



Kentucky Court of Justice  
**RECOVERY-ORIENTED  
SYSTEM OF CARE**  
Summit Series



***Northern Kentucky  
University***  
***June 26, 2024***





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# A Message from the Chief Justice



## Welcome to the ROSC Summit 2024!

Distinguished Guests:

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to each of you as we kick off the Recovery-Oriented System of Care Summit proudly presented by the Kentucky Court of Justice. This year, seven summits will be held across the Commonwealth, one in each appellate court district.

Today, we gather not as individuals, but as a unified group dedicated to building a system that not only addresses the complexities of substance use disorders and mental health concerns, but also nurtures hope and facilitates recovery. We understand the pursuit of justice extends beyond our courtrooms and into the fabric of our communities.

Throughout my tenure in the Kentucky Court System, I have witnessed the transformative power of a recovery-oriented approach. This approach, grounded in the principles of empowerment, resilience, and community support, holds the promise of renewal and restoration for individuals, families, and communities. In an environment cultivated to foster collaboration and innovation, our hope is to ensure that each of you feel welcome and invigorated through the duration of this summit. As you immerse yourself in these dynamic and engaging sessions, let us engage in meaningful dialogue, share best practices, forge new connections, and chart a course toward a more compassionate and effective system of care. Let us break down barriers, challenge stigma, and stand together in our commitment toward the journey of recovery, building a brighter future for those traveling this path.

Thank you for being here today and thank you for your contributions towards a recovery-oriented system of care.



**Laurance B. VanMeter**

Chief Justice of the Commonwealth  
Supreme Court of Kentucky

# ROSC Vision Statement

Kentucky Court of Justice (KCOJ) is committed to improving responses to justice-involved Kentuckians and their families, focusing on individuals with substance use disorder, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities. The KCOJ strives for equitable pathways to recovery that divert justice-involved individuals into necessary treatments and out of the court system. This is achieved through intentional collaborations involving a multidisciplinary system of the KCOJ, behavioral health systems, and local communities.

## **12 Guiding Principles**

1. There are many pathways to recovery.
2. Recovery is self-directed and empowering.
3. Recovery involves a personal recognition of the need for change and transformation.
4. Recovery is holistic.
5. Recovery has cultural dimensions.
6. Recovery exists on a continuum of improved health and wellness.
7. Recovery emerges from hope and gratitude.
8. Recovery involves a process of healing and self-redefinition.
9. Recovery involves addressing discrimination and transcending shame and stigma.
10. Recovery is supported by peers and allies.
11. Recovery involves (re)joining and (re)building a life in the community.
12. Recovery is a reality

## **17 Essential Elements**

1. Person-centered
2. Inclusive of family and other ally involvement
3. Individualized and comprehensive services across the lifespan
4. Systems anchored in the community
5. Continuity of care
6. Partnership-consultant relationships
7. Strength-based
8. Culturally responsive
9. Responsiveness to personal belief systems
10. Commitment to peer recovery support services
11. Inclusion of the voices and experiences of recovering individuals and their families
12. Integrated services
13. System-wide education and training
14. Ongoing monitoring and outreach
15. Outcomes driven
16. Research-based
17. Adequately and flexibly financed

# ***Agenda-at-a-Glance***

- 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.** Registration
- 9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.** Welcoming Remarks
- 9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.** Session 1: Cognitive Impairment and the Courts, Rebuilding Bridges-Empowering Communication and Acquired Brain Injury
- 10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.** Break
- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** Session 2: The Positive Power of a Trauma-informed, Person-Centered Approach in Court Settings
- 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.** Networking Luncheon
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.** Session 3: Expanding the Conversation: Bridging the Relationship Between a Person-Centered Approach and Harm Reduction
- 2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.** Break
- 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.** Session 4: Optimizing Connection: A Unified Approach
- 3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.** Session 5: Perspectives from the Field (Hosted by Volunteers of America Mid-States)
- 4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.** Closing Remarks

# Agenda

**8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

**Registration**

**9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks Introduction: Judge Patricia Summe, Chief Circuit Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit, Division 4**

**Speaker:** Justice Michelle Keller, Supreme Court of Kentucky, 6th District

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Kentucky courts play an integral role in upholding public safety while providing equitable pathways to recovery for individuals with substance use and other behavioral health challenges. This forum will highlight the judiciary's impact on improving the quality of life for court-involved persons and their families by employing community collaborations, harm reduction, and "no wrong door" methods while reducing recidivism.

**9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

**Cognitive Impairment and the Courts: Rebuilding Bridges- Empowering Communication and Acquired Brain Injury**

**Speakers:** Dr. Christen Guffey Page, Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders

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Mary Beth Allen, Telehealth Support Services Director, University of Kentucky Communication Sciences and Disorders Center for Telehealth Education, Research and Outreach

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Brain injury symptoms can present in various ways and create increased difficulties in navigating the criminal justice system. This session will build participants' understanding of brain injuries while highlighting the associated impact of judicial interaction.

**10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Break**

## **11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **The Positive Power of a Trauma-informed, Person-Centered Approach in Court Settings**

**Introduction:** Meghan Johnson, Program Project Coordinator, Department of Family and Juvenile Services

**Speaker:** Miriam Silman, Executive Advisor, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

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This session will present engagement strategies that utilize trauma-informed, healing centered and person-centered approaches to utilize across the court system when interacting with individuals and families in experiencing behavioral health challenges or with carrying developmental and intellectual abilities.

## **12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

### **Networking Luncheon: Passport to Connection**

**Facilitator:** Jason Dufeck, Manager, Department of Pretrial Services

ROSC cultivates cross-system collaboration breaking organizational silos to stimulate communication, enhance resource capacity, and improve accessibility to treatment services. Use this opportunity to connect with other professionals in attendance.

*\* Provided by the ROSC Grant; Award #15PBJA-21-GG-04131-DGCT*

## **1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

### **Expanding the Conversation: Bridging the Relationship Between a Person-Centered Approach and Harm Reduction.**

**Introduction:** Bridgett Baker, Care Navigator, Department of Pretrial Services, Senate Bill 90

**Speaker:** Chris Smith, Overdose Prevention Program Manager, Kentucky Dept. for Public Health and Department by Vital Strategies

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Harm reduction is a practical and transformative approach that incorporates community-driven public health strategies such as prevention, risk reduction, and health promotion to empower individuals to live healthy, self-directed, and purpose-filled lives. This session will establish harm reduction modalities across the lifespan and analyze how increased access to these strategies reinforces a recovery-oriented care system.

**2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

**Break**

**2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

### **Optimizing Connection: A Unified Approach**

**Introduction:** Beverly Woosley, Statewide Services Liaison, Department of Specialty Courts

**Speakers:** Shawna Mitchell, Administrator, Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health

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Jennifer VanOrt-Hazzard, Behavioral Health Liaison, Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health

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This session will analyze the concepts and resources necessary to help build and promote the continuing development of a Recovery-Oriented System of Care.

**3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.**

### **Perspectives from the Field**

**Presented by Volunteers of America Mid-States**

**Moderator:** Dallas Hurley, Volunteers of America Mid-States

**Speakers:** Alicia Webb Edgington, President, Life Learning Center

Amy Martin, Assistant Director, Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy

James “Jim” Daley, Jailer, Campbell County Jail

James Sherry, Chief Executive Office, Holly Hill Child & Family Solutions

Shellie Blackburn, RN, CPSS, St. Elizabeth Healthcare

This panel will highlight the importance of people with lived experience, judiciary, and other community stakeholder application of system mapping to fill critical gaps in accessibility to support services.

**4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Evaluations and Closing Remarks**



# Kentucky Supreme Court Justices Biographies

## Chief Justice Laurance B. VanMeter



Laurance B. VanMeter was elected to the Kentucky Supreme Court in November 2016 from the 5th Appellate District, then comprising Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Fayette, Franklin, Jessamine, Madison, Mercer, Scott, and Woodford Counties. Upon taking office on January 2, 2017, he became just the third Justice to have served at all four levels of Kentucky unified court system. His fellow justices elected him as Chief Justice of the Commonwealth for a four-year term that started

in January 2023. Prior to being elected to the Supreme Court, Chief Justice VanMeter served thirteen years as a Judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, having been elected in November 2003, and being re-elected unopposed in 2006 and 2014. Chief Justice VanMeter currently serves as chairman of the Supreme Court's Civil Rules Committee and Supreme Court Rules Committee and is the Supreme Court's liaison to the Kentucky Office of Bar Admissions. He formerly served as chair of the Kentucky Evidence Rules Review Commission, as the Supreme Court's liaison to the Continuing Legal Education Committee, and on the Board of Trustees of the Kentucky Judicial Form Retirement Systems from 2009 to 2018, serving as chairman of that Board for two terms (2012-16, and 2017-18), with an intervening term as chairman of the Judicial Retirement Fund Investment Committee (2016-17). Chief Justice VanMeter served the Court of Appeals as acting Chief Judge during 2010, as Chief Judge Pro Tempore from 2007 to 2010, as its representative on the Ethics Committee of the Kentucky Judiciary from 2004 to 2012, and as its alternate member

on the Kentucky Judicial Conduct Commission from 2012 to 2016. In addition, Chief Justice VanMeter has served on the Probate and Trust Legislative Committee of the Kentucky Bar Association, the Family Court Rules and the Civil Rules Committees of the Kentucky Supreme Court, the Chief Justice's Fayette County Family Court Task Force, and is a frequent speaker for continuing legal education. Chief Justice VanMeter was born in 1958 in Lexington and was raised in Winchester. He received his undergraduate degree with a major in history in 1980 from Vanderbilt University, and his J.D. in 1983 from the University of Kentucky College of Law, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif and the Kentucky Law Journal. More recently, he earned an LL.M. degree, May 2020, from Duke University School of Law and, in July 2020, was elected to The American Law Institute.

Chief Justice VanMeter practiced law with the Lexington firm of Stoll, Keenon & Park from 1983 to 1994, where his practice areas included equine law, business planning and organizations, real estate, taxation, estate planning, trusts and probate. He has been

admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States and is a member of the Kentucky and Fayette County Bar Associations. From 1994 to 1999, he served as a judge of the Fayette District Court, 22nd District, Division 1. Chief Justice VanMeter was appointed and then elected to the Fayette Circuit Court bench in 1999 on which he served until his election to the Court of Appeals. Chief Justice VanMeter has been actively involved in a number of community organizations, including Little League Baseball, Lexington Youth Soccer, Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America, Parents' Place, the University of Kentucky Libraries National Advisory Board, and has served on the vestry of Christ Church Cathedral, on the Vanderbilt University Alumni Board of Directors, and on the Sayre School Board of Trustees. He is a Fellow of the University of Kentucky, a Life Fellow of the Kentucky Bar Foundation, and a Founding Fellow of the Fayette County Bar Foundation. He is a member of Christ Church Cathedral. Chief Justice VanMeter is married to Fayette Circuit Judge, Lucy A. VanMeter. His late wife, Lucy Bryans VanMeter, and he are the parents of four children.

## Deputy Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert



Debra Hembree Lambert was elected to the Supreme Court of Kentucky in November 2018. She serves the 3rd Supreme Court District, which is composed of 25 counties. Justice Lambert came to the Supreme Court after four years on the Kentucky Court of Appeals. Prior to taking the appellate bench, Justice Lambert was a Circuit Judge/ Family Court Division for the 28th Judicial Circuit, composed of Lincoln, Pulaski and Rockcastle counties. She was appointed to that seat in 1999 by then-Governor Paul E. Patton. While a Family Court judge, she created the first Drug Court in the area. She was recognized for her efforts in 2002 when the National Association of Drug Court Professionals inducted her into the Stanley M. Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame. For several years, she volunteered in area

middle schools, working 10 weeks each semester with at-risk children and families in an effort to help them avoid truancy charges. Justice Lambert currently volunteers as a certified suicide prevention trainer, training others how to properly intervene to prevent suicide. Chief Justice John D. Minton appointed Justice Lambert as Chair of the newly created Kentucky Judicial Mental Health Commission in 2022. In that role she will lead a large group of key stakeholders in a statewide effort to improve how judicial processes affect cases where parties have mental health, substance use or intellectual disabilities. A native of Bell County, Ky, Justice Lambert earned a bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University, where she graduated with distinction. She went on to graduate from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1989. Justice Lambert practiced law in Mount Vernon, Ky, serving as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney and City Attorney for the city of Mount Vernon. In 2007, Justice Lambert resumed her private practice of law in Mount Vernon until her election to the Court of Appeals in 2014. Justice Lambert and her husband, Joseph Sharpe, reside on Lake Cumberland in Burnside in Pulaski County. She is the mother of two sons, Joseph Patrick Lambert and John Ryan Lambert, and two stepdaughters, Jessica Sharpe Guffey and Chelsea Sharpe Woolums. She is also the Nonna of Sam Stringer, Collin Guffey, George Guffey and Fletcher Sharpe Woolums.

## Justice Christopher Shea Nickell



Justice Christopher Shea Nickell was elected to the Supreme Court of Kentucky in November 2019. He serves the First Supreme Court District, which is composed of the twenty-four westernmost Kentucky counties. Justice Nickell previously served 13 years as a Judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, having been elected in November 2006, and being unopposed for re-election in November 2014. During his tenure on the Court of Appeals, Justice Nickell served as Chief Judge Pro Tempore, Chair of the Personnel Committee, and a member of the Judicial Compensation Commission. Prior to becoming an appellate judge, Justice Nickell practiced law 22 years. Licensed to practice law before all Kentucky state and federal trial and appellate courts

and the United States Supreme Court, he served as a Kentucky trial attorney, an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney (21st Judicial Circuit), an Assistant McCracken County Attorney, and a Public Advocate. He also served as an instructor at Murray State University (Insurance and Risk Management) and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Jurisprudence). In 1995, the Kentucky Bar Association named him the “Outstanding Kentucky Young Attorney.”

A native of McCracken County, Justice Nickell graduated from Paducah Tilghman High School in 1977. He earned a bachelor’s degree from DePauw University in 1981, with a double major in communications and political science. At DePauw, he served as Student Body President, Editor of a campus newspaper, and was awarded “The Walker Cup,” presented annually by the faculty to the graduating senior who has contributed most to the campus community. He subsequently served on the University’s Board of Trustees. In 1984, he earned his juris doctor degree from the University of Kentucky College of Law, where fellow law students elected him President of the Student Bar Association. Justice Nickell currently serves as an International Director for Lions Clubs International, the world’s largest humanitarian service club with 1.35 million

members in more than 45,000 clubs. In 2011, he served on the Rules Committee of the 94th International Convention in Seattle, Washington; in 2013, he served on the Nominating Committee of the 96th International Convention in Hamburg, Germany; and in 2017, he served as Co-Parliamentarian and Chair of the District Governor's Banquet of the 100th International Convention in Chicago, Illinois. He has also served as President of the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation, Council Chair for Multiple District 43 (Lions of Kentucky), District Governor for District 43K (western Kentucky), and President of the Paducah Lions Club. He is a Melvin Jones Fellow, a Finis E. Davis Fellow, and was named to the Kentucky Lions Hall of Fame in 2015. Justice Nickell has also been involved in numerous other civic organizations. An Eagle Scout, he formerly served on the board of the Shawnee Trails Boy Scout Council. A lecturer on regional history, he has served on the board of Paducah's Market House Museum and is a member of the

Sons of the American Revolution. Active in various environmental and sporting organizations, he is a Life Sponsor of Ducks Unlimited. He is also a 32 Degree Mason, a Silver Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a Life Fellow of the Kentucky Bar Foundation, a Gideon, and a deacon at Paducah's Heartland Church. A popular soloist, song leader, and speaker at numerous civic, religious, and sporting events, he previously served as Music Director at Paducah's Concord United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church.

Justice Nickell is married to Dr. Carolyn Sue Watson, a Paducah pathologist, former Vice Chair of the Kentucky Medical Association Board of Trustees, and Music Director at Paducah's Highland Baptist Church. His first wife, Lana Jean King Nickell, an educator, died in 2001. He is the son of the late Carl Duane "Red" Nickell and Anna June Starrett Nickell, both former educators.

## Justice Kelly Thompson



Kelly Thompson was elected to the Supreme Court in November 2022 from the 2nd Supreme Court District, which is composed of Western Kentucky counties. He served as a Kentucky Court of Appeals judge from January 2007 until his election to the Supreme Court. Judge Thompson was chief trial counsel for the Kentucky Department of Highways in Hardin County from 1972 to 1973 and served as law clerk for the Kentucky Court of Appeals from 1973 to 1974. He then practiced law in Bowling Green from 1974 until his election to the Court of Appeals. He was the chief public advocate for the 8th Judicial District from 1976 to 1999 and he twice served on the board of directors for the Bowling Green-Warren County Bar Association.

Judge Thompson graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1968 with a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate. He earned his juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1972. Judge Thompson has been admitted to practice before the U.S. Board of Claims and the U.S. Supreme Court. He has successful appellate experience in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court of Kentucky and the Kentucky Court of Appeals. He is a recipient of the Kentucky Bar Association's Donated Legal Services Recognition Award. He has been certified as a civil trial specialist by the National Board of Trial Advocacy, which is accredited by the American Bar Association to certify lawyers in civil, criminal and family law trial advocacy. Judge Thompson has also served as a board member of numerous civic organizations in Warren County.

## ***Justice Angela McCormick Bisig***



Angela McCormick Bisig was elected to the Kentucky Supreme Court in November 2022. She serves the Fourth Supreme Court District which is Jefferson County. Justice Bisig has been a member of the Kentucky Judiciary for 20 years. She has served in both district and circuit courts and as chief judge of both terms. She is also one of two founding circuit judges in the Commonwealth who presided over cases on a newly formed business court. Justice Bisig worked as a juvenile court judge for many years. She was a founding member of a restorative justice program which currently serves to rehabilitate juveniles and bring healing to crime victims. She helped to establish a special program called the enhanced

supervision docket providing court supervision of domestic violence offenders. She also founded Jefferson County's only language and cultural immersion training for court system partners. Prior to her service on the bench Justice Bisig served as an attorney for 13 years. She worked for 7 years as a prosecutor in the area of domestic violence and sexual assaults. She also practiced civil law in the firms of Brown, Todd & Heyburn and Greenebaum Doll & McDonald. Justice Bisig is very involved in the community and is on the Board of Directors of the Volunteers of America. She served for many years on the Board of Directors of the World Affairs Council and regularly hosts international delegations in her home. She also has served on the Boards of the Dare to Care food bank, the Center for Women, the Red Cross, Sister Cities of Louisville and on the Board of Trustees of the University of Louisville. Justice Bisig was voted the "Judge of the Year" by the Louisville Bar Association in 2013 and 2020. She was named "Trial Judge of the Year" in 2021 by the American Board of Trial Advocates. She was named the Kentucky Justice Association "Judge of the Year" in 2016. She has also been named a Muhammad Ali Daughter of Greatness. She is married to Arnold Rivera and has 3 adult children and 2 stepchildren.

## Justice Michelle M. Keller



Justice Michelle M. Keller was appointed to the Kentucky Supreme Court in April 2013. She was subsequently elected in both 2014 and 2022 for two full terms on the Court. Prior to her service on the Supreme Court, Justice Keller was elected as Judge on the Kentucky Court of Appeals in November 2006. Justice Keller has served as the Court of Appeals representative on the Judicial Conduct Commission and Chairperson of the Court of Justice's Technology Governance Committee and is currently serving as Chairperson of the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission and Criminal Rules Committee. Prior to her service on the bench, Justice Keller practiced law for 17 years. She served as an Assistant County Attorney for her home

county of Kenton. Her private practice concentrated in the areas of medical negligence and product liability defense, personal injury, family law, and criminal defense. Justice Keller also practiced administrative law, representing numerous clients before state regulatory and licensure boards. She is Chairwoman Emeritus of the Kentucky Personnel Board and has served as a hearing officer and member of that Board. Justice Keller is licensed to practice law in Kentucky, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and the United States Supreme Court. She is a member of the Honorary Order of Kentucky Colonels and has twice been commended by the Kentucky House of Representatives for her service to the Commonwealth. Justice Keller attended Northern Kentucky University's Chase College of Law while working as a licensed registered nurse in critical care. At Chase, Justice Keller was an IOLTA Scholar, earning her Juris Doctor in 1990. Chase presented Justice Keller with both the Chase Excellence and Chase Exceptional Service Awards in 2007 and 2011 respectively. Additionally, Justice Keller was named a 2012 Outstanding Woman of Northern Kentucky honoree for her commitment to public service and community involvement. She was honored on Law Day in 2013 with the Richard D. Lawrence Lifetime Achievement Award presented



by the Northern Kentucky Bar Association (“NKBA”). Justice Keller was honored in 2014 with the Liberty Bell Award for her service to the Court of Justice, and in 2016 she was inducted into the Lloyd Memorial High School (her alma mater) Alumni Hall of Fame. In December 2017, Justice Keller was the first woman presented with the Distinguished Lawyer of the Year Award by the NKBA. Recently, the Kentucky Bar Association (“KBA”) honored Justice Keller with the 2020 Distinguished Judge Award. Justice Keller has served in various positions for the NKBA, KBA, and the American Bar Association.

In 2009, she received the KBA’s Donated Legal Services Award for her commitment to Pro Bono service and support of Kentucky’s legal services organizations. She is a Master in the Salmon P. Chase Inn of Court and served as President of the Inn from 2012-13. Justice Keller is also a Fellow of both the American and Kentucky Bar Foundations. A lifelong Northern Kentuckian, Justice Keller and her husband, Jim, a physician, are the proud parents of two adult daughters. One serves as a public health practitioner and the other is a practicing attorney.

## Justice Robert B. Conley



Justice Robert B. Conley was elected in November 2020 to serve the 7th Supreme Court District, which comprises 32 Eastern Kentucky counties. Justice Conley joined the state's highest court after 26 years as a trial court judge for Greenup and Lewis counties. In 1994, Justice Conley was appointed by Governor Brereton Jones to fill a vacancy in the 20th Judicial District Court and then was elected to that seat for three successive terms. In 2006, he was elected to the 20th Judicial Circuit Bench, where he served until his election to the Supreme Court. While a circuit judge, he also presided over the Greenup/Lewis Drug Court, which was recognized by the National Drug Court Institute in 2010 as a

mentor court to help train Drug Court personnel from all over the Eastern United States. Prior to taking the bench, he worked in Ashland, KY as an associate in the law firm of McKenzie, Woolery & Emrick PSC, a corporate attorney with Addington Mining/Addington Environmental Inc. and as attorney for the Greenup County School Board. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics and business from the University of Kentucky in 1981 and a juris doctor from Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University in 1984. He worked his way through UK and his first year of law school as a steelworker for ARMCO Steel Inc.

Justice Conley is married to Melanie Simpson-Conley of Lexington, KY. Simpson has a daughter, the late Alexandra H. Simpson. He was married to the late Melanie Stephens Conley for 28 years and they have two children, Katlyn Ann Conley and Robert B. Conley II. He has been active in his community as a coach for youth baseball, football, softball and soccer teams. He has also been involved in Bridges Christian Church in Russell, KY as a Sunday school teacher, adult Bible study leader, deacon and elder.

# Speakers Biographies

## *Christen Guffey Page, PhD, CCC-SLP*



Christen Guffey Page, PhD, CCC-SLP, is an Assistant Professor within the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Page's research and publications encompass interprofessional education, Scholarship of Teaching and

Learning, and life participation for individuals with brain injury. She is a licensed speech-language pathologist of 18 years with expertise in addressing the communication needs of individuals who experienced an acquired brain injury.

At the University of Kentucky, Dr. Page coordinates the UK Aphasia Lab which pioneers groundbreaking therapies that not only restore communication abilities but also foster holistic life participation for individuals with

aphasia. Dr. Page is a vocal advocate for communication access within the broader community, particularly for individuals navigating the challenges of brain injury. She recognizes the potential of collaborative approaches in addressing complex healthcare challenges and remains steadfast in her mission to illuminate the path toward greater understanding, compassion, and empowerment for adults with cognitive-communication disorders.

## **Mary Beth Allen, MS, CCC-SLP**

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Mary Beth Allen, MS, CCC-SLP, is a Telehealth Support Services Director and

Speech-Language Pathologist with over 17 years of experience at the University of Kentucky. Ms. Allen was a member of the Stroke Performance Improvement Team for the University of Kentucky Comprehensive Stroke Center and served on Advancing Best Care practices committees with the Neurology and Neurosurgery

service lines.

Ms. Allen's dedication extends to quality assurance, academic instruction, and a focus on telehealth advancements in the field. She has a strong foundation in communication sciences and disorders and an expertise that spans direct patient care in the adult population.

## Miriam Silman, MSW



Miriam Silman, Executive Advisor at the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, works to create a trauma-informed, healing-centered, resilience-oriented system of service delivery and workforce support

across the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Commonwealth. This work supports public and private agencies, providers and organizations within state government and across the state to become more trauma-informed and resilience-focused.

She has worked as a clinician, researcher and trainer focusing on trauma and resilience across various populations, professionals, and service sectors for more than 30 years including at Mountain Comprehensive Care Center, the University of Kentucky

Department of Psychiatry, and the University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children, and consulting to national and international organizations. Miriam lived and worked in eastern Kentucky for 29 years where she also developed, implemented and evaluated a number of behavioral health, public health, and arts programs across the region. Miriam has a BA from Brown University, an MSW from the University of Kentucky, and completed her doctoral coursework in Social Work at the University of Kentucky.

## **Chris Smith, Overdose Prevention Program Manager**

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Chris Smith is the Overdose Prevention Program Manager at the Kentucky Department for Public Health,

seconded to the Department by Vital Strategies. Working as an Emergency Medical Technician and a Registered Nurse in rural and urban Kentucky, he saw first-hand the limits of stigmatized approaches to the harms associated with substance use. This led to his career transition to public health and harm reduction. Working closely with people

who use drugs in a Syringe Service Program, he learned to center lived experience in health promotion and to advocate for evidence-based interventions based on Harm Reduction principles. Chris is proud to be working on the KDPH Harm Reduction Team, sharing these strategies across the Commonwealth.

## **Shawna Mitchell, MS, LCADC**



Shawna Mitchell, MS, LCADC, is the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health Administrator. Beginning her career with the Administrative Office of the Courts in 2004, Shawna has held positions in Drug Courts, Family and Juvenile Services, and the Office of Statewide Services. Throughout her

tenure, Shawna has worked on initiatives including the Court Improvement Program, Title IV-E, Responsive Education to Support Treatment in Recovery Efforts, Family Law Drug Testing, Judicial Symposium on Addiction and Child Welfare, Legal Training for Dependency, Neglect and Abuse Cases, Domestic Violence Initiatives, Open Courts Project, SB 200 Implementation, Screening and Assessment Protocols, Family and Juvenile Technical Assistance Network, Implementation Science, and many other programs that

support the work of AOC.

Shawna has been commissioned as a Kentucky Colonel and received a citation from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, House of Representatives for her work in community substance abuse prevention. Shawna received recognition for her contributions to Kentucky's Law Related Education with a Law Day Award and was recognized for her professionalism, teamwork, and leadership with an Outstanding Service Award by the Department of Family and Juvenile Services.

## Jennifer Van-Ort Hazzard

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Jennifer Van Ort-Hazzard has served as Behavioral Health Liaison for the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health since May 2023. She promotes the lived experience

voice, individualized recovery, and collaboration. From a young age, Jennifer wanted to help others and promote justice.

Jennifer graduated Magna Cum Laude and with Honors from Colorado State University in 2005 with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Sociology (concentration in Criminal Justice).

After a few years as a sheriff's deputy inside a county jail, Jennifer returned to working

with children/adults with special needs. In 2012, a move to Kentucky and the loss of her brother to suicide prompted new opportunities, to include case management on multiple pilot teams addressing gaps in services for high acuity individuals in residential and community settings. Merging passions, Jennifer joined the NAMI Lexington team as the Fayette Mental Health Court coordinator in 2015.



# ***Perspectives From the Field***

*Presented by*



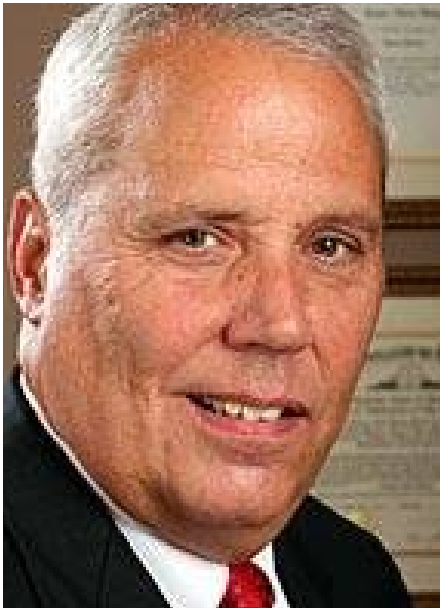
Volunteers of America was founded in 1896 by social reformers Ballington and Maud Booth, who envisioned a movement dedicated to “reaching and uplifting” people in need. The Booths pledged to “go wherever we are needed and do whatever comes to hand.” When the organization was founded, the common understanding of “volunteer” was someone who dedicated their life to helping others. Operations in Kentucky started concurrently in 1896 by providing food and medicine to Kentuckians who were not supported by other charitable organizations at the time. These early efforts established a proud tradition of service resulting in over 125 years of providing continuous support to some of Kentucky’s most vulnerable residents. Today, Volunteers of America Mid-States has grown into one of the most diverse regional human service agencies operating an array of programs across Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and Clark and Floyd Counties in Indiana. VOA serves individuals and families overcoming substance use disorder and homelessness, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, veterans in need of housing and many other individuals and families in need through evidence-based interventions and programs designed to heal past trauma, strengthen individual protective factors, and allow every client to reach their full potential.



**Alecia Webb-Edgington**  
President/CEO  
Life Learning Center



**Shellie Hall**  
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## **Kentucky Court of Justice**

**Division of Family & Juvenile Services**

**Division of Pretrial Services**

**Division of Specialty Courts**

**Kentucky Commission on Mental Health**