

AMICUS COMMITTEE CHAIR OF FAMILY LAW SECTION

Responsibilities

The Amicus Committee submits briefs to address important points of law, practice or issues in family law. Usually a case is flagged as important when filed by the Court of Appeals or as ongoing at the district court.

The Family Law Amicus Committee has been invited to submit amicus briefs by the Minnesota Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and district court judges. More commonly, the committee sees cases or receives telephone calls from attorneys who are involved in or outraged by the decision.

The submission of an amicus brief must be approved by the Section membership or, as frequently occurs because of operative time constraints, by the Executive Committee of the Section. The Chairs of the Amicus Committee must review cases for purposes of a recommendation for participation by the Section. For an informed recommendation, this usually entails obtaining the memoranda of law or briefs, underlying orders and miscellaneous pleadings.

Very tight appellate deadlines must be met, not only with respect to the petition for amicus status, but also with respect to the submission of the amicus brief. The members on the Amicus Committee must be corralled, with fairly intensive meetings for review of legal research, formulation of the position of the Section and drafting of the amicus brief. These meetings can be the most educational and analytical expositions of legal issues for family lawyers.