EDITOR’S NOTE

Our lead article will be of interest to all judges who made child-custody decisions as part of their work. Psychologist Ira Turkat notes a seldom-discussed but critical point about child-custody evaluations conducted by psychologists—there is no scientific data demonstrating the validity of these reports. Given that fact, he discusses questions judges should ask and the framework within which these reports should be viewed. He also notes a recent Florida Court of Appeals case, *Higginbotham v. Higginbotham* (reprinted at page 9), in which the court noted that a court-ordered psychological evaluation had cost $20,000, an amount equal to the parties’ net worth, in a case in which the appellate court considered the issues “neither complex nor voluminous.” The Florida appellate court is right to point out that judges should carefully consider the costs attendant to these investigations. Dr. Turkat’s article provides help in considering whether the benefits are likely to exceed the costs for a given case.

We next have Professor Whitebread’s annual review of the civil decisions of the past Term of the United States Supreme Court. The final year of the Rehnquist Court was perhaps most noteworthy on the civil side for the opinion upholding the use of eminent domain management, providing substantive information regarding an area of law likely to be encountered by many judges, or by providing background information (such as psychology or other social science research) that can be used by judges in their work. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for Court Review are set forth on page 39. Court Review reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject material submitted for publication.

Letters to the Editor, intended for publication, are welcome. Please send such letters to Court Review’s editor: Judge Steve Leben, 100 North Kansas Avenue, Olathe, Kansas 66061, e-mail address: sleben@ix.netcom.com. Comments and suggestions for the publication, not intended for publication, also are welcome.

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Photo credit: Mary Watkins (marywatkinsphoto@earthlink.net). The cover photo is of the Surrogate’s Courthouse in New York City, built from 1899 to 1907 at a cost of more than $7 million. The Surrogate’s Courthouse, a designated New York City landmark, is located at the corner of Chambers and Centre Streets in downtown Manhattan. For more information about the building and its history, go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/resources/man_surrogatetour.shtml.

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