

WHO'S WATCHING THE HENHOUSE?

Five documented facts about Connecticut family court — in the participants' own words and public records

The Fair Court Project | June 2026 Every fact in this report carries a numbered source. Check them yourself — that is the point of this report.

The 60-second version

A small law firm in Old Greenwich — about eight lawyers — represents one side of Connecticut divorce cases. In its own marketing video, a firm partner names the firm's competitive advantage out loud:

*“Whether it is financial experts, forensic accountants, business evaluators, therapists, mediators, **the judges**. Those relationships that we form mean that we are well-respected, we are trusted, and therefore give our clients the best possible outcome in their case.” [1]*

That is not an accusation. That is an advertisement.

Meanwhile, the judge who wrote the operating rules for every family courtroom in Connecticut developed those rules through years of documented meetings with a bar committee whose officer seats have rotated through this same firm — including the lawyer who is, right now, the committee's sitting Secretary while she litigates cases under those rules. [2][3][4]

Connecticut's judicial ethics code does not wait for proof of bias. It says a judge must disclose, on the record, anything the people in the courtroom “might reasonably consider relevant” to fairness. [5]

None of this was ever disclosed to the families in those courtrooms.

You do not have to believe anyone broke a law. You only have to answer one question honestly: **if you were the parent on the other side, would you have wanted to know?**

The cast

- **The firm.** Schoonmaker, George, Blomberg, Bryniczka & Welsh, P.C. (“SGB”), Old Greenwich — a boutique family-law firm of roughly eight attorneys. [6]

- **The judge.** Hon. Leo V. Diana — since September 2023, the Chief Administrative Judge of Connecticut’s Family Division: the statewide administrator above every family-court judge, and the signer of the statewide “trial management order” that governs how every divorce case runs. [7] [8]
 - **The committee.** The Connecticut Bar Association’s Family Law Section — the official bar-side counterpart that the court system consulted, repeatedly and by its own written account, while those statewide rules were drafted. [2]
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Fact 1 — The firm advertises its relationships with “the judges”

The quote at the top of this report is from the firm’s own promotional video, publicly distributed under its own name, transcribed verbatim. [1] It lists the professionals a family-law firm works with — experts, accountants, therapists, mediators — and then adds “the judges,” and says those relationships “give our clients the best possible outcome in their case.”

Sit with that sentence. It is the firm’s own theory of why you should hire them. Nobody investigating this case wrote it. The firm did.

Fact 2 — The statewide rulebook was written in consultation with a committee this firm helps lead

On January 1, 2025, a new statewide “Trial Management Order” took effect in every Connecticut family court, signed by Judge Leo V. Diana, Chief Administrative Judge of the Family Division. [8] It controls scheduling, deadlines, what evidence gets exchanged when — and it carries teeth, including the power to exclude a parent’s evidence for noncompliance.

How was it written? We don’t have to guess. Judge Diana co-authored a 2025 article in a national legal journal describing the process: between 2021 and 2022, court leadership — including the Chief Administrative Judge of the Family Division — met “at least seven” times with the Connecticut Bar Association, its Family Law Section, the matrimonial lawyers’ academy, and Legal Aid. The bar’s input changed the actual rule text. [2]

Who sat atop that Family Law Section during those exact years? In 2021, SGB partner Aidan Welsh was its CLE Chair. In 2022–23, she was its Vice Chair. In 2023 — the year Judge Diana was elevated to run the Family Division statewide — she was its **Chair**. [3] All of this is listed proudly on the firm’s own website.

And today? The Section’s sitting **Secretary** is SGB partner Molly Miller — who climbed the same officer ladder (Treasurer 2024, Secretary 2025) and who is actively litigating family cases under the rules her section consulted on. [4]

One firm. Officer seats on the rule-consulting committee, essentially continuously, before, during, and after the rulebook was written.

Fact 3 — The footnote and the introduction

Two smaller facts, documented in black and white, that show how close the circle runs:

The footnote. Judge Diana’s own published 2025 article about the new rules rests its very first citation — footnote 1, the foundation of the piece — on a 2020 article by Samuel V. Schoonmaker IV: eleven years a partner at SGB’s predecessor firm, son of its founder, and a former Chair of that same Family Law Section. [9]

The introduction. On March 29, 2022, the Connecticut Bar ran a continuing-education program for lawyers titled “Jennifer’s Law: Its Impact on ROs, Divorces, and Family Law Cases.” The published agenda shows SGB partner Aidan Welsh delivering the opening introductions — and Judge Diana teaching the session called “What is a judge looking for during a TRO hearing and/or trial, practical tips for practitioners.” [10] Twelve months later, he was elevated to run the Family Division statewide. The lawyer who introduced him now appears in family courtrooms across the same district where she also serves as a court-appointed Special Master, and has served as a court-appointed guardian ad litem — a paid appointment — on cases the judge’s office administers. [3][11]

Fact 4 — Wherever lawyers and judges share a table, this firm has held the gavel

This is not one committee. From the firm’s own attorney bios and public bar records: [3][4][6][12]

Organization	SGB seat
CT Bar Association, Family Law Section	George: past Chair. Welsh: Chair 2023 (after Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chair). Miller: Secretary right now
CT Bar Association, Bench/Bar Committee	George: past Chair — the committee whose literal job is the judge-lawyer relationship
American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, CT Chapter (22 members)	George: past President. Blomberg: President 2018–19 (after Treasurer, Secretary, VP, President-Elect). Welsh: current chapter officer
Greenwich Bar Association	Bryniczka: President 2018 (after Secretary, Treasurer, VP, President-Elect)
Fairfield County Bar Association, Family Law Section	Bryniczka: Co-Chair 2006–2012. Miller: Co-Chair 2021–22. Blomberg: past Co-Chair
Stamford courthouse Special Masters program	Blomberg: Co-Chair 2008–2020 . Welsh: current Special Master
American Bar Association, Family Law Section	George: Treasurer 1998–99

Roughly eight lawyers. Officer ladders at five different bar organizations, the courthouse dispute-resolution program, and the bench-bar committee itself.

Fact 5 – Nobody told the families

Connecticut’s Code of Judicial Conduct, Rule 2.11(B)(2) and its commentary, places an affirmative duty on judges: disclose on the record information the parties “might reasonably consider relevant” to a possible disqualification motion — *even if the judge believes there is no real basis for disqualification*. [5]

In the case that prompted this investigation — a self-represented parent in Stamford facing SGB — the docket shows a scheduling order personally signed by Judge Diana in March 2026, applying the framework he authored, in a case where SGB is opposing counsel and where the Section’s sitting Secretary is the firm’s lawyer of record. The docket shows no disclosure of any of it: not the consultation history, not the CLE co-presentation, not the officer overlaps, not the firm’s marketing claims about “the judges.” [13]

Disclosure is cheap. It is a paragraph on the record. The question this report asks is not “is this judge corrupt.” The question is: **why were facts this easy to document never put on the record by anyone — in front of the families whose homes and children were on the table?**

What we did NOT find — read this part carefully

Honest reporting means saying what the record does *not* show. After months of searching public records: [14]

- **No money.** No payment, gift, or campaign contribution from any SGB lawyer to Judge Diana was found. Connecticut judges are appointed, not elected — there are no campaign accounts to give to.
- **No co-authored publications.** Judge Diana has never co-written anything with an SGB lawyer. The connection is a citation, an introduction, and a consultation table — not a byline.
- **No secret meetings.** Every meeting described here comes from the court system’s own published account of its rulemaking.
- **Routine paperwork is routine.** Judge Diana signs scheduling orders in batches statewide; his signature on this one case is administratively normal. The issue is not the signature — it is that the relationships behind the framework were never disclosed.

This is not a bribery story. It is quieter than that — and that is exactly the point. Nothing in this report requires anyone to have done anything illegal. It requires only what the firm itself put in its marketing: relationships. The law’s answer to relationships is not punishment. It is **disclosure**. That is the part that never happened.

Why you, a voter, can actually do something

Connecticut judges are nominated by the Governor and confirmed — and **reconfirmed every eight years** — by the state legislature’s Judiciary Committee. Your state representative and state senator vote on judicial reappointments. The court system’s budget, its data-transparency obligations, and guardian-ad-litem fee reform all run through the same building.

Three things you can do in ten minutes:

1. **If you lived it** — if you went through a Connecticut family case with this firm on the other side and something about the process never sat right — call **1-877-542-4578** or visit **www.sgbclassaction.com**. Your case file may matter more than you think.
 2. **Ask your legislators one question.** Find your state rep and senator at cga.ct.gov. Ask: “Will you support requiring family-court judges to disclose, on the record, their rulemaking-consultation and bar-leadership relationships with the law firms appearing before them?” That single sentence is the whole reform.
 3. **Demand the data.** The Judicial Branch holds the docket-assignment and GAL-appointment records that would prove — or disprove — every systemic question this report raises. Ask your legislators to make family-court assignment and fee data public, the way criminal-court data already is.
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Sources

1. SGB firm marketing video (publicly distributed under the firm's name, no later than May 13, 2026), verbatim transcript at 00:02:24–00:02:40, preserved with cryptographic hash; available for inspection on written request.
2. Harvey, Bozzuto, Albis, Ficeto & Diana, *Docket Management in Family Law Cases: The Connecticut Pathways Experience*, J. Am. Acad. Matrimonial Lawyers, Vol. 38, Art. 3 (2025), incl. fns. 35, 41–43 — https://www.aaml.org/wp-content/uploads/38_Article-3.pdf
3. SGB website, attorney bio: Aidan R. Welsh (accessed June 10, 2026) — <https://sgbfamilylaw.com/connecticut/family-and-matrimonial-law/attorney/aidan-welsh/>
4. SGB website, attorney bio: Molly C. Miller (accessed June 10, 2026); CBA Family Law Section officer page (accessed June 10, 2026) — <https://www.ctbar.org/members/sections-and-committees/sections/family-law>
5. Connecticut Code of Judicial Conduct, Rule 2.11 and commentary — <https://jud.ct.gov> (Practice Book)
6. SGB website, attorneys index (accessed June 10, 2026) — <https://sgbfamilylaw.com>
7. CT Judicial Branch, CAJ-Family announcement (Sept. 4, 2023) — <https://www.jud.ct.gov/HomePDFs/ChiefCourtAdministratorAnnouncesNewChiefAdministrativeJudgeofFamilyMatters.pdf>
8. Statewide Family Trial Management Order (eff. Jan. 1, 2025), signed Hon. Leo V. Diana — https://jud.ct.gov/external/super/Standorders/Family/statewide_family_TMO21.htm
9. *Id.* at footnote 1, citing Samuel V. Schoonmaker IV, 55 Family L.Q. 87 (2020); Schoonmaker IV bio — <https://ctfamilylaw.com/attorneys/samuel-v-schoonmaker-iv/>
10. CT Bar Institute CLE EWL220329, *Jennifer's Law* (Mar. 29, 2022), faculty agenda pp. 6–8 — <https://www.ctbar.org/docs/default-source/education/materials/2021-2022-materials/ewl220329-jennifer's-law-final-materials.pdf>
11. Court-appointed GAL service by Atty. Welsh on dockets FST-FA17-6031564-S and FST-FA22-5026729 (public docket records).
12. SGB attorney bios: Cynthia C. George, Jill Heitler Blomberg, Peter M. Bryniczka (accessed June 10, 2026); Greenwich Law Day 2018 coverage (Bryniczka presiding as GBA President); FCBA Officers & Directors 2025–26 — <https://fairfieldbar.org/page/officersanddirectors>
13. Docket FST-FA26-6078292-S, Entry 136.00 (Scheduling Order, Mar. 19, 2026) and docket review through June 2026.
14. Negative-findings record compiled May–June 2026 from CT SEEC records, publication databases, CLE archives, and disciplinary databases; methodology and confidence tags preserved in the underlying research file.

Prepared by the Fair Court Project. This report states documented facts and asks whether they should have been disclosed; it does not assert that any judge or lawyer violated any law. Corrections: if any fact above is shown to be inaccurate, it will be corrected prominently. Contact: via www.sgbclassaction.com.