

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS
SOUTHERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

Re: Domestic Relations Cases

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**STANDING ORDER:
DOMESTIC RELATIONS ACTIONS**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 19-1-1(b), this is a standing order of the Southern Judicial Circuit that applies in every divorce case and every case affecting the parent-child relationship. The Court is adopting this Order to provide direction to Parties (defined as all Plaintiffs and Defendants) as to expectations of the Court as it relates to the issues of children, finances, and debts after the filing of a domestic relations case and prior to ruling on a temporary hearing. **Therefore, it is ORDERED,**

1. **CHILDREN**: The Parties are ORDERED to refrain from doing the following acts concerning any child(ren) involved in this case:
 - a. Disrupting or withdrawing the child(ren) from school or day-care facility where the child(ren) is presently enrolled without the written agreement of the Parties or an order of this Court.
 - b. Hiding or secreting the child(ren) from a Party, or changing the child(ren)'s current place of abode without the written agreement of the Parties or an order of this Court.
 - c. Making disparaging remarks to or in front of the child(ren) about a Party or a Party's family members.
 - d. Discussing with the child(ren), or with any other person in the presence of the child(ren), any issue involving the current or past litigation between the Parties.
 - e. Interfering with the ability of a Party to communicate with a child(ren) by cancelling cellular service of a child(ren), by blocking the other Party's number from appearing on a phone of the child(ren), or such similar acts.

2. **IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILDREN**: Pursuant to Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.8 and Standing Order entered on December 30, 1997, a copy of which is attached hereto as reference, for any action involving child(ren) less than eighteen (18) years of age, the Parties are to successfully complete the "In the Best Interest of the Children" seminar, or such similar program as approved by the Court, within

forty-five (45) days of service of the original complaint upon the defendant or filing of the Acknowledgment of Service and Summons.

3. **FINANCIAL ISSUES:** If this is a divorce action, the Parties are ORDERED to refrain from doing the following acts, except by written agreement of the Parties or Order of the Court:
 - a. Cancelling any health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, automobile insurance or other similar form of insurance insuring a Party or child(ren) involved in the pending matter.
 - b. Cancelling any utility (water, electricity, sewage, cable, internet, phone, alarm, etc. . .) that services the marital residence or any other location where the children might reside.
 - c. Cancelling the cellular service of the other Party or child(ren) involved in the pending matter.
 - d. Making a change to any beneficiary or payable on death designation to any financial account, life insurance policy, or Last Will and Testament.
 - e. Taking any action with a marital financial account, regardless of title or ownership, that wastes, secretes, hides, or otherwise changes the status quo of the financial situation of the Parties. Reasonable transfers and expenditures within the normal course of business of the marital relationship or to obtain the services of an attorney are permitted.

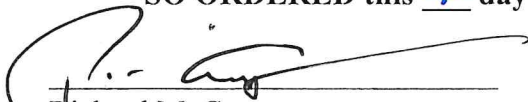
4. **FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS:** If this is divorce case, the Court expects that
 - a. The Parties are to continue paying for the marital bills in the same manner they have historically been doing prior to the filing of this action regardless of any ruling of this Court given in a separate Ex Parte Order concerning custody or temporary housing arrangements.
 - b. The financial status quo of the marriage is to be maintained, including providing financial support to one Party if that has been the historical practice of the Parties (ie., if only one Party has been earning an income in the marriage, the Court expects that reasonable financial support in accordance with the historical practice of the marriage is to be provided to the non-income producing Party).
 - c. In accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 19-5-7 and 19-6-1(e), except as to bona fide transfers of value or payment of preexisting debts, the Parties are restrained

and enjoined from disposing of any real property belonging to the Parties, including but not limited to the transfer of real property, the closing or transfer of bank accounts or bank account funds, 401(k) account, money market accounts, stocks or bonds, or other retirement or investment portfolio or account.

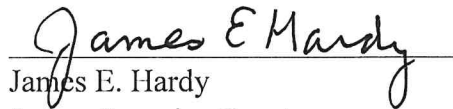
5. **FINANCIAL AFFIDAVIT and CHILD SUPPORT WORKSHEETS:** All Parties are to strictly comply with O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(m)(1) and Rule 24.2 of the Uniform Superior Court Rules by completing and filing a Financial Affidavit and/or Child Support Worksheets. These filings are to be within the times required by Rule 24.2 and are to be amended for accuracy prior to any hearing.
6. **APPLICATION OF THIS ORDER:** This order is effective immediately upon the filing of the original petition and shall remain in full force and effect as a temporary restraining order until the filing of a Temporary Order, the filing of an order extending this Standing Order, or sixty (60) days, whichever first occurs.
7. **EFFECT OF OTHER COURT ORDERS:** If any part of this Order is different from any part of an Ex Parte Order entered in a new action, the Ex Parte Order provisions prevail.
8. **VIOLATIONS:** Violations of this Standing Order may subject a Party to contempt sanctions.

The Clerks of Superior Court for the Southern Judicial Circuit are directed to spread this Order upon the minutes of the Court.

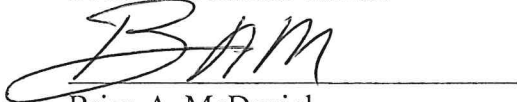
SO ORDERED this 4th day of November, 2022.



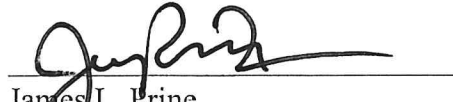
Richard M. Cowart
Chief Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



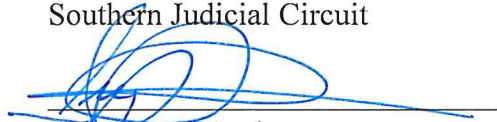
James E. Hardy
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



Brian A. McDaniel
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



James L. Frine
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



Gregory A. Voyles
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF LOWNDES COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

LOWNDES COUNTY, GEORGIA
FILED IN OFFICE

97 DEC 30 AM 8:58

John A. ...
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT

RE: SEMINAR FOR DIVORCING PARENTS

ORDER

Pursuant to the inherent powers of this Court and Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.8 and in order to provide for the speedy, efficient and economical resolutions of domestic disputes, and to prevent disputes and to benefit the children of parents involved in a divorce action or other action involving children,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this order applies to all parties in all divorce, separate maintenance, paternity (once established), change of custody, visitation, legitimization (once established), and other domestic relations actions filed on or after **February 1, 1998**, where the interests of children less than eighteen (18) years of age are involved, or if so ordered by the Court,

FURTHER ORDERED that all parties shall successfully complete a program entitled "In the Best Interest of the Children." The seminar shall focus on the effects of divorce on children, specifically as it relates to the parents' actions during and after separation, and as it relates to the children at different developmental stages. Specific attention will be given to the effects of the economics of divorce on children,

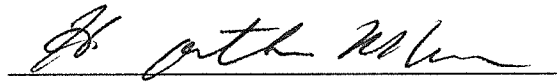
FURTHER ORDERED that the seminar shall be successfully completed within forty-five (45) days of service or acknowledgment of service of the original complaint upon the original defendant,

FURTHER ORDERED that upon a party's failure to complete the seminar pursuant to this rule, the assigned judge may take appropriate action, including but not limited to actions for contempt, continuance of hearings, withholding of the final divorce decree and award of attorney's fees and costs,

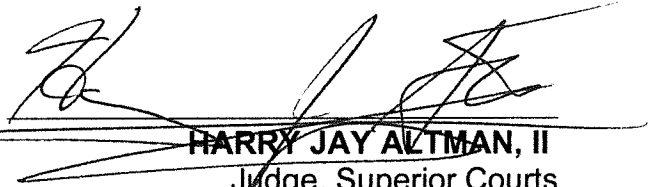
FURTHER ORDERED that for good cause shown, the assigned judge may waive the requirements of completion or extend the time requirements of this program in individual cases,

FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Lowndes County Superior Court shall spread this Order upon the minutes of this Court.

SO ORDERED, this 22 day of December 1997.



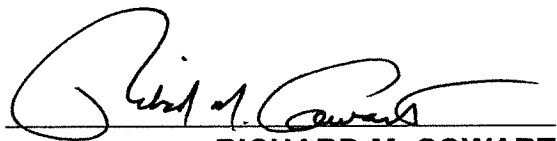
H. ARTHUR MCLANE
Chief Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



HARRY JAY ALTMAN, II
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



FRANK D. HORKAN
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit



RICHARD M. COWART
Judge, Superior Courts
Southern Judicial Circuit

West's Code of Georgia Annotated
State Court Rules
Uniform Superior Court Rules (Refs & Annos)
Rule 24. Domestic Relations

Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.8

Rule 24.8. Court Mandated Programs in Domestic Relations Cases

Currentness

(A) There may be established by any superior court circuit a program designed to educate the parties to domestic relations actions in regard to the effects of divorce on minor children of the marriage. Establishment of the program shall be by majority vote of the judges of the circuit or by the chief judge, in the event of a tie vote by all judges.

(B) The superior court judges, under whose authority the program shall function, may require any or all parties to attend an educational seminar of no more than four hours in any domestic relations action before the court. The program may be administered by the court or by contract with a private agency. The seminar shall be conducted by qualified personnel whose professional and educational experiences include a knowledge of children and families.

(C) The seminar shall focus on the effects of divorce on children, specifically as it relates to the parents' actions during and after the separation, and as it relates to the children at different developmental stages. Specific attention should be given to the effects of the economics of divorce on children.

(D) The court or contracted agency may charge each participant a fee, provided there is a fee waiver procedure in cases of indigent parties. The fee may be assessed in addition to court costs against either party in the discretion of the judge. The program shall be non-profit.

(E) The mandate of attendance shall be by court order with the assigned judge retaining the discretion to waive attendance for good cause shown. Such good cause may include: a party's non-residence in Georgia or in the county in which the action is pending or the reasonable availability of a similar program to the party or other such reasonable causes which indicate to the court that a party should not be required to complete the program. The court may, in its discretion, accept alternative counseling covering the subject matter of the required seminar. Unless waived, the failure to successfully complete the seminar shall be cause for appropriate action by the assigned judge, including but not limited to, withholding the final decree of divorce, attachment for contempt and award of attorneys' fees and costs.

(F) The assigned judge may, as a discretionary matter, grant a final decree of divorce before completion of the seminar, but shall retain authority to impose sanctions upon either party who fails or refuses to comply with the order to attend and complete the seminar.

(G) The various courts which have established a seminar may make reciprocal agreements which would allow a party to attend an approved out-of-county seminar as a substitute for attending the seminar held in the county in which the action is pending.

Credits

Rule 24.8 adopted effective May 26, 1994.

Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.8, GA R UNIF SUPER CT Rule 24.8

Current with amendments received through April 1, 2023. Some rules may be more current, see credits for details.

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