

The Arc Mid-South

"I Matter" Conference 2017

Speakers



Judge Kathleen N. Gomes has practiced law for over 34 years, and practiced exclusively in probate law for the past 15 years. She was in private practice until being appointed Judge for Shelby County Probate Court, Division I, in 2013. Before her appointment to the bench, Judge Gomes sat as a Substitute Judge for Probate Judges Karen Webster, Robert Benham, and the late Leonard Pierotti on many occasions. She earned her J.D. from The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 1980 after receiving an undergraduate degree from UT-Chattanooga. Judge Gomes serves on The Arc Mid-South's Board of Directors and as a Cantor at Church of the Holy Spirit.



Upon graduating from Boston College Law School in 1969, Ruby Wharton worked for the Neighborhood Legal Services Program in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Wharton thereafter came to serve as an assistant public defender in Memphis, Shelby County Tennessee in the Juvenile and Criminal Courts.

Mrs. Wharton focuses her law practice in the areas of will and estates, personal injury, workers compensation, medical malpractice, employment and family law, guardianship, conservatorship, and powers of attorney. She serves on the boards of Memphis Airport Authority, Sacred Heart Southern Missions and volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America.



Deborah K. Brooks is an Elder Law Attorney certified by the National Elder Law Foundation as a "CELA" (Certified Elder Law Attorney). She is also member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the Memphis/Shelby County Professional Network on Aging and the Long Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Council, of counsel for the Aging Commission of the Mid-South, Office of the Public Guardian Advisory Counsel and a member of the Tennessee Bar Association's Elder Law Section. She is a graduate of the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.



Robert Donati is a graduate of Haverford College, Donati also studied at the University of Pennsylvania and Bryn Mawr College before receiving his law degree from University of Mississippi School of Law in 2006.

His practice focuses on helping individuals with disabilities in all aspects of their lives, including employment disputes surrounding the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act. He is certified as a specialist in Social Security Disability by the National Board of Trial Advocacy and is able to handle claims for Long Term Disability under ERISA.



Craig Barnes received his undergraduate degree from Duke University and his J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law in 2000. He began his career with a small firm in Seattle, WA representing indigent prisoners in cases involving prison conditions, sentencing structure and federal civil rights violations. In 2005, Mr. Barnes joined Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. as the NCLC Brooks Consumer Law Fellow.

As a Managing Attorney, he represents children with disabilities and their parents in special education matters. Mr. Barnes, who has received numerous awards, serves on the board of Disability Rights Tennessee.