

HON. DIANE BRENNEMAN

Ms. Brenneman was born in Rockville Center, Long Island, New York and grew up in Southern California where her father, Frank E. Quass, a graduate of Rennselear Polytechnic Institute, was an aeronautical engineer and computer entrepreneur. Her mother, Margaret C. Quass, was a graduate of Hofstra University and a full-time mother.

Ms. Brenneman graduated from Santa Clara University in 1968 and entered the Peace Corps, serving two years as a teacher in India. On her return to the United States, she taught in schools in California before moving in 1973 to the Washington area, where she served as the Assistant Admissions Director of Dag Hammarskjold College in Columbia, Maryland and then as founding Director of the Polycultural Institute, a program - likened to a reverse Peace Corps - that involved students of different economic, cultural and national backgrounds working with community development organizations in Washington's inner city. Her experience in this program prompted her to enter law school. Ms. Brenneman graduated from Georgetown University Law Center in 1979 and became a clinical supervisor in the Family Law Clinic of the Antioch School of Law. She received a master's degree in clinical teaching from the Antioch School of Law in 1982 and at that time became a full professor of the school. In 1985, she became the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Her teaching experience continued at Antioch's successor institution, the District of Columbia Law School. While at the D.C. School of Law, Ms. Brenneman worked extensively with lead counsel, Joseph Tulman, and attorneys from the Department of Justice on the Forest Haven class action case. In 1986, she and Mark G. Levine, a former ASL colleague, established the general civil practice law firm of Brenneman and Levine. After her partner and his family moved to Chicago in 1995, Ms. Brenneman continued as a sole practitioner focusing primarily on family law, domestic relations law, and alternative dispute resolution. During the twenty-three year period in which she taught law, supervised legal clinics, and served as a private practitioner, Ms. Brenneman had a role in the training of more than 500 law students and has been directly involved in the provision of legal services to more than 2,500 low-income families of the District of Columbia.

For many years, Ms. Brenneman has been closely involved in the work of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, the Women's Bar Association, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, the Archdiocesan Legal Network, and the Superior Court.

As co-chair of the Family Law Representation Committee of the D.C. Bar's Pro Bono Program for over six years, she assisted the Court with updating pleadings, forms, and practice requirements to conform to the revisions in the law and provide access for persons in the Domestic Relations Branch of the Court. She is a member of the Superior Court's Family Rules Advisory Committee. As a trainer and mediator, she participated in a number of Family Court pilot activities, including the Child Protection Mediation Project and the Family Mediation Section of the Court's Multi-Door Mediation Division.

More than eight years ago, Ms. Brenneman was instrumental in the development of the Pro Se Divorce Clinic that continues to provide informational services to families and which serves as a prototype for new pro se oriented programs.

Ms. Brenneman has also been actively involved with the Legal Counsel for the Elderly as a reduced fee volunteer attorney. On behalf of the Women's Bar Association, she served with Elizabeth Langer as the co-producer and co-director for a twelve-part public-access cable television series aimed at providing basic information on family law to the general public. She was instrumental in coordinating the assistance of members of the Women's Bar in the Family Court's pilot Self-Help Center. In 2001, Ms. Brenneman was the recipient of the Archdiocesan Legal Network of Catholic Charities award for "Outstanding Legal Services in Family Law." In 2003, she co-authored with Linda Ravdin a comprehensive practice manual for attorneys on Domestic Relations Law in the District of Columbia that was published by Lexis Nexis/Matthew Bender.

In addition to her membership in the D.C. Bar and the Women's Bar Association, Ms. Brenneman is a member of the Bar Association of the District of Columbia, the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the District of Columbia Trial Lawyers' Association, the Washington Bar Association, the Maryland State Bar Association, the Montgomery County Bar Association, and the United States Supreme Court Bar.

She is married to Dr. Lyle Brenneman. Her daughter, Sara Chauhan, resides in Washington, D.C. Her stepdaughters are Kathryn Lyon and Elizabeth Clusman. She has six step grandchildren.