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NEWS AND UPDATES

DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMISSION

October 2024

DRCMediators@nccourts.org

919-890-1415

The Commission has a New Chair and Vice Chair!

On October 1, 2024, Justice Paul Newby appointed Judge Lori Hamilton to a two-year term as chair of the Commission.

At the September 20, 2024, Commission Meeting, Judge Michael Stading was voted by the full Commission to the position of vice chair.



The Commission Seeks Comment!

The following item was approved at the September 20, 2024, Commission meeting, and is now Open for Comment until December 8, 2024. All comments will be shared with the full Commission.

Amendments to the Dated and Out-of-State Training Policy.

Visit the [Commission Seeks Comment page](#) to view the document.

Forward your comments to DRCMediators@nccourts.org by December 8, 2024.

Advisory Opinion ad hoc Review Committee Update

While reviewing the Commission adopted AOs for accuracy and consistency, the ad hoc AO Review Committee requested the Commission reevaluate the gift-giving language in Advisory Opinion 33 in relation to the Standards of Professional Conduct for Mediators, Standard 7(h). Standard 7(h) prevents gift giving that creates a situation where a party to the mediation could question the mediator's impartiality. After review and consideration, the Commission determined Advisory Opinion 33 adopted in 2016, took too narrow of a view on Standard 7(h) by prohibiting a mediator from gifting a mouse pad with their name on the pad. Reviewing the language under an objectively reasonable Standard, the Commission determined the mouse pad is an advertising tool, not an object that would impact the mediator's ability to remain neutral. The Commission modified AO 33 to allow gift giving when the gifts do not raise a question as the mediator's impartiality.

To review all the amended Advisory Opinions, visit the [DRC Advisory Opinions and Policy website](#).

Welcome New Commissioners!

Andrew Murray was appointed in May 2021, and subsequently elected to a four-year term in November of 2022, as District Attorney for North Carolina's 42nd Prosecutorial District, which includes Henderson, Transylvania, and Polk Counties.



Prior to his serving as District Attorney, Mr. Murray served as the presidentially appointed United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Mr. Murray was nominated by President Donald Trump on September 11, 2017, and was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on November 9, 2017. He served as U.S. Attorney from November 2017 to March 2021.

Prior to becoming the United States Attorney, Mr. Murray served as the elected District Attorney of North Carolina's 26th Prosecutorial District (Mecklenburg County) from January 2010 to November 2017.

Prior to serving as the Mecklenburg District Attorney, Mr. Murray was a criminal law attorney in private practice from 1995 to 2010. Prior to his election as District Attorney, Mr. Murray was the managing partner of the law firm Goodman, Carr, Laughrun, Levine, Murray & Greene for over ten years.

Mr. Murray is also a retired United States Coast Guardsman. He enlisted with the United States Coast Guard in 1980 and completed six years of active service. Upon separation from active duty, he continued to serve as a U.S. Coast Guard Reservist. Mr. Murray attended Coast Guard Officer Candidate School in 1987 and was commissioned as an officer. He retired from the U.S. Coast Guard in 2016 as a Captain (O-6) after honorably serving for thirty-five years.

Mr. Murray has been married to his wife Pam Murray for over forty years. They raised three boys together and now have two precious granddaughters.



Lauren Taylor Quinn was appointed to the North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission by the North Carolina State Bar President, Todd Brown. Her commission commenced on October 1, 2024 and expires on September 30, 2025.

Ms. Quinn leads the Family Law practice group at Ward and Smith, P.A. where she has practiced as an attorney for 17 years. She is a North Carolina State Bar Board Certified Specialist in Family Law and has been certified as a specialist since 2015. She handles litigation and non-litigation matters throughout Eastern North Carolina related to complex issues arising out of the contemplation of marriage, dissolution of marriage, and issues incident to custody and support of children. Ms. Quinn's practice routinely involves the use of alternative dispute resolution measures, including mediation, to attempt to reach a resolution for the parties. Ms. Quinn also represents clients before the NC Court of Appeals and NC Supreme Court on family-related cases after final judgment at the trial court level. Prior to joining the firm, she was a law clerk to Judge J. Douglas McCullough of the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Ms. Quinn earned a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, her M.B.A. from Campbell University, and J.D., *cum laude*, from Campbell Law School. She is a board member of the North Carolina Symphony (New Bern Series) and a member of the Eastern North Carolina Inn of Court.

Joy Peele Easley was appointed to the Dispute Resolution Commission by the Speaker of the House, Tim Moore. Her Commission commenced on October 1, 2024, and expires on September 30, 2026.



Ms. Easley practices law in Oak Island, NC.



Guide to Assist NCDRC Mediators with Filing their Reports of Mediator in Odyssey.

To assist certified mediators, NCDRC staff created a Guide to Assist Certified Mediators with Filing their Reports of Mediator in Odyssey. The guide may be found within the Mediator Toolbox located on the Commission's website, www.ncdrc.gov; or by visiting: [Guide to Assist NCDRC Certified Mediators with Filing their Reports of Mediator | North Carolina Judicial Branch \(nccourts.gov\)](#).

Emergency Judges and non-attorney certified mediators must create/register for an "Individual Account in eCourts".

A special thank you to NCDRC Certified Mediator (MSC/FFS/Clerk) Salim Uqdah who assisted staff with creating the guide.

Have you recently moved? Changed email address?

Mediator Profiles - be sure to keep your profile current with your contact information. You do not want to miss out on any announcements, emails or updates from the Commission.

eCourts - Contact information posted on your Mediator Profile is not yet being Staff is working to update mediator information weekly, but we encourage you to contact court staff to be sure the district has your correct contact information.



Hurricane Helene

On Friday, September 27, 2024, many of you suffered the impact of Hurricane Helene. Michael Drye, dually certified mediator, his wife Nora, and grandson Micha, perished in the flooding. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Drye family and with so many others who are still struggling with the aftermath of the storm.



Listen to the Commission's Three Podcasts "Beyond Neutrality" and receive one-hour of CME credit for each podcast. (No CLE credit is available.)

In each episode listen to Tara Kozlowski and Maureen Robinson discuss ethical questions and concerns from certified mediators regarding Rules, Standards, Forms, and Advisory Opinions.

To find a full list of approved CME courses, visit the [DRC CME Page](#).

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