

April 17, 2018: Meet Judge Milan

A special thanks to our panel: Judge Milan, Sharon Hornett (Lead Attorney 09), and Monica Porrota (CAM II). We appreciate you sharing your passion, knowledge and time with us.

- For those who didn't attend this meeting, there are no notes that can adequately portray the passion Judge Milan has or his appreciation for GALs in his courtroom.
- As a bit of background -- Judge Milan was a prosecutor and then went into private practice. When he became a judge, he was in the criminal division. He requested dependency because he believes judges should be involved in the community they serve. He is the father of 5 boys and married to a teacher.

Q: What do you want to hear from the GAL?

- o **Sharon** wants to hear from the GAL PRIOR to the hearing -- not right when the case is called.

GAL/Attorney protocol:

- THE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR SCHEDULED HEARING, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO YOUR ATTORNEY WITH "LEGAL" IN THE SUBJECT. IN THAT EMAIL, YOU CAN SET UP A STAFFING -- EITHER TELEPHONIC OR IN PERSON -- WITH YOUR ATTORNEY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES IN YOUR CASE. You can let the attorney know if you plan to attend your hearing, your priorities or what you hope to accomplish during the hearing, and your concerns. A relationship goes both ways, and the GAL, attorney, and supervisor are a team ... DON'T BE AFRAID TO CONTACT YOUR ATTORNEY!!!!
 - She wants to know how the child is -- are there any changes? Did you observe any visits? Are there any issues?
 - LET HER KNOW AND THE BAILIFF KNOW YOU ARE HERE AND WHEN EVERYONE ON THE CASE IS PRESENT.
- o **Monica**
 - Keep in touch with your supervisor. Let them know if you are going to be in court.
 - Make sure services are in place and how are they going.
 - o **Judge Milan**
 - Tell me everything about my kids!!! I need you to tell me what's really going on.

Q: When do you want our reports and what do you look for?

- o **Monica** - 5 days/week prior to the hearing. We review them before sending them to the attorney. I want to know services; express your opinion on placement and permanency.
- o **Sharon** - 5 days prior because they must be filed 72 hours prior to a hearing. I want your placement recommendations; is the goal of the case plan appropriate? and the date of your last visit.
- o **Judge Milan** - I want to know everything and I read everything. I like courtesy copies. I want to know the things I would want to know about my own children.

Q: What are your pet peeves?

- o **Judge Milan** - intellectual dishonesty. If you know something, tell me!!
- o **Sharon** - not knowing what you are going to say in court.

- o **Monica** - people not working in as a team (case manager, supervisor, etc.)

Q: When do you consider changing the goal of the case plan?

- o **Sharon** - when the parents are not doing their services. You don't have to wait 1 year. Irrespective of services -- parents are doing the services but not gaining any insight. These cases need to be staffed as we need a legal basis.
- o **Judge Milan** - a Judge can change the goal when given the proper information. That will also put the parents on notice.

Q: What is your view on children attending hearings? How about if a child wants to speak with you privately?

- o **Judge Milan** - Let them come all the time!!! Especially teens who must feel like they are a part of the process. If necessary not to miss school, I will set afternoon hearings. I have the children out of the courtroom when certain proceedings or conversations are not appropriate for them to hear. I meet with the children and take the GAL back with me. I do not meet with the children 1-on-1.

Q: Are you comfortable with GALs appearing by phone?

- o **Judge Milan** - Yes. Let your attorney know but I would love to see you.

Q: Do you want to hear from foster parents/ caregivers?

- o **Judge Milan** - Yes! I want to hear from everybody. Foster parents love having GALs on their cases. They feel like you can be their voice too.

Q: How can we get our cases called sooner?

- o **Judge Milan** - talk to the bailiff and your attorney and let them know all parties are present. I will call cases out of turn but like to call cases with children present first and cases with doctors second.

Q: How many 2nd chance/last chance case plans are sufficient?

- o **Judge Milan** - this process is predicated on hope and we need to give these families as much love and support as possible. It is on a case-by-case basis. I don't believe in just "kicking the can down the road either" and prolonging permanency.

Q: How can we move a case forward?

- o **Sharon** - get me the evidence and information I need.
- o **Monica** - obtain reports from the providers.
- o **Judge Milan** - tell me everything (but clear it with Sharon first).