

Background Information on the Trainers, Role-Play Coaches, and Guests

Israela Adah Brill-Cass, Esq., is an attorney, mediator, and she serves as the Ombuds for The Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, and as the Inaugural Faculty and Staff Ombuds for both Wesleyan and Clark Universities. Through her company, fixerrr, LLC (three "r's" for rethink, respond, resolve), she provides independent ombuds services, mediation, facilitation, training, dispute systems design and consulting to individuals and organizations including the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Tufts Women in Medicine and Science, the Rhode Island School of Design, MIT, Takeda Pharmaceutical, MindEdge (a Harvard and MIT founded Higher Learning Initiative) and the American Bar Association. She is Senior Affiliated Faculty in the Communication Studies Department at Emerson College where, since 2012, she's taught courses in Mediation, Conflict and Negotiation and Law. Israela is a contributing author to "Mediation: A Practice Guide for Mediators, Lawyers, and Other Professionals" (MCLE, 2013) and the 2018 recipient of the Alan L. Stanzler Award for Teaching Excellence at Emerson. She has been recognized as a New England Super Lawyer in ADR (2012, 2016) and as a Top Woman Attorney in Massachusetts (2013, 2016).

Hon. Mark D. Mason has been an Associate Justice of the Superior Court since January 2015. He served as an Associate Justice of the Springfield District Court during the period January 2009 to January 2015. Prior to joining the Bench, Judge Mason was a partner at the Springfield law firm of Cooley Shrair where he specialized in business litigation, domestic relations and mediation. He is a 1980 graduate of Columbia University and a 1984 graduate of Boston University School of Law. Judge Mason served as Chair of the Trial Court's Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution. He chaired the Superior Court's Civil Committee and served on the Superior Court's Committee on Litigation Options. He currently serves on the Superior Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. Judge Mason has served as chair of the Trial Court's Public Outreach Committee since 2021. He served on the SJC's Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution and the SJC's Committee on the Code of Judicial Conduct. Judge Mason presided over the Springfield District Court Mental Health Session for three years. He is a past Vice President of the Massachusetts Judges Conference. Judge Mason has served on numerous community boards and is the recipient of several awards. He served as the 2006 – 2007 President of the Massachusetts Bar Association. Judge Mason is a frequent lecturer covering a wide array of subjects including negotiation and mediation. He was an Adjunct Faculty Member of Western New England University School of Law during the period 2009-2013 where he taught negotiation, mediation, civil practice, and criminal practice.

Eugene A. Nigro, Esq., is a managing director with the law firm of Negro, Pettepit & Lucas LLP in Wakefield, where he practices in the firm's litigation department with a focus on family and probate law. His practice consists of all areas of domestic relations, including litigation, conciliation, mediation, antenuptial agreements, divorce, custody and modification. He received his B.A. from Clark University and his J.D. from New England School of Law. Eugene has been a conciliator with the Essex County Bar Association since 1998 and with the Middlesex County Bar Association since its inception. He has worked as a trainer and mentor in helping to establish Probate Conciliation Programs in Barnstable, Bristol, Worcester, Berkshire and Norfolk Counties. Eugene received his qualification as a Conciliation Trainer from the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution (MODR). He is also a trained mediator.

Timothy M. Linnehan, Esq., is the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Coordinator for the Trial Court. He is the former Acting Director of the Support Services Department in the Office of Court Management for the Trial Court. As the Coordinator of ADR Services for the Trial Court, Tim serves on the Trial Court Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution. He has been a mediator since 1992 and a conciliator since 2005. In addition, he was the Coordinator for the Middlesex Community College Face-to-Face Mediation Program from 1993 to 1996. Mr. Linnehan is a former Assistant Attorney General and litigator in private practice. He is a former adjunct faculty member at Northern Essex Community College and Middlesex Community College. Mr. Linnehan holds a B.A. from Merrimack College, as well as a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School.

Josh Hoch is an ADR Instructor, ombuds, mediator, and is the Director of Ombuds & Mediation Services at MWI. As Director of Ombuds & Mediation Services, Josh manages MWI's Outsourced Ombuds Panel and has worked as an outsourced organizational ombuds for clients including CVS Health and John Moriarty & Associates. He works with companies interested in starting an ombuds program or hiring conference ombuds. Josh also travels to MWI's ombuds client sites to meet with senior leadership to educate employees about the role of the ombuds and how to access ombuds. Josh has been an active mediator since 2001 for various case types, including divorce, workplace, and employment cases, and is a mediation trainer who leads advanced mediation training programs for clients, including the Executive Office of the Massachusetts Trial Court and Community Mediation Programs.

Nnena Odim, Esq., is a mediator, ombuds, attorney, trainer, and consultant. She has been mediating since 1997, and has mediated disputes involving issues such as employment, housing, business, consumer, academic/higher education, and the full range of family/domestic relations (divorce, unmarried parents, elder care, adoption, etc.). Nnena has also designed and/or led conflict management trainings for several local and national businesses and agencies, including the Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts Housing Authority, Neighborhood Works, Coca-Cola, and Netflix. In addition to her mediation and conflict resolution training background, Nnena is trained by the International Ombuds Association and has served as an ombuds for CVS, American Planning Association, and several local construction companies. After 25 years, Nnena has recently retired from Harvard Law School, where she was the Director and Senior Clinical Instructor of the Family/Domestic Violence Law Clinic at Harvard's Legal Services Center. In addition to being an active practicing attorney in Massachusetts Family and Probate Courts, she provided experiential training to law students and taught them how to become effective and ethical attorneys. Nnena has worked with the Harvard Mediation Program (HMP) and Harvard Program on Negotiation to provide trainings for students and community members, and to supervise Harvard Law School students in their mediation and negotiation studies. She served as a faculty and coach of mediation skills for trainings at Suffolk and Boston College Law Schools, MIT, and New England School of Law. Nnena has also served on numerous panels and speaking rosters for a variety of topics, including those on self-care and mental health for students and faculty, establishing boundaries in a professional setting, race and gender, and LGBTQ+ rights. Nnena is a member of the HMP Advisory Board. In 2019, Nnena was honored by the Harvard Women's Law Association International Committee. In 2015, she received the Harvard Law School Dean's Award for Excellence, and in 2013, Nnena was a Top Women in the Law award recipient from Mass. Lawyers Weekly.

Diana Chiang is a mediator, ombuds, trainer, and Director of Corporate and Court Programs at MWI. Diana oversees the Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs for MWI's corporate clients including General Motors, BMW of North America, and 7-Eleven. She is the Director of MWI's Court Programs, overseeing a panel of 100+ pro bono court mediators. Through this program, she conducts seminars and trainings to provide continuing education and networking opportunities for MWI's dedicated panel. Diana mediates in a variety of areas including divorce, civil cases, workplace & employment, housing disputes, and harassment prevention orders. She provides coaching and mentoring services to mediators seeking to grow their skills. Diana is currently an adjunct faculty member teaching negotiation at Suffolk University Law School, and also taught at the University of New Hampshire as an adjunct faculty member of the Justice Studies Program. She earned a B.A. dual degree in Sociology and Justice Studies from the University of New Hampshire, and a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School. Diana also serves on the Board of Directors of the New England Association for Conflict Resolution.

Alnoor Maherali is a highly skilled diplomat, dispute resolution specialist, ombuds, and certified mediator. He resides in New York City and mediates for MWI, Venn Mediation, the New York Peace Institute (NYPI) and New York Small Claims Court. He also serves as a mediation coach for NYPI and MWI and as a mediation and negotiation trainer for MWI. His professional accomplishments include the negotiation of resolutions at the United Nations in Geneva and New York, sharing of best practices in disaster response and civil-military coordination with the Government of Brazil, and important roles in the resolution of two high-profile kidnapping cases in Afghanistan. He has a Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Mathematics from Queen's University in Canada and a Master's in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School in the US.

Elise Ramos is a mediator and Program Coordinator at MWI. She oversees different projects and teams, develops training material for organizations, and conducts organizational climate surveys and reports for different clients. Elise holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from Utrecht University in the Netherlands and a Master's degree in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution from Columbia University. In 2020, Elise earned certifications in mediation and cross-cultural negotiation from ESSEC Business School in Paris. In 2022, she completed MWI's advanced mediation training, became a member of the International Ombuds Association, and completed IOA's ombuds training, Foundations of the Organizational Ombuds course. In the past, Elise worked designing participatory action research workshops to guide social transformation in conflict-prone settings. She is fluent and comfortable working in English, Spanish, and Dutch.