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Foreword: Symposium on Emerging Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems

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Foreword

BY LINDA R. SINGER*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this symposium on dispute resolution. It features articles by some of the leaders in the movement to bring community mediation and arbitration to Kentucky, together with some of the nation's pioneers in developing the techniques now known as alternative dispute resolution ("ADR") and in adapting them to a variety of settings in courts and the community.

The inspiration for this symposium was, appropriately, the founding and flourishing of the Mediation Center of Kentucky, Inc. That project is described in the detailed case study prepared by one of its founders, Tom Stipanowich, a scholar who previously was occupied with the very different problems of commercial arbitration.

This project is set against the background of evolving systems and strategies on the national scene, as described by those in the field.

Patrick F. Piere has served as vice president of the National Institute for Dispute Resolution, which for ten years has been active in promoting the dispute resolution field and in supporting its growth in constructive and innovative directions.

Linda Work is Director of Outreach at the National Institute of Dispute Resolution and has mediated a wide variety of cases for many years.

Joseph (Josh) Stulberg, one of the earliest proponents of community mediation, has been training mediators and offering constructive criticism to our field since its beginning more than twenty years ago.

* Linda R. Singer, a creator and leader of the dispute resolution movement for the past twenty years, is a mediator, teacher, and author. Director of the Center for Dispute Settlement since 1971, she also serves as a principal in ADR Associates. Her book, *Settling Disputes: Conflict Resolution in Business, Families and the Legal System*, was published by Westview Press in 1990.

Peter Adler not only began the Neighborhood Justice Center in Honolulu, but went on to create a statewide office of mediation based in the courts.

Sharon Press has been active in improving the Florida court-based ADR system, which she now coordinates, into perhaps the most comprehensive state-wide court-connected ADR program in the country.

Edith Primm developed and still operates one of the earliest and most successful local neighborhood justice centers, a model for many other programs.

Judge Jack P. Etheridge, one of the early inspirations behind the Atlanta Neighborhood Justice Center, has been an effective advocate for ADR among the judiciary and, more recently, an active mediator himself.

Tom Christian operates one of the earliest, and most successful, state agencies to coordinate, develop, and fund local community justice centers.

In addition, the volume examines other regional developments. Professor Stipanowich's piece on the Mediation Center is supplemented by an analysis of domestic mediation at the Center by Gary Paquin, a professor of social work with legal training who was active in the development of the project. Other emerging programs are described by Louise Graham, who assisted in the establishment of the Louisville Family Court mediation program; Christopher Mehling and Donald Stepner, practitioners active in the development of Kentucky's first court-annexed arbitration program; and Karen Zerhusen, a long-time professional mediator who has been involved in all of the foregoing programs.

All of the authors featured in this issue have been associated in some way with community dispute centers. Most of the innovations in the courts and in other public institutions, such as schools and government agencies at all levels, have been created by people whose first experiences in the ADR field were in the context of community justice. The interdisciplinary nature of the group's backgrounds and of the topics they address emphasizes the continued importance of cross-fertilization as our field expands.

Also of critical importance is the continued emphasis on the quality of service, to which the best representatives of our field remain committed. Occasionally we are asked to do too much with too little. At a time when methods originally developed in carefully controlled contexts are being transplanted into courts and administrative agencies, with limited resources and shrinking budgets, an exploration of the appropriate uses and limitations of ADR processes, together with a continuing commitment to providing services of consistently high quality, may be the most important contribution we can make to our dynamic and still growing field.