

FULL-TIME HEARING OFFICERS

Attorney William F. Culleton, Jr. served as an advocate for individuals diagnosed with physical and mental disabilities for twenty seven years, both in the courts and in statewide policy committees in New Jersey. He has served as trial and appellate counsel in state and federal courts, conducted investigations and negotiated statewide reforms in mental health service delivery systems. In addition, he served as an administrator in a program providing legal services to individuals with diagnosed disabilities for seven years. Attorney Culleton was a special education due process hearing officer for almost four years under contract with the Office for Dispute Resolution from January 2005 to December 2008. His undergraduate degree is from St. Joseph's University and he has a J.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. He has completed basic mediation training through the New Jersey Office of Dispute Resolution. Attorney Culleton is a certified hearing official by the National Association of Hearing Officials.



Attorney Brian Jason Ford received a B.A. from Franklin & Marshall College and a J.D. from Penn State Law (Dickinson). While at Penn State, working as a research assistant, Attorney Ford studied ODR's mediation system while completing a state-by-state analysis of special education dispute resolution systems. Attorney Ford also holds a certificate in advocacy and dispute resolution from Penn State and received the CALI award for excellent achievement in the study of mediation. After law school, Attorney Ford practiced special education law in Pennsylvania and New Jersey for nearly six years, representing both families and educational agencies at various points in his career. In 2010, he was named a Pennsylvania Super Lawyers Rising Star. He left the private practice of law the same year to become a Hearing Officer.



Attorney Charles W. Jelley, LL.M received his undergraduate and master degree from Slippery Rock State University. Attorney Jelley received his first law degree from Duquesne Law School, and received his second law degree, an LL.M. in Health Law, from the University of Loyola School of Law, Institute for Health Law in Chicago, Illinois. From 1980–1991, Attorney Jelley worked for Westmoreland County ARC as a lay advocate, then as the Director of Educational and Legislative Advocacy, and then for a short period of time after graduating from law school as the Executive Director. Attorney Jelley was the co-editor of the Health Law Institute's first health law journal, The Annuals of Health Law. In 1991, Attorney Jelley's LL.M thesis focused on the application of the anti-discrimination provision in Section 504, the



Americans with Disabilities Act and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) as applied to persons with disabilities accessing health insurance. After graduating from Loyola, Attorney Jelley worked as a consultant to the Chiropractic Legal Defense Fund in Englewood Colorado. In April 1993, Attorney Jelley joined the Law Office of Margaret Tremba and resumed his school law practice in Westmoreland County. Attorney Jelley's practice focused on children's issues, school law, juvenile justice, children and youth services, health law, disability law, medical assistance issues, community services, estate planning for families of persons with disabilities, civil rights litigation, ERISA litigation and legislative/policy analyses for persons with disabilities. Attorney Jelley served as the solicitor for the Parent Education Network, a Pennsylvania Parent Training initiative. Attorney Jelley is the past co-chairman of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Exceptional Children's Committee. He is a past member of the Westmoreland County Academy of Trial Lawyers and the Ned Nakles Inns of Court.

Attorney Jake McElligott has been helping school districts and the parents of special



needs children resolve disputes since 1994, first as a member, and co-chair, of the Pennsylvania special education appeals panel and, now, as a hearing officer. Attorney McElligott is a certified hearing officer through the National Association of Hearing Officers. He is also trained in special education mediation. For many years, Attorney McElligott was an administrator at the School of Education at Duquesne University. He holds a bachelor's degree from Penn State University and a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, a master's degree in education from Duquesne University, where he also engaged in doctoral studies in educational leadership. Attorney McElligott is certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education

in secondary English and secondary social studies. He has taught social studies in public and private high schools, as well as a wide array of university courses, including school law. And as an author, he has published book chapters on school counseling and school law.

Attorney Cathy A. Skidmore has been active in the field of special education dispute



resolution in Pennsylvania for over seventeen years, in both formal and alternative dispute resolution processes. She earned her undergraduate degree in Special and Elementary Education from Slippery Rock University, her Juris Doctor from Duquesne University, and her Master of Education in a program of general special education from the University of Pittsburgh. Attorney Skidmore previously served for fourteen years as an appellate due process hearing officer in Pennsylvania, including seven years as a panel chairperson. She was also trained in basic and special education mediation and has been involved in collaborative dispute resolution,

serving as a special education mediator and facilitator in Pennsylvania. Attorney Skidmore is a certified hearing official by the National Association of Hearing Officials. She has experience in private law practice and also formerly served as a judicial law clerk. Attorney Skidmore has been a frequent speaker and lecturer on various aspects of special education and disability law, including serving as an adjunct professor of special education focusing on its legal processes, and remains active in numerous special education and legal professional organizations.

Linda M. Valentini, Psy.D. is a senior special education due process hearing officer who



has presided over more than 1,500 special education disputes throughout Pennsylvania over the past thirteen years. In Summer 2009, Dr. Valentini became a certified hearing official by the National Association of Hearing Officials (NAHO). Dr. Valentini received her Bachelor's Degree in psychology summa cum laude from LaSalle University and her Master's and Doctoral Degrees in clinical psychology from Hahnemann Medical College; in partial fulfillment of her doctoral requirements she studied for six months with Miss Anna Freud in London, England. A licensed psychologist in the state of Pennsylvania, Dr. Valentini is also a Pennsylvania certified school

psychologist. She has been a houseparent in a residential treatment facility for juvenile offenders, an assistant director of a private youth services agency, the executive director of a private children's mental health agency specializing in children ages birth through seven, and a private practitioner, is a certified mediator, a consultant in the area of child/adolescent physical and sexual abuse and behavioral health, and a frequent speaker in special education and administrative law training programs. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she has lived in Philadelphia for thirty-eight years and also lived in Italy for a year.