



Heartland Mediators Association

Professionals in Conflict Resolution

HMA is a not-for-profit organization bringing together people who share a common interest in mediation. HMA advocates for and provides continuing education about mediation and provides a network for information, skill sharing, and referrals.

P.O. Box 14971
Lenexa, KS 66285
Phone: 913-956-7620
Fax: 913-825-3243
Email: HMAOrganization@everestkc.net

Restorative Justice in Kansas

The HMA board recently approved the formation of a Restorative Justice Subcommittee which initially included Art Thomson, Janelle Murphy and John Errante. The hope is to create a place to share locations within our area where Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices are being implemented. We also hope to create a repository of practitioners and resources to support efforts in schools, neighborhoods and criminal justice systems.

We know that some mediators are already engaged in this field of “alternative dispute resolution” with practical programs in all three areas mentioned above. There are many resources available in print, on the internet and in classes and seminars offered online from many of the regional organizations supporting alternatives to traditional approaches to managing harm.

One of the fundamental characteristics of restorative justice is a focus on three components: a) what harm has been caused, b) what persons were affected by this harm, and c) how can we make things right? Like many forms of mediation, the option for a unique solution are in the hands of ALL those affected – victim(s), offender(s), family, friends, other community members and seeks to heal as much of the harm caused as possible.

If you are interested in this subcommittee or have questions please contact the subcommittee members.

John Erante
jmerrante@yahoo.com

Art Thomson
MassThom@aol.com

Janelle Murphy
JanelleMurphy@gmail.com

Save The Dates

Upcoming HMA Training Dates. Training material and registration will be forwarded

Fall 2019 – To Be Announced

February 28, 2020 – HMA Winter Training, Topeka Public Library – Domestic Violence
Training and Ethics Jeopardy

April 16 and 17, 2020 – HMA Annual Meeting, Overland Park

TRAINING CALENDAR

The Kansas Judicial Branch provides an Office of Dispute Resolution web link that provides monthly updates for approved Kansas mediation training. Check out all the state training at:

<http://www.kscourts.org/programs/alternative-dispute-resolution/schedule.pdf>

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2018-2020 Executive Officers

President

Jim Donovan
913.660.4815
Jim.Donovan.Mediation@gmail.com

President-Elect

Melanie Worsley
785.670.1410
melanie.worsley@washburn.edu

Past-President

Wayne Olsen
913.660.4090
mediation913@outlook.com

2020 DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Verdell Taylor, Jr.
B: 785.843.2429
pastort77@aol.com

Deborah Medlock, Treasurer
913.715.7486
Deborah.medlock@jocogov.org

2021 DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Lloyd Swartz
785.554.3562
civsol@aol.com

Art Thompson
C: 785.249.1414
MassThom@aol.com

Tonya Ricklefs
785-789-2544
Tonya.Ricklefs@Washburn.edu

Janell Murphy
785-825-5965
JanellMurphy@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Janet Lhuillier
913.956.7620
HMAOrganization@everestkc.net

The second in a three-part series that addresses the core of The Heartland Mediators Association

You may recall in the last newsletter I posed three questions that I have been posing to our board for well over 5 years – Who Are We, What Do We Do, and How Do We Do It. Our last newsletter addressed the first question. This newsletter addresses the second . . .

What Do We Do

In 1986 HMA was recognized by the Kansas Secretary of State as a not-for-profit corporation, applied for and received a federal employer number, and applied for and was recognized as a 501(c)6 organization by the IRS. While accomplishing all this the incorporating officers developed a set of bylaws that have been updated from time to time as needed.

These documents identify what we do and should be held as a banner over our organization's proverbial head and why on page 1 of each of our newsletters immediately under our logo we state:

“HMA is a not-for-profit organization bringing together people who share a common interest in mediation. HMA advocates for and provides continuing education about mediation and provides a network for information, skill sharing, and referrals.”

(Copies of all these documents are available on our web page or through the Secretary of State's office.)

The board is scheduled to meet in January to create/undertake a review of these documents and efforts. As always, your thoughts and ideas are welcome. Any proposed amendments will be presented to the membership at our annual membership meeting in April.

Jim Donovan, President

Next time: How We Do It

HMA Membership is open to any person interested in mediation or interested in pursuing a career in mediation or alternative dispute resolution. Membership goes from June 1 to May 31.

Janell Murphy
HMA Board Member

Greetings from the central Kansas! I'm thrilled to serve on the Heartland Mediators Association Board of Directors.

As a lifelong Kansas, 2001 KSU graduate, and my family's fifth generation to live and work on our family's farm in northern Ellsworth County, I started my career serving the public as a member of Salina's Police Department.

In 2010 I attended KIPCOR and had the pleasure of meeting (and being mentored by) Kirsten Zerger and Gary Flory. I completed several classes under their instruction and became a state approved core and domestic mediator.

I soon opened my private practice, Murphey Mediation, in Salina and shared offices with a former prosecutor-turned-defense-attorney, Bobby Hiebert. Based on my background, KIPCOR recommended me to Forrest Buhler and the staff at the Kansas Agricultural Mediation Service as a mediator for their program. I started contracting with their program in 2011 and continue work with them today.

Soon, Thea Nietfeld invited me to a community event at her Salina church focused on Restorative Justice. I had the pleasure of meeting fellow mediator and attorney, Ann Zimmerman, and a retired community leader, Martha Rhea, and the partnership led to the creation of the Salina Initiative for Restorative Justice (SIRJ) in the summer of 2012.

SIRJ, an 8th and 28th Judicial District diversion program, started with the simple goal of keeping kids in the classroom and out of the courtroom for low level offenses. Today, we offer victim-offender dialogues, neighborhood accountability boards, and parent-adolescent mediation for our community members. I am the program's executive director.



I then completed the parent-adolescent mediation training and practicum with Roxanne Emmert-Davis in the summer of 2015. Doing so has allowed me to better understand the victim-offender relationship as well as the family dynamics that I encountered in domestic mediation in my private practice.

I am a member of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice, the Noon Network Ambucs, and the Ellsworth County Chamber of Commerce. I co-chair the planning committee for the 2nd Restorative Kansas conference to be held in June 2020, with my friend and KDOC associate Holly Chavez. I'm excited to have input from the HMA as we organize that event.

Personally, I am a work-from-home/stay-at-home mom raising two boys, age 6 and 3, along with my wonderful husband of 9 years, Rob. We thoroughly enjoy being outdoors and life on the farm, make time during the fall and winter months to watch our KSU Wildcats play football, and entertain friends and family at our home.

I am excited to serve on the HMA board and look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming trainings, events, and conferences.

The Heartland Mediator Association's quarterly newsletter welcomes submissions of articles about mediation and news of mediation activities in the state of Kansas.

Tribute to Helen Grace Wahl

Helen Grace Wahl, a Kansas mediation pioneer, passed away June 10, 2019 at 87 years of age in Arizona. Her son Grant, writer for Sports Illustrated, wrote an article about her in the June 13, 2019 magazine. Helen started the Olathe Small Claims mediation program close to the date that Gary Kretchmer started the first Kansas Domestic mediation program in 1980.

Peg Nichols said the small claims mediation program had been initiated by Helen, Judge Farley and late Judge Herbert Walton. To get the program started, Helen sent a news release to the media seeking people who were interested in becoming volunteer mediators.

She observed eleven small claims mediations and then did a mediation by herself while being observed by Helen. After both parties had spoken, Peg violated the cardinal rule of mediation-she offered them what she thought was a reasonable solution to the dispute. Helen and Peg had a serious talk afterwards, and Helen repeated her admonition that Peg needed to get formal training - not readily available in those early days. Gary and Helen did the initial training for the Small Claims mediation program in the early 1990s.

Gary said her program quickly became the major training opportunity for many mediators. There is no doubt that it was Helen's patience and perseverance that created the enduring small claims mediation program that has enabled thousands of mediators to take their first steps toward becoming the peacemakers of the world.

Joanne Katz met Helen in 1989, as she was trying to learn and practice mediation. Helen had been hired by Kansas Legal Services (KLS) to take over a languishing mediation program at the Johnson County, Kansas KLS Office. There couldn't have been a better person to do it. Helen helped organize a group of volunteer mediators, and we were hungry for the opportunity to mediate. And of course, her lasting legacy was establishing the Olathe Small Claims Mediation program, which still exists today.



Helen conceptualized and helped organize the first Heartland Conference. She was the inspiration behind the mediation training that has been going on for years at Johnson County Community College. She developed mediation training for volunteers. She helped KLS to develop mediation in their offices and organized their first state-wide training for Domestic Mediators.

Helen's legacy has to be the generation of mediators who grew under her tutelage. Helen always saw the mediator within us, even when we doubted our own ability. Her eagle vision helped each of us to understand our own special talent to assist in peaceful resolution for even the hardest issues. And her total belief that there was always the potential for settlement, no matter how entrenched the parties were in their positions, made us all keep trying, often finding a way to help the parties involved.

Kansas owes a lot to Helen Grace Wahl. Her legacy lies in helping create successful mediation training, good mediation practices, and producing many professionally trained mediators.

Thank you Helen!