

Subject: Spectrum Institute Launches Monthly E-Newsletter



Spectrum E-News Recap for December 2020

For information about our activities throughout the year, read our [2020 Annual Report](#).



Thomas F. Coleman

Spectrum Institute is pleased to announce the publication of a monthly newsletter to recap the educational and advocacy activities of the organization during the month. It will also include news summaries of significant events during the past 30 days pertaining to conservatorship and guardianship reform as well as advancements in promoting the right of people with developmental disabilities to prompt and effective mental health care.

To submit a news item for inclusion in the newsletter, please contact us at the email address below.

Thank you.

Thomas F. Coleman
Executive Director



12-30 * Outreach to California Supreme Court on Disability Terminology

Spectrum Institute sent a letter today to the California Supreme Court. It asks the justices to direct Lawrence W. Striley (photo) to include a section on disability terminology in the California Style Manual when the 5th Edition is published in the near future. Striley is the reporter of decisions and was hired as such by the Supreme Court a few years ago. The Daily Journal [commentary](#) on disability terminology was sent to the Court along with the letter. To read the letter, [click here](#).



12-29 * Op-Ed Article Calls on Supreme Court to Set New Tone on Disability Terminology

The Daily Journal published a commentary today written by Thomas F. Coleman, legal director of Spectrum Institute, focusing on bad linguistic habits of the judiciary in writing opinions. The commentary asks the Supreme Court to direct the reporter of decisions to include a new section in the California Style Manual on disability terminology. To read the commentary, [click here](#).



12-29 * Team is Assembled to Review How Courts Award Conservatorship Attorney Fees

Spectrum Institute has convened a workgroup to examine the policies and practices being used in probate conservatorship proceedings to award attorney fees in California's probate courts. The team includes Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, a public official who has been studying the conservatorship system in that jurisdiction for three years. More info, [click here](#).



12-28 * Reaching Out to California State Treasurer Fiona Ma

Spectrum Institute has sent a request to Fiona Ma, Treasurer of the State of California, asking her to include a segment on excessive attorney fees in a Town Hall forum she is sponsoring on February 2, 2021. More info, [click here](#). Update: A message was sent on 12-30 expressing disappointment that the focus of the Town Hall has been changed from its original intent. It was supposed to be an opportunity for victims and families to expose abuses within the probate conservatorship system. Now the treasurer's office and Assembly committee staff have said they don't want any testimony involving courts or attorneys in conservatorship cases. The grass roots advocates want a new and separate hearing on the dysfunctional conservatorship system, the need for judicial accountability, and methods to regulate excessive attorney fees. Whether the treasurer will sponsor such a forum remains to be seen.



12-23 * Podcast Internships Were Posted Today at Washington State University

The Freedom Files -- [a Pursuit of Justice Podcast](#) -- is seeking interns to help with the production and promotion of a new podcast that will be launched in 2021. Two internship announcements were posted today for students at the Edward R. Murrow College of Communications at Washington State University. We are grateful for the assistance of Angela Schweigert (photo) for helping us design these internships so they would meet our needs and also satisfy the requirements of the college. Angela is the college's For information on the Production/Journalism Internship, [click here](#). For information on the Strategic Communications Internship, [click here](#).



Spectrum Institute received a check for \$400 in the mail this month from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Enclosed was a note that says "Keep up the good work." Please consider making a donation to support our advocacy efforts promoting justice and equal rights for seniors and people with disabilities. Although our work is done on a volunteer basis, we need donations to pay for operating expenses. To donate by check or securely by credit card, [click here](#).

In Memory of .

- * David Rector
 - * Michael Parisio
- . . . people whose experiences propelled us into action and whose memories inspire us to this day.

Mental Health Project

For information about our advocacy for the right of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have equal access to prompt and effective mental health therapies, [click here](#).

Guardianship Project

For information about our advocacy for conservatorship reform in California and guardianship reform elsewhere, [click here](#)



12-21 * California Court of Appeal Publishes Opinion and Removes Antiquated Terminology

The California Court of Appeal has responded to two letters from Spectrum Institute. The [first letter](#) asked the court to publish an important decision regarding the rights of an conservatee not to be forced to have unwanted visits with a parent. The [second letter](#) asked the court to remove offensive terminology from the caption of the case. The court granted both requests. For a copy of the order, [click here](#). For a copy of the opinion, [click here](#). The author of the opinion, Justice Marsha P. Slough. (Photo)



12-18 * Op-Ed: Ending Disability Stigmas in Judicial Opinions

The Daily Journal published a commentary today written by Thomas F. Coleman, legal director of Spectrum Institute. It calls out a recent appellate opinion in California that unnecessarily and inappropriately used a derogatory term to label a woman with cerebral palsy. To read the commentary on the newspaper's website, [click here](#).



12-13 * Tina Baldwin Appointed to Abuse Workgroup of the Idaho Living Well Project

With a federal grant from the Administration of Community Living, the Idaho Living Well Project has formed a Quality Assurance Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Monitoring Workgroup with key stakeholders across the state. The goal of the workgroup is to protect individuals with disabilities from, and ultimately prevent, abuse, neglect, and exploitation by creating a self-advocate informed, integrated, community-based reporting and monitoring as a component of a

larger quality assurance system. Tina Baldwin, chairperson of the board of trustees of Spectrum Institute, has been appointed to serve as a member of the workgroup.



12-7 Request to the California Supreme Court to "Depublish" an Appellate Opinion

Spectrum Institute sent a letter today to the California Supreme Court asking the court to delete an appellate opinion from the law books. The Court of Appeal went out of its way to publish an opinion that unfortunately, perhaps inadvertently, undermines the constitutional and statutory requirement that a conservatorship not be imposed on an adult unless less restrictive alternatives have been considered and are found to be unworkable. This

opinion dismisses this important safeguard in way that sends the wrong signal to judges and attorneys in California. To read our letter, [click here](#).



OTHER NEWS . . .

- Spectrum Institute now has a Facebook page. To visit the page, [click here](#).
- An excellent article about the right to counsel in guardianship restoration of rights proceedings was published yesterday in the *Voice of Experience* – a monthly e-newsletter of the American Bar Association. To read the article, [click here](#).
- Retired Superior Court Judge James P. Gray ha written to the presiding judges of superior courts in all 58 counties in California to remind them of judicial duties to protect seniors and people with disabilities who become involved in conservatorship proceedings. For a copy of his letter, [click here](#).



[Click here](#)



The Spirit of Giving: Tina Baldwin is Volunteering and Networking for Disability Rights

As chairperson of the board of trustees of Spectrum Institute, Tina Baldwin communicates frequently with the executive director about administrative matters as well as activities pertaining to the organization's projects. As director of the newly-formed Mental Health Project, Tina is working to develop a national network of mental health professionals to provide ongoing advice and feedback to the project. Beyond her pro bono work with Spectrum Institute, Tina volunteers with a variety of other organizations and agencies. As a member of the ISAKI task force (Idaho Sexual Assault Kit Initiative), Tina is the sole representative to that agency promoting the interests of people with disabilities. Tina is also a member of the Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Monitoring Workgroup. This project is sponsored by a grant from the federal Administration on Community Living and is done in partnership with the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Idaho, and The Center on Disabilities and Human Development. She is also an advisor to People First of Washington.

Spectrum Institute

Visit Our Website

<https://spectruminstitute.org/>

Email Us

tomcoleman@spectruminstitute.org

Realtime News

To read news about our activities and projects in real time, go to our website's "what's new" page at:

<https://disabilityandguardianship.org/whats-new-guardianship.htm>