

Notice & Call for Papers
Mini-Symposium on *Parentlessness*
Brigham Young University Law School
Friday, October 8, 2004.

The J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University is sponsoring a one-day mini-symposium on Friday, October 8, 2004. The topic is "*Parentlessness: Promoting the Best Interests of Parent-Deprived Children Growing Up In A World of Diversity.*" The conference website is at <http://www.law2.byu.edu/marriage_family/>.

Historically, especially in recent centuries in developed societies, public policy has encouraged the raising of children by their mothers and fathers who are married to each other on the assumption that this "dual" or "marital" parenting is in the best interests of the children. Significant social changes in recent decades have raised questions about this policy preference and assumption. For example, the dramatic increase in children born and raised out of wedlock, the significant increase in the incidence of divorce, resulting in children being raised primarily by only one parent, and in many blended families with step- and half-siblings and parents, changes in adoption practices, and the rise in the number of children being raised by same-sex couples have led to challenges to the "marital" or "dual parent" best interest assumption. This symposium on "*Parentlessness: Promoting the Best Interests of Parent-Deprived Children Growing Up In A World of Diversity*" will explore a variety of dimensions relating to that topic.

Many outstanding experts have already agreed to present papers. Professor Patrick Parkinson (University of Sydney) will present recent empirical research from Australia about contact between noncustodial parents and children of divorce, and discuss a new initiative re: visitation centers undertaken by the government there; Professor Deborah Forman (Whittier Law School) will address paternity acts and parentage of children born to same-sex couples; Professor Lynn Wardle (BYU) will present a paper on parenthood and the limits of adult autonomy; Professor Vince Samar (Chicago Kent) will discuss how education can facilitate the social acceptance of gay parenting; Professor Alan Hawkins (BYU, School of Family Life) will present a report on the federal welfare "marriage initiatives"; Professor Lynn Hogue (Georgia State) will present a paper about interstate recognition of gay adoption; Professor Nick Wolfinger (University of Utah, Sociology) will present research dealing with children of divorce; Professor David Dollahite (BYU, School of Family Life) will present his research about fathering; Camille Williams (Provo, Utah) will address public policy concerning the procreation of children intended to be partially parentless; William C. Duncan (Sutherland Institute, Utah) will discuss recent developments re: gay adoption. The Whittier Journal of Child and Family Advocacy has agreed to publish a symposium issue containing selected papers presented at this conference.

Scholars interested in presenting a paper at this mini-symposium are invited to submit proposals by Saturday, August 28, to Professor Lynn Wardle by email at <Lynn_Wardle@byu.edu>. Please provide three items of information: (1) the working title of your proposed paper, followed by your name, and a one-paragraph abstract or general description of the paper you propose to present,(2) your contact information including your name, title, institutional affiliation, postal address, telephone, and email address, and (3) a short (50-75-word) bio of your professional background relating to the topic of the symposium. (If your paper is accepted, we intend to publish that information on the symposium website and/or in the conference materials; so if you do not wish some/any of your contact information to be disclosed please indicate that clearly.) We suggest that participants aim to prepare relatively

short papers of 15-30 pages in length, but full law review article length papers will also be welcome. If your proposal is accepted, you will need to send a rough draft of your paper by email (MS Word format) to Ms. Marcene Mason at masonm@lawgate.byu.edu by October 1st, one-week before the conference, so that it can be posted on the conference website, where other participants in the conference can access, read, and prepare to respond to it.

This will be the third in a series of conferences addressing various aspects of children and adoption. The first was held at the Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio in October 31 - November 1, 2002, and papers from that conference were published in the Capital University Law Review and in the Journal of Law and Family Studies at the University of Utah. The second was held last October at Brigham Young University, co-sponsored by the BYU School of Social Work; papers from that conference were published in a symposium issue in the Journal of Law and Family Studies also.

For logistical information, please contact Ms. Marcene Mason, by phone (801-422-2079), or by email (above). Persons wishing to attend the conference without presenting a paper are welcome, but are asked to pre-register (for nominal \$40 registration fee) by contacting Ms. Mason.