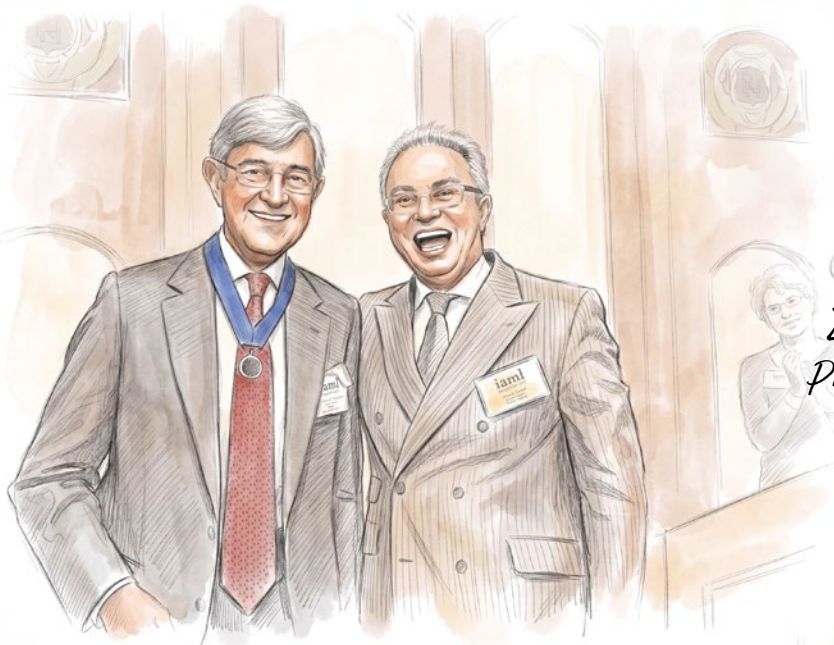
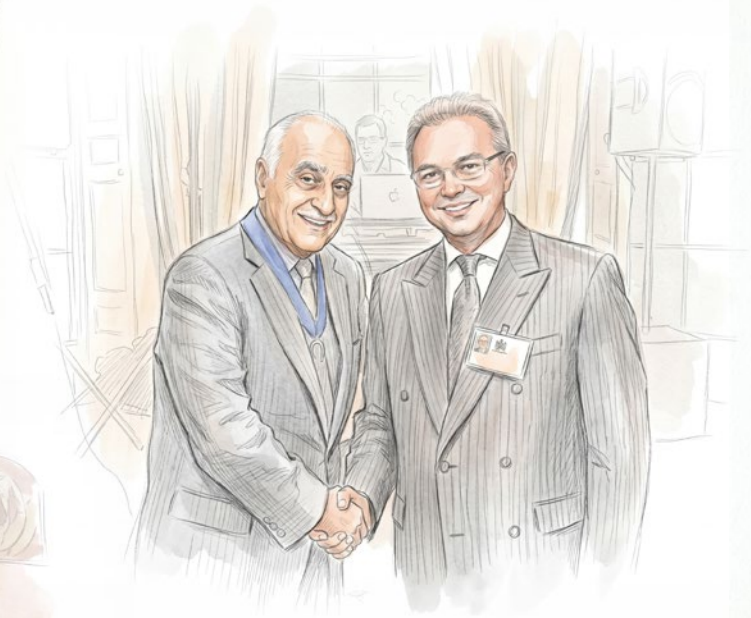


Corinne Remedios
2024 · Boston
President : Rachael Kelsey



*Richard Sax
2010 . Queenstown
President : Ian Kennedy*

*George Stern
2011 . Harrogate
President : David Salter*

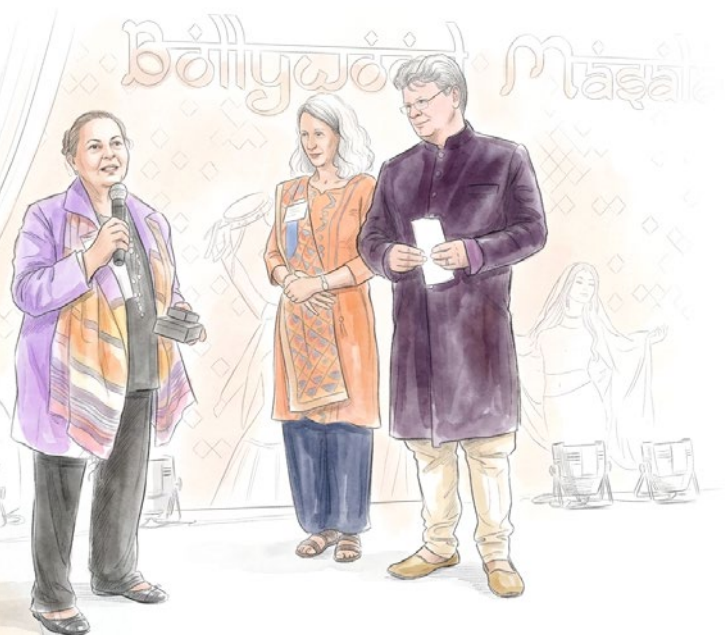


*Alan Ward
2012 . Singapore
President : David Salter*

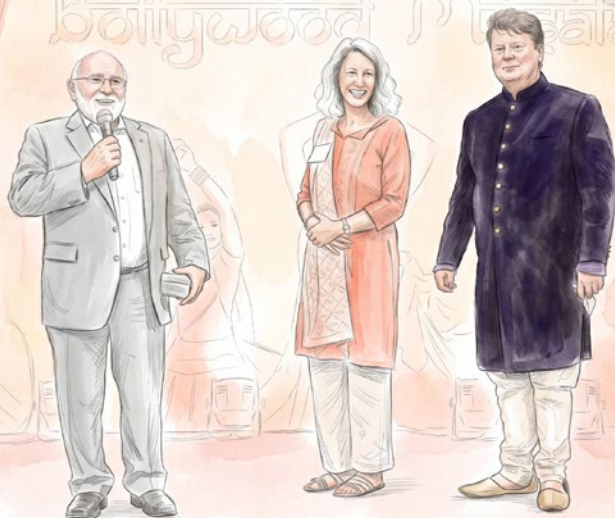
*Anne-Marie Hutchinson
2014 . Budapest
President : Cheryl Hepfer*



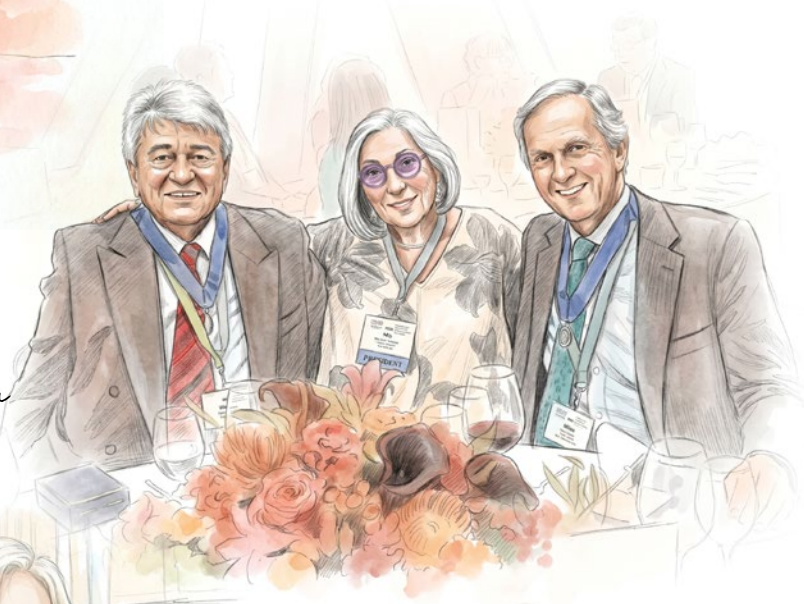
Cheryl Hepfer
 2016 . New Delhi
 President : William Longrigg



Ian Kennedy
 2016 . New Delhi
 President : William Longrigg



Werner Martens
 2018 . Stuttgart
 President : Mia Reich-Sjögren



Corinne Remedios
 2024 . Boston
 President : Rachael Kelsey



What the IAFL Means to Us

Clare Wiseman (London, England & Wales)

Attending the conference reminded me that excellence is not just about knowledge and skill. It is also about having a common purpose and camaraderie working on cases collaboratively for the benefit of our clients and indeed ourselves.

Amanda Trigg (New Jersey, USA)

IAFL Fellowship is indispensable and Fellows' depth of knowledge is unmatched. For any international family law question, I turn first to IAFL seasoned professionals who are leaders in their jurisdictions and generous with their expertise. Returning the favor when asked is a highlight in my practice.

Mark Woods (Melbourne, Australia)

In terms of international organizations, the IAFL punches way above its weight. The quality of this meeting has been extraordinary.

Nancy Zalusky Berg
IAFL Past President 2016 - 2018

The glue that holds the IAFL together is collegiality. Commitment to the health of the organization is truly in the hearts of every Fellow. We become like family.



Emma Hatley (London, England & Wales)
European Chapter President, 2025- 2026

It is the combination of intellectual exchange and genuine collegiality that defines IAFL meetings. In a world where families and their assets are increasingly transnational, the value of these connections cannot be overstated.

Shu Mei Hoon (Singapore)

IAFL is much, much more than a professional organisation. To say that it is a professional organisation of international family lawyers would be reductive. This is because of the deeply held friendships which cross boundaries and time zones... the kind which keeps you up at 3 am to jump on a seminar or a committee meeting, or figuring out a problem for a Fellow somewhere else in the world and promising them that they would have their answer by the time they wake up, or knowing their children by name.

That is IAFL.

Ruth Juliet Nyambura (Kenya)

The IAFL, for me, is where thoughtful, introverted (at least for the most part) family law minds gather. It is a hub of knowledge and inspiration where our color, race, nationalities and differences fade, ideas grow, and the shared goal is advancing family law.

Evan Marks (Florida, USA)

I am so grateful to be a member of the IAFL. I have made lifelong friends, established professional relationships all over the world, and have learned so much about how family law is practiced in other countries. All of this while travelling to the most beautiful destinations imaginable! The IAFL is without a doubt my favorite professional organization and I look forward to the next 40 years!

Isabelle Rein-Lescastereyres (Paris, France)

The IAFL it is having a drink at one of the meetings with your Bulgarian colleague. She tells you about her new client whose child was wrongfully removed many years ago and who might now be in Italy. You introduce her to your Italian friend who makes a few calls. 10 minutes later she has located the child and what had been impossible for many years is suddenly happening because of the IAFL.

It is also sending your 15 year old to your buddy in Chile knowing he will be treated as a member of the family, or being part of a support group during Covid that met remotely every single week.

Those two very different examples summarize what the IAFL has become to me: not only a fantastic resource of the best professionals in their country, but also a group of cherished friends who would do a lot for each other.

Long live the IAFL!



Shabina Begum (London, England & Wales)

It has been a privilege to be the co-chair of the IAFL Forced Marriage Committee on the fortieth year (the same year I will be turning 40!) and being able to speak at the United Nations to show them that the IAFL is also committed towards contributing towards the global goal of ending child and forced marriage.



Tom Sasser (Florida, USA)

IAFL Past President 2020 - 2022

I have grown in ways I never would have imagined because of minds of Fellows that I have been able to explore over an informal dinner. We are dealing with some of the brightest minds.

Makiko Mizuuchi (Tokyo, Japan)

As a family lawyer based in Japan, IAFL has given me trusted connections with colleagues around the world, which I rely on in cross-border matters involving Japan and other jurisdictions.

Through IAFL, I have met many Fellows globally and am especially happy to have built friendships beyond our professional work, for which I am truly grateful.

Marlene Eskind Moses (Tennessee, USA)
IAFL Past President 2020

This organization is my heart. I love the IAFL. I love talking and networking; it doesn't get better than creating relationships all over the world.



Catherine Por (Hong Kong, China)

It was a wonderful surprise, at the start of my first IAML (as it then was) conference as a guest in Sydney, in 2004, to learn that I had been admitted as a Fellow. Since then, over the next 2 decades, in so many cities across the globe, this time has been both a professional and a personal enrichment paralleled to none.

The educational programmes are so well put together, the social activities so fun and the camaraderie palpable from the outset.

I have made some wonderful friends with whom I keep in touch and with whom I travel outside conferences. Long may that last.

Alice Meier-Bourdeau (Paris, France)

The IAFL could just as easily have a second name for me - the International Academy of Friends for Life.



Cheryl Hepfer (State of Maryland, USA)
IAFL Past President

Joining the IAFL was one of the best decisions of my career, I have learnt a lot, I have travelled to some amazing places. Most importantly, I have developed friendships with people I never would have had the opportunity to meet.



Natalia Olowska-Czajka (Poland)

The IAFL is the Avengers of Family Law – "the best group of family lawyers in the world" – quote from Maximizing Your Fellowship session held for new and recently joined Fellows.

What is IAFL to me:
In short words:
Infinite opportunities
All Around the World
Family bonds
Legal depth



Mudita Chawla (New York, USA)

Robert Arenstein first told me about the IAFL (when it was the IAML) and I joined in 2014 at his urging. My first meeting was in Taormina, Sicily and I knew right away that being accepted into the IAFL would change my life for the better.

Since then, I have attended conferences in Tokyo, Melbourne, Palma de Majorca, New Orleans, Athens, Marrakech, Venice, Santiago, Brisbane, Boston, Seattle, Paris, Charleston, Istanbul, Nairobi, Hong Kong, Barcelona and Kuala Lumpur. It's hard to pick a favorite because there is something special and unique about each conference. Regardless of where in the world we are, the exceptional educational programs, the fabulous company and the late nights filled with fun and laughter remain consistent.

Over the years I have become more involved in the organization, first serving on the USA Chapter Board of Governors and the Communication with Fellows Committee and since September 2023, I have had the pleasure of serving as the Assistant Treasurer of the

IAFL. The more involved I become, the more I gain. Watching the organization expand across the globe as a result of the tireless dedication of the IAFL's leadership has been extraordinary.

I continue to be awed by the Fellows of this incredible organization, many of whom have not only taught me so much professionally but have become trusted colleagues and lifelong friends.

Being able to call or email a Fellow in another jurisdiction with questions or issues my clients may have concerning that jurisdiction has improved the service I can provide my clients and makes me a better lawyer.

The ability to learn from Fellows, improve my practice, foster genuine friendships and connections and travel around the globe has made my life richer and more meaningful in a way I never imagined was possible. I am so grateful for the IAFL and can't wait to see what the next 40 years bring!

Kim Kieller (Barrie, Ontario, Canada)

I became a member of the IAFL; then IAML in the early aughts. Our incredible first Chapter president, Stephen Grant, sponsored me. As a single practitioner (and traveller) I was wary of attending meetings but the chance to visit Bhutan (before a conference) spurred me to attend my first meeting in New Delhi. My early fears were for naught – every member regardless of their chapter was welcoming, generous and kind. What I learned was that while the value of the IAFL is education and obtaining contacts, its heart is the people and the warm and caring relationships. As the saying goes “we are family”.



Mrunalini Deshmukh (Mumbai, India)

I am located in Mumbai, India and officially became a Fellow of the IAFL in July 2025. Joining the IAFL was a natural and deeply meaningful step for me. It offered an unparalleled global platform to align with a prestigious network of practicing family lawyers who share a mutual commitment to improving the practice and administration of family law worldwide.

Since becoming a Fellow, I have enthusiastically sought opportunities to participate in and advance the Academy's global footprint. In November 2025, I had the privilege of organizing and moderating the very first IAFL webinar held in Mumbai. This landmark educational event successfully brought together an esteemed, international panel of judicial minds - including sitting and former judges from the Bombay High Court, the High Court of England and Wales, and the High Court of Hong Kong. Serving as a bridge between the Indian legal community and the IAFL Asia Pacific Chapter to host this cross-border dialogue was an incredibly rewarding experience.



The IAFL European Chapter Meeting in Barcelona in February 2026 provided a truly spectacular environment, set against the city's rich architectural backdrop, to connect deeply with peers. Beyond the immense technical value found in the academic exchanges and educational programs, the true magic of the Academy lies in its extraordinary spirit of congeniality. It has given me a vibrant global community where I can exchange insights on modern family law trends, collaborate on international wealth and alimony structures, and cultivate genuine friendships with brilliant practitioners across the world.



I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and special thanks to two remarkable leaders whose support has been instrumental to me throughout my journey: Inger Blackford, Vice President of the IAFL Asia Pacific Chapter and AP Hour Subcommittee Chair, for her incredible guidance, encouragement, and dedication to fostering regional engagement; and Suzanne Todd, President-Elect Designate of the IAFL, for her unwavering warmth, mentorship, and invaluable support as I stepped into my role within the Academy. The foundation for my active participation was truly laid last year in Mumbai during a wonderful meeting over drinks with IAFL President Heather Hostetter, Suzanne Todd, and Marc Pursals. That gathering gave me a much deeper, clearer understanding of the IAFL's mission and the various interactive academic and professional sessions conducted by the organization.



For a newer member, the warmth, guidance, and collaborative spirit of the IAFL have made me feel entirely at home. IAFL is indeed a family and I look forward to contributing to our shared global mission for many years to come.

Aleksander Pavlevski (Belgrade, Serbia)

I am based in Belgrade, Serbia, where I practise family law with a particular focus on international and cross-border cases. Coming from a jurisdiction that is still relatively small and not always closely connected to the wider international family law community, becoming part of the International Academy of Family Lawyers has meant a great deal to me, both professionally and personally.

I joined the IAFL because of its reputation as the leading international association of family lawyers, but also because I genuinely believe that cooperation between lawyers from different countries is becoming increasingly important. Family law today often extends beyond national borders, and many cases require not only legal knowledge, but also trust, communication, and strong professional relationships between practitioners from different legal systems and cultures.



What impressed me most from the beginning was the openness and friendliness of the Fellows I met. The IAFL is made up of exceptional lawyers, but what truly makes it special is the willingness of people to support one another, exchange knowledge, and build genuine professional relationships and friendships. As a younger Fellow, I found that particularly encouraging.

Attending conferences has already had a significant impact on me professionally. Meeting practitioners from different parts of the world and hearing about their experiences has broadened my perspective considerably and helped me better understand the practical realities of international family law.



The AGM conference in Nairobi was especially meaningful for me. Beyond the excellent professional programme, it highlighted the growing international reach of family law and the importance of perspectives from different regions of the world, including Africa. It was inspiring to see how lawyers from diverse jurisdictions often face similar challenges despite differences in legal systems and cultures. The recent meetings in Asia, especially Kuala Lumpur, further reflected the truly international character of the Academy and the friendships that naturally develop through these shared experiences.

As someone practising in Southeast Europe, I particularly appreciate that the IAFL gives lawyers from smaller or less internationally represented jurisdictions the opportunity to participate in important global discussions on family law. In many ways, the Academy acts as a bridge between different legal systems, cultures, and people who share the same commitment to improving outcomes for families and children.

Most importantly, being part of the IAFL has reinforced my belief that good family lawyers need not only professional excellence, but also empathy, respect, and the ability to work together internationally. Looking back at the Academy's forty years of history, what stands out to me most is not only its contribution to international family law, but also the strong sense of trust, collegiality, and friendship between Fellows across the world.

It is a real privilege to be part of the IAFL, and I very much look forward to contributing to the Academy in the years ahead.



Patricia Mundia (Nairobi, Kenya)

I joined the IAFL in January 2025, having previously attended a meeting held in Nairobi in 2023 that was organised by Rachael Kelsey, William Longrigg and Annie Dunster with family lawyers in Nairobi. As a family lawyer, I was drawn to the opportunity to practise family law at the highest level, while also learning from and connecting with esteemed colleagues across jurisdictions. Since joining, I have participated in meetings of the Relocation, ADR and Expansion Committees during 2025. Being involved in planning the Nairobi AGM in 2025 also gave me a deeper appreciation of the IAFL and its objectives. In addition, I attended the Asia-Pacific Meeting in Hong Kong in 2025 and the European Chapter Meeting in Barcelona in 2026, both of which enriched my practice in international family law.

One of the greatest benefits of my membership has been the client referrals, as well as the opportunity to build meaningful professional and social connections with colleagues. Their willingness to support our work towards establishing an Africa Chapter has been both humbling and deeply encouraging. It has also been inspiring to see so many international colleagues generously share their expertise and knowledge with members of the East Africa Law Society, both by attending conferences in person and by participating in webinars.

My hope is to see the IAFL represented in more of Africa's 54 countries, so that families across the region may benefit from access to the highest level of expertise in family law.



Dilia Leticia Jorge Mera

(Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

I live and practice Family Law in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. I became a Fellow of the IAFL in 2007. Over the years I have attended several IAFL conferences and meetings: Puerto Rico, (2010); South Beach, Florida (2011); Argentina (2013); Seville, Spain (2015); Savannah, Georgia (2018). I have also seen the Academy's presence and voice contribute to important legal developments in my own country, including its support for the

elimination of child marriage in the Dominican Republic, finally achieved in 2021. In 2025, making the most of the presence of Rachael Kelsey, then President of the IAFL, and other Fellows in Santo Domingo, we organized a gathering with Dominican family lawyers and members of the judiciary to introduce the Academy more broadly in my country.

That year also brought another meaningful opportunity within the Academy: I was invited to join the Non-Chapter Admissions Committee, which I received as a vote of confidence in my professional work and regional involvement.

For me, the IAFL has meant learning, credibility, friendship, generosity among colleagues, and the invaluable feeling that, from a jurisdiction such as the Dominican Republic, I am part of a truly global family law community.



Anita Chan (Dunedin, New Zealand)

When I think about my most memorable experiences with IAFL, they are not tied to a particular conference, presentation, or case. By far the most meaningful aspect of IAFL has been the friendships I have made. IAFL has given me the privilege of meeting outstanding family lawyers from all over the world and building genuine friendships that extend far beyond our professional lives. Through those connections, I have had the opportunity to work with colleagues from different jurisdictions on complex cross-border cases, each with its own unique legal and cultural challenges. Those collaborations have not only made me a better lawyer but have also broadened my understanding of families and legal systems around the world.

Some of my favourite memories have been the personal ones: being welcomed into colleagues' homes when travelling overseas, sharing meals together, exchanging stories about our families and practices, and discovering just how much we have in common despite coming from different corners of the globe.



And, if I am honest, some of the very best IAFL memories have happened before and after the official meetings. The road trips, vintage shopping adventures, long lunches and dinners, exploring new cities, and catching up with friends around the world have created lasting memories and lifelong friendships.

IAFL has given me an extraordinary international professional network, but more importantly, it has given me friends. That, above all else, is what I treasure most about my IAFL journey.



Hachem El Housseini (Beirut, Lebanon)

I became an IAFL fellow in September 2023. I serve on the Communication with Fellows Committee and the Nominating Committee and have so far attended two conferences: Boston (2024) and Nairobi (2025). Since joining, I've lived through two wars, one of which is ongoing as I write these words - and which I hope will be over by the time we meet to mark the 40th anniversary of the IAFL. Against all odds, I have during this short period significantly developed my international family law practice and worked with Fellows who shape international family law today.

For me, IAFL is essentially about camaraderie, unfailing kindness, and the friendship with so many Fellows. It is also about perpetuating the legacy of some of the finest international family lawyers who are no longer with us - among them Maggie Rae and Judy Thongori.



Winnie Chow (Hong Kong, China)

I love the inclusiveness of the IAFL, especially their attempts in welcoming Fellows and their families at their events. Over the years, not only have I made many friends at the Academy, so have my husband and children. It's one of the rare professional commitments which I can enjoy with my family.

Corinne Remedios (Hong Kong, China)

It should come as no surprise that '*my IAFL*' is an anagram of '*FamILy*' because for many of us Fellows, it is just that: 'the Family of family lawyers'.



Overview - Corinne Remedios

1. The IAML was set up in 1986 and is a worldwide association of practising lawyers who are recognised by their peers as the most experienced and skilled family law specialists in their respective countries.

[See List of IAML Founding Members](#)

2. The Organisation voted in favour of changing its name from IAML to IAFL in 2015.
The IAFL's mission is: *"to improve the practice of law and the administration of justice in the area of divorce and family law throughout the world"*.

3. Although when we started, we were exclusively family law practitioners, we now are more diverse and numbers have grown significantly. At the end of the First Decade, there were 256 fellows. As at July 2026, there are **1,114 Fellows**, comprising:

- **972 Full Fellows**
- **43 Judicial Fellows** (current and former members of the judiciary)
- **28 Associate Fellows** (family law academics, leaders from civil society organisations which make a major contribution to international family law)
- **36 Non-Practising Fellows**

4. Fellows hail from **128 Jurisdictions**:
 - **432 in 42** states in the USA Chapter
 - **60 in 6** provinces in the Canadian Chapter
 - **353 in 36** nations in the European Chapter
 - **173 in 14** jurisdictions in the Asia Pacific Chapter
 - **88 in 30** Other jurisdictions

[See Number of Fellows / Jurisdictions in the 4 Decades](#)

5. The IAFL connects colleagues through its organisation and substantive committees.

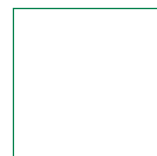
[See IAFL Organisational Chart](#)

Connecting colleagues

6. Fellows frequently seek assistance from other Fellows on a wide range of issues. We share information with all Fellows through the members area of our website. IAFL provides Fellows with an invaluable network of contacts throughout the world. This is a resource that inures to the benefit of not only the practitioner but also the client and their families.
7. Undoubtedly, the 4 Meetings each year, their venues, social programmes and networking are vital components of the family of Family Lawyers, connecting and supporting us.

[See Tables of Global and Chapter Meetings, and the President concerned](#)

8. In addition, IAFL gives notice of other events, uploaded onto the website, including:
 - the Symposium, invariably held on the Tuesday before each Meeting
 - the Introduction to European Family Law Meetings
 - European Chapter Webinars
 - AP Hour: the Asia Pacific Chapter's monthly online meeting
 - Meetings run by organisations sharing values and objectives with IAFL
- [See website for Webinars →](#)
- [See website for forthcoming events →](#)



Cultivating knowledge

9. The Educational Programmes at Meetings/ Symposia deliver on cutting-edge family law and practice.

[See website for Education Programmes Details](#)
2008 - 2026 →

10. Knowledge is cultivated outside of Meetings:

- The work of the IAFL Committees and their publications, such as

Child & Forced Marriage	Dispute Resolution	SOGI
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- Institute for Further Learning (aimed at lawyers of 6–7 years PQE.)
- Law Reform and Education
- Educational presentations in multiple jurisdictions, such as
 - The European Parliament
 - Select Committees from both Houses of Parliament in the UK
- Sending representatives to conferences: relating to children, service, the taking of evidence abroad, and the harmonisation of jurisdictional rules in family law
- Judicial Training
- Providing informed commentary to the media, highlighting when the treatment of individuals does not meet minimum international standards respecting human rights.

[See IAFL Press Releases](#)

Creating solutions

11. The IAFL creates solutions within individual cases and globally, including by:

- Promoting Dispute Resolution
- Supporting issues relating to families e.g.
 - International relocation and/or abduction of children
 - Forced marriage
 - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification issues

12. The IAFL is respected and recognised as a worldwide association of the most experienced and skilled specialists. This is evidenced by the grant of:

- Leave to intervene by the following courts:
 - The Supreme Court of the USA
 - The Supreme Court of the UK
 - The Cour de Cassation in France
 - The Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic
 - The Court of Appeal in England & Wales
 - The Tribunal da Relacao de Lisboa
- Observer status on HCCH
- Participatory status with the Council of Europe

[See Amicus Curiae Interventions](#)

13. The President's medal or award has been presented to some Fellows

[See List of Recipients of the IAFL President's Medal/Award](#)

Corinne Remedios (Hong Kong, China)
IAFL First Vice President (2025 – 2026)
Asia Pacific Chapter Past President (2020 – 2022)

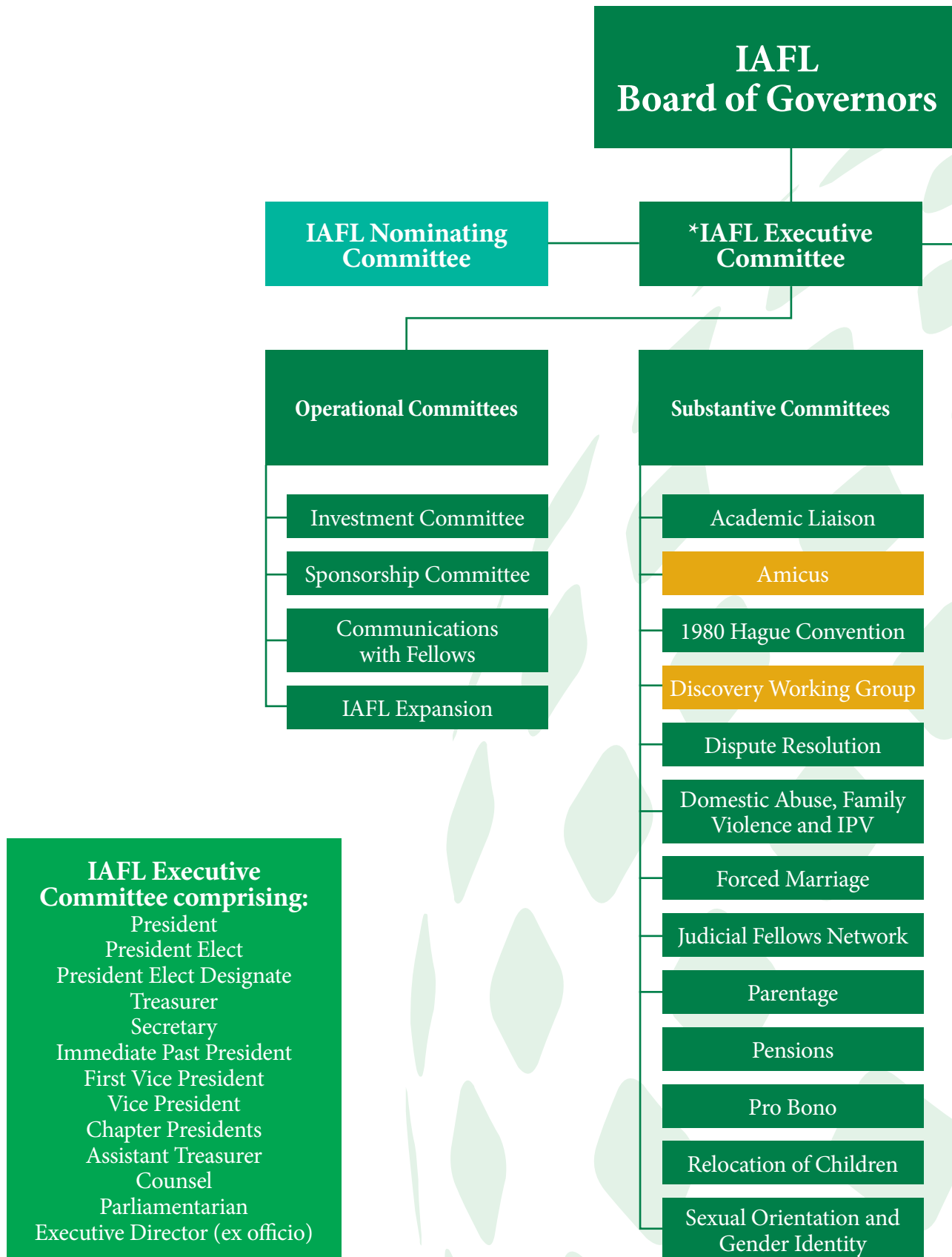
List of IAML Founding Fellows

Douglas Alexiou	England	Margaret F McGovern	USA
Margaret H Bennett	England	Catherine McGuinness	Ireland
Paul Birzon	USA	C lan McLachlan	USA
Peter E Bronstein	USA	John Nichols	USA
Edward Cazalet QC	England	Christopher Nickols	England
Alain Cornec	France	Gerald L Nissenbaum	USA
David Murray Davidson	England	Miles Preston	England
Charles Doughty	England	Claës Renström	Sweden
Sanford S Dranoff	USA	R M James Ruscick	USA
Anne Dunne SC	Ireland	Donald J Sasser	USA
Peter George	England	Philip Schwartz	USA
Andrew Gerry	England	Fiona Shackleton	England
Donald Hart QC	England	Norman M Sheresky	USA
Peter Grose-Hodge	England	Jane Simpson	England
Joseph Jackson QC	England	Peter Singer	England
Robert Johnson QC	England	Barry Singleton	England
Jerome Karet	England	John Sykes	England
Ian Karsten QC	England	Jeremy Tatham	England
Ann Loughridge Kerr	USA	Mathew Thorpe QC	England
David Leverton	England	James Townend QC	England
Jeremy Levison	England	Alan Ward QC	England
John V Long	USA	John Westcott	England
Werner Martens	Germany	Nicholas Wilson QC	England

Number of Fellows / Jurisdictions in the 4 Decades

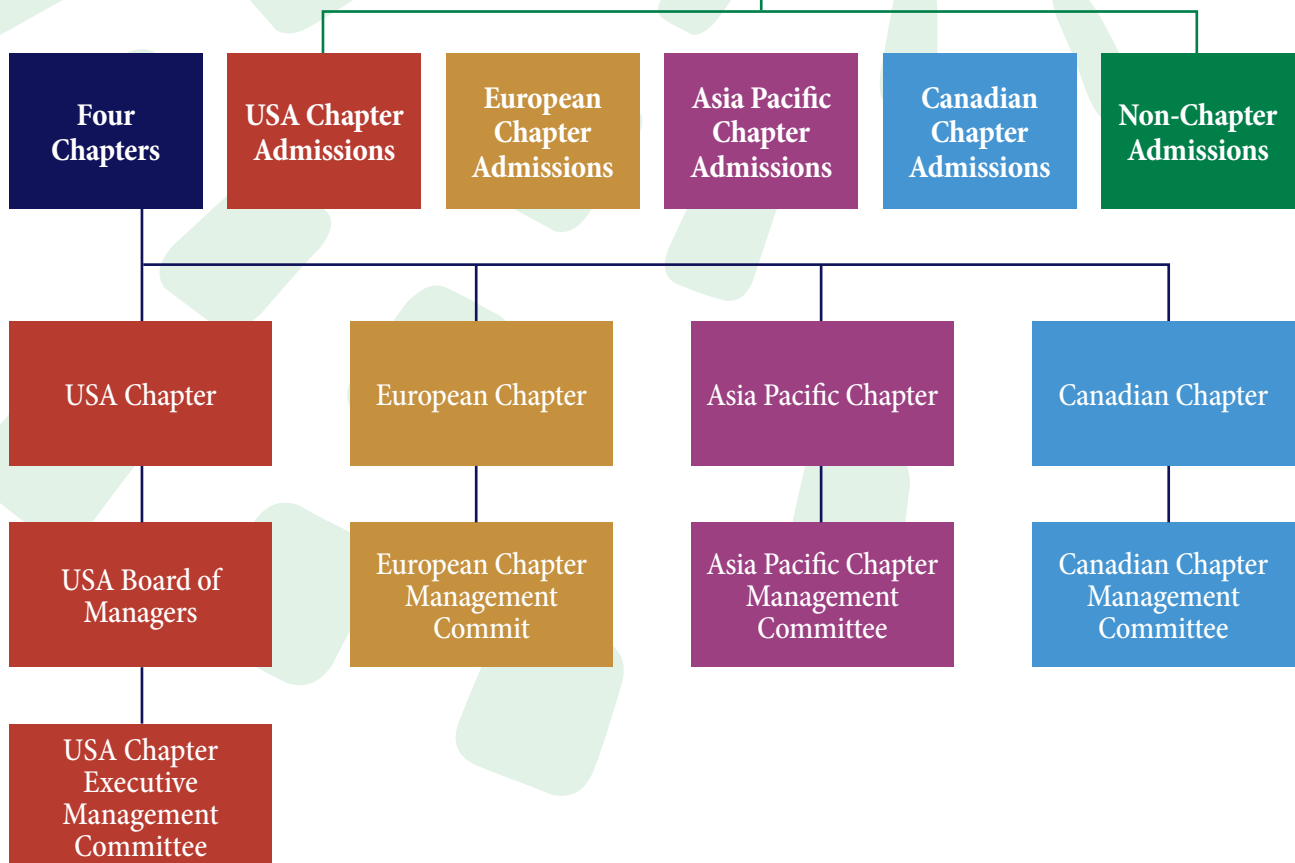
Date	Fellows	Jurisdictions	USA [jurisdictions]	Canadian [Provinces]	Europe [jurisdictions]	Asia Pacific [jurisdictions]	Rest of World [jurisdictions]
First Decade							
Sep-95	256						
Second Decade							
Sep-04	384						
Dec-04	394		223	22	106		43
Third Decade							
Sep-14	681	93	306 [40]	46 [6]	229 [28]		100 [19]
Sep-19	833	103	341 [40]	53 [7]	279 [30]	114 [10]	46 [16]
Sep-24	1032	124	405 [41]	63 [6]	336 [35]	157 [14]	71 [28]
Fourth Decade							
Jun-26	1090	128	418 [42]	60 [6]	353 [36]	173 [14]	88 [30]

IAFL Organisational Chart



Board of Governors comprising:
IAFL Executive Committee Four Governors at
Large Chapter Delegate Governors

**IAFL Board
of Governors**



Tables of Global and Chapter Meetings, and the President concerned

Year	IAFL Annual Meeting	USA Chapter Meeting	European Chapter Meeting	Canadian Chapter Meeting	Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting
2026	Dublin, Ireland 2-9 September Heather Q. Hostetter	Fort Lauderdale, Florida 2-6 December Katharine Maddox	Barcelona, Spain 4-8 February Emma Hatley	Fort Lauderdale, Florida 2-6 December Caroline Harnois	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 20-24 May John Spender
2025	Nairobi, Kenya 3-7 September Rachael Kelsey	Charleston, S Carolina 5-8 February Wendy Crew	Istanbul, Turkey 21-25 May Sandra Verburgt	Charleston, S Carolina 5-8 February Oren Weinberg	Hong Kong, China 3-7 December Kai Yun Wong
2024	Boston, USA 6-9 June Rachael Kelsey	Seattle, Washington 11-15 September Peter Buchbauer	Paris, France 4-8 December Sandra Verburgt	Seattle, Washington 11-15 September Kay Melbye	Brisbane, Australia 21-25 February Geoff Wilson
2023	Santiago, Chile 6-10 September Thomas Sasser	Joint with IAFL AGM Peter Buchbauer	Venice, Italy 1-5 February Alberto Perez Cedillo	Joint with IAFL AGM Kay Melbye	Bangkok, Thailand 31 May – 4 June Geoff Wilson, Corinne Remedios & Nigel Nicholls
2022	Marrakech, Morocco 30 Nov – 4 December Thomas Sasser	New Orleans, Louisiana 16-20 February Reneaux Collins	Athens, Greece 11-14 May 2022 Alberto Perez Cedillo	New Orleans, Louisiana 16-20 February Karon Bales	
2021	Virtual 17 September Marlene Eskin Moses	Virtual 29 April Reneaux Collins	Virtual 1 October Rachael Kelsey	Virtual 29 May Karon Bales	Virtual 22 December Corinne Remedios
2020	Virtual 5 June Mia Reich-Sjögren	Virtual 29 August Jorge Cestero	Virtual 4 December William Massey	Virtual 29 August Karon Bales	Virtual 2 June Nigel Nicholls
2019	Melbourne, Australia 20-24 February Mia Reich-Sjögren	San Francisco, California 15-19 May Jorge Cestero	Palma, Mallorca 11-15 September William Massey	San Francisco, California Sarah Boulby	Melbourne, Australia Max Meyer
2018	Tokyo, Japan 30 May – 3 June Nancy Zalusk Berg	Savannah, Georgia 21-25 February Marlene Eskin Moses	Stuttgart, Germany 26-30 September Dr Daniela Kreidler-Pleus	Savannah, Georgia Elisabeth Sachs	Tokyo, Japan Nigel Nicholls

Year	IAFL Annual Meeting	USA Chapter Meeting	European Chapter Meeting	Canadian Chapter Meeting	Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting
2017	Reykjavik, Iceland 13-17 September Nancy Zalusky Berg	Nashville, Tennessee 24-28 May Marlene Eskind Moses	Lisbon, Portugal 22-26 March Dr Daniela Kreidler-Pleus	Nashville, Tennessee Elisabeth Sachs	
2016	New Delhi, India 14-18 September William Longrigg	Los Angeles, California 3-7 February Joy Feinberg	Amsterdam, Netherlands 25-29 May Mark Harper	Los Angeles, California Pierre-Hugues Fortin	
2015	Taormina, Sicily 9-13 September William Longrigg	Québec City, Canada 10-14 June Joy Feinberg	Seville, Spain 25-29 March Mark Harper	Québec City Pierre-Hugues Fortin	
2014	Budapest, Hungary 10-14 September Cheryl Hepfer	New York City, NY 28 May – 1 June Sylvia Goldschmidt	Bordeaux, France 19-23 March Alfred Kriegler	New York Jim Stoffman	
2013	Buenos Aires, Argentina 18-22 September Cheryl Hepfer	Carefree, Arizona 13-17 February Sylvia Goldschmidt	Salzburg, Austria 22-26 May Alfred Kriegler	Carefree Esther Lenkinski	
2012	Singapore 5-9 September David Salter	Minneapolis, Minnesota 13-17 June Nancy Zalusky Berg	Crete, Greece 18-22 April William Longrigg	Minneapolis Esther Lenkinski	
2011	Harrogate, England 7-11 September David Salter	South Beach, Florida 16-20 February Nancy Zalusky Berg	Strasbourg, France 6-10 April William Longrigg	South Beach Trudi Brown	
2010	Queenstown, New Zealand 1-5 September Ian Kennedy	Puerto Rico 3-7 February Marcia Maddox	Munich, Germany 5-9 May Mia Reich-Sjögren	Puerto Rico Trudi Brown	
2009	Vancouver, Canada 2-6 September Ian Kennedy	San Antonio, Texas 4-8 March Marcia Maddox	Stockholm, Sweden 6-10 May Mia Reich-Sjögren	Vancouver Gerald Stotland	
2008	Cape Town, South Africa 3-7 September Donald Sasser	Boston, USA 4-7 June Ed Thomas	Rome, Italy 2-6 April David Salter	Boston Gerald Stotland	
2007	St Petersburg, Russia 4-12 September Donald Sasser	San Diego, California 28-31 March Ed Thomas	Krakow, Poland 25-28 April David Salter	San Diego Stephen Grant	

Year	IAFL Annual Meeting	USA Chapter Meeting	European Chapter Meeting	Canadian Chapter Meeting	Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting
2006	Shanghai, China 6-10 September Jacqueline Leong	Orlando, Florida 29 March – 2 April Floyd Nadler	Thessaloniki, Greece 3-7 May Haroula Constandinidou	Orlando Stephen Grant	
2005	Brussels, Belgium 7-11 September Jacqueline Leong	Chicago, Illinois 1-5 June Floyd Nadler	Vienna, Austria 4-8 May Haroula Constandinidou	Chicago Stephen Grant	
2004	Sydney, Australia 8-12 September Charles Shainberg	Washington DC 24-28 March Cheryl Hepfer	Venice, Italy 21-25 April Richard Sax		
2003	Barcelona, Spain 10-14 September Charles Shainberg	New Orleans, Louisiana 26-30 March Cheryl Hepfer	Copenhagen, Denmark 7-11 May Richard Sax		
2002	Berlin, Germany 18-21 September Douglas Alexiou	Charleston, South Carolina 2-6 April Thomas Stabile	Madrid, Spain 24-28 April Luis Zarraluqui		
2001	Montreal, Canada 5-9 September Douglas Alexiou	Las Vegas, Nevada 29-31 March Thomas Stabile	Prague, Czech Republic 25-29 April Luis Zarraluqui		
2000	Edinburgh, Scotland 6-10 September Richard Barry	Palm Beach, Florida Late March Donald Sasser	Paphos, Cyprus 3-7 May Douglas Alexiou		
1999	San-Tropez, France 2-5 September Richard Barry	Bermuda Late March Donald Sasser	Amsterdam, Netherlands Late April Douglas Alexiou		
1998	San Francisco, California 9-12 September Werner Martens	New York, New York 26-29 March Stephen Kolodny	Ascona, Switzerland 22-26 April Rolf Steinegger		
1997	Florence, Italy 4-7 September Philip Schwartz	Washington DC 27-30 March Stephen Kolodny	Athens, Greece 7-11 May Rolf Steinegger		
1996	Hong Kong 4-8 September Miles Preston	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 28-31 March Charles Shainberg	Göteborg, Sweden 24-28 April Audrey Ducroux		
1995	Istanbul, Turkey 13-17 September Miles Preston	New Orleans, Louisiana 16-19 February Charles Shainberg	Seville, Spain 15-19 March Audrey Ducroux		

Year	IAFL Annual Meeting	USA Chapter Meeting	European Chapter Meeting	Canadian Chapter Meeting	Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting
1994	Paris, France 21-25 September Arthur Berman	New York, New York Sanford S. Dranoff	Budapest, Hungary 27 April – 1 May Werner Martens		
1993	London, England 1-5 September Arthur Berman	Salzburg 28 April – 2 May Sanford S. Dranoff	Salzburg, Austria 28 April – 2 May Werner Martens		
1992	Lisbon, Portugal 2-6 September Peter Grose-Hodge	Vancouver, Canada 30 April – 3 May Arthur M. Berman	Lyons, France Miles Preston		
1991	Boston, USA 4-8 September Peter Grose-Hodge	Boston, USA Arthur M. Berman	Interlaken, Switzerland 24-28 April Miles Preston		
1990	Dublin, Ireland 5-9 September Gerald L. Nissenbaum	San Francisco, California 19-22 April Arthur M. Berman	Munich, Germany 25-29 April Miles Preston		
1989	Rome, Italy 11-15 October Gerald L. Nissenbaum	New York, New York 27-30 April Philip Schwartz	Paris, France 22-23 April Miles Preston		
1988	Warwickshire, England 12-16 October Gerald L. Nissenbaum	Washington, DC 23-26 April Philip Schwartz			
1988	Copenhagen, Denmark 30 June – 3 July (mid year meeting)				
1987	London, England 8-10 October Gerald L. Nissenbaum	Boston, USA 5-8 February Philip Schwartz			
1987	Bern, Switzerland 26-28 June (mid year meeting)				
1986	London, England 10 October Gerald L. Nissenbaum				

Amicus Curiae Interventions

Sofia Appellate Court Miladinov v. Delidimova

Posted 28 May 2025 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus brief filed by the IAFL in 2026

Anthony Patterson v Asli Baz

Posted 18 Nov 2024 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus brief filed by the IAFL in November 2024 in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Omer Peretz v Oryan Shtark

Posted 23 Aug 2024 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus brief filed by the IAFL in August 2024 to the Tribunal da Relação de Lisboa - 8ª Secção.

Intervention Volontaire Accessoire en demande

Posted 19 Jun 2024 by Alice Meier-Bourdeau

Amicus Brief filed by the IAFL in June 2024 that was submitted to the Cour de cassation.

Honourable Mr Justice MacDonald v P & ORS [2022] EWHC (FAM)

Posted 23 May 2023 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus brief filed by the IAFL on 23 May 2023 in The Court of Appeal, Civil Decision
Case No. CA-2023-000216/312

Golan v Saada Case

Posted 13 Apr 2022 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by the IAFL in February 2022 in the Supreme Court of the United States in the
Golan v Saada case

Manuela case and others vs. El Salvador

Posted 25 Mar 2021 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by IAFL with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in the
Manuela case and others vs. El Salvador

Supplemental Brief, UKSC, G. v G

Posted 10 Feb 2021 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus brief filed by the IAFL in February 2021 in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

In the Matter of NY (A child) - UKSC 2019/0145

Posted 30 Oct 2019 by IAFL

The IAFL were again given permission to intervene in the UK Supreme Court in the matter of NY (A Child)

18-935 Monasky v. Taglieri

Posted 11 Oct 2019 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by IAFL in October 2019 in the Supreme Court of the United States Court in the Monasky v Taglieri case

Remanding Order Calixto v. Lesmes

Posted 30 Nov 2018 by IAFL

Order remanding the Calixto v. Lesmes case to the Federal trial court

17-15364 Calixto v. Lesmes

Posted 6 Feb 2018 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by IAFL in February 2018 in the United States Court of Appeals in the Calixto case.

AR v RN and Reunite, Children, Families Across Borders and IAML

Posted 21 Jun 2015 by Edwin Freedman

Amicus Brief filed by IAML in June 2015 in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom on Appeal from the Extra Division of the Inner House of the Court of Session (Scotland). Case of AR and RN and Reunite, Children and Families Across Borders and IAML.

16-582 Cahue v. Martinez

Posted 8 Jan 2017 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by IAFL on the 8th January 2017 in the Supreme Court of the United States in the Cahue case.

T15-26664 Bowie v. Gaslain

Posted 28 Nov 2016 by IAFL

Amicus Brief in support of Emma Bowie, 28th November 2016, France

12-820 Lozano v. Alvarez (Amicus of IAML)

Posted 1 Sep 2013 by IAFL

Amicus Brief filed by IAML in September 2013 in the United States Supreme Court in the Lozano case on the issue of equitable tolling.

IAFL Press Releases

8.12.25 Support of the
Protection of
Fundamental Human
Rights for Civil Partners
and LGBT Hongkongers

6.9.25 Support for LGBTQ
Kenyans, Refugees and
Asylum Seekers

5.12.22 Statement in support
of LGBTI Rights
in Morocco and
Internationally

30.6.21 IAFL Condemns
Hungarian Government
Ban on Promotion of
Homosexuality to under
18s

19.6.19 IAFL Applauds
Recognition of LGBT
Rights in the Asia Pacific
Region

8.4.19 IAFL Condemns
Brunei's New Penal
Code

9.11.18 Restriction of US G-4
Visas to married persons

20.6.18 Forced Separation of
Children and Parents on
US Border

18.9.16 Support for LGBTI in
India

17.9.16 Standing Position on
Forced Marriage

20.5.15 Surrogacy Symposium

28.5.14 Pakistani Stoning

29.3.14 Gay Marriage

14.6.13 Legal Issues Important
for Parents Using ARTS

8.5.13 International Lawyers
take stand on Forced
Marriage

Recipients of the IAFL President's Medal/Award

Recipient	Year	Where	President
Richard Sax	2010	Queenstown	Ian Kennedy
George Stern	2011	Harrogate	David Salter
Alan Ward	2012	Singapore	David Salter
Anne-Marie Hutchinson	2014	Budapest	Cheryl Hepfer
Ian Kennedy	2016	New Delhi	William Longrigg
Cheryl Hepfer	2016	New Delhi	William Longrigg
Werner Martens	2018	Stuttgart	Mia Reich-Sjögren
Miles Preston	2018	Stuttgart	Mia Reich-Sjögren
Edwin Freedman	2022	Marrakech	Tom Sasser
William Longrigg	2022	Marrakech	Tom Sasser
Corinne Remedios	2024	Boston	Rachael Kelsey

Acknowledgments

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