

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

André de Gruy is the State Public Defender for Mississippi. He founded the Mississippi Office of Capital Defense Counsel in July 2001, and has continuously served as director of that program, now a division of the Office of State Public Defender. He previously worked as an intern, staff attorney and director of the Mississippi Capital Defense Resource Center Inc. and as an assistant public defender in Hinds County.

He is a 1990 graduate of Mississippi College School of Law. He served on the Mississippi Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force and now serves on the Corrections and Criminal Justice Oversight Taskforce. He served on the Mississippi Public Defender Association Board of Directors for over 15 years including as President and chair of both the Training and Public Policy Committees. He is also a member of the National Association for Public Defense, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Mississippi Association for Justice. He is a “Life Member” honoree of MPDA. He is also a recipient of the Kenneth J. Rose Award for Compassionate Advocacy from Mississippians Educating for Smart Justice (MESJ); the 2014-15 Stone Pony Award from MAJ; and the 2019 Trail Blazer for Justice Award from the Mississippi Center for Legal Services. André has served on the Mississippi Public Defender Taskforce and as a lawyer/advisor to the Mississippi Psychology Association’s Forensics Working Group.

He is married to Judge Elizabeth de Gruy, they have five children and two grandchildren.

Jill Cohen is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and the Director of Programs at the Office of Respondent Parents’ Counsel (ORPC) in Colorado. Jill oversees the agency’s statewide social work program, including the design, implementation, and analysis of a social work pilot program. Jill has worked on attorney teams representing indigent parents in dependency and neglect cases in Colorado. She previously worked for over 10 years at the Center for Family Representation in New York and was part of designing and implementing the interdisciplinary practice model there that is considered one of the best in the country. She supervised the law office’s interdisciplinary staff, participated in strategic organizational planning, trained, and participated in policy initiatives with a focus on team collaboration between attorneys and social workers. She obtained an M.S.W. from the Hunter College School of Social Work and a B.A. from Barnard College in New York City.

Darice Good is a child abuse and neglect attorney in Georgia. She is a member of the Georgia Supreme Court’s Justice for Children Committee and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Panel, Children’s Justice Task Force. Darice is a Member of the Steering Committee for the National Parents Representation Project at the Children and Law Center of the ABA. She is also a certified trainer for the National Institute of Trial Attorneys. Darice co-authored the adjudication chapter of the first National Parents Representation book. Lastly, Darice was the 2015 Georgia Juvenile Attorney of the Year and the 2014 Shining Star.

Chad King is an attorney with Thompson Law Firm, PLLC, with a special concentration on Family Law. Chad currently serves as a Parent Representative Attorney in Hinds County Youth Court. Chad earned his J.D. from Mississippi College School of Law in 2015, where he served as President of the Family Law Society and a Student Attorney in the Adoption Clinic. He also served as an Adjunct Professor in Paralegal Studies at Hinds Community College. Chad is a member of the Family Law Section of the Mississippi Bar and the Rankin & Madison County Bar Associations.

Kelly G. Williams is a native Mississippian and was born and raised in the Jackson Metro area. She received a B.A. in English from Belhaven College in 2003 and a J.D. from Mississippi College School of Law in 2006. She is licensed to practice law in all state and federal courts in Mississippi, as well as in the Fifth Circuit and the United States Supreme Court.

Before forming The Law Office of Kelly G. Williams, PLLC, Kelly was with a Jackson law firm. Kelly is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the Capital Area Bar Association, the Madison County Bar Association, and the National Association of Counsel for Children.

Kelly is an Adjunct Professor at Mississippi College School of Law and teaches Children in the Legal System. She has practiced in a variety of areas of the law, but has a special interest in Child Welfare Law. To date, she is one of Mississippi's two Child Welfare Law Specialists (CWLS) certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) to represent children, parents, and agencies in Child Welfare Proceedings. This title of distinction requires, among other things, an applicant to pass a rigorous certification exam. The NACC Certification Program is the only program approved and accredited by the American Bar Association to certify attorneys as Child Welfare Law Specialists. This certification also lends itself to representation as related to juvenile offenders; subjects of custody, visitation and adoption proceedings; and as participants in civil damages litigation. Kelly has extensive experience in representing children and has served as a Special Judge and Designee in Youth Court for five years, and currently serves as a Parent Representation Attorney in Hinds County Youth Court.