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GLOSSARY OF FAMILY LAW TERMS

Alimony: See Spousal Support.

Annulment: Judgment establishing that a marital status never existed.

Child Support: Financial support by parents to provide for the maintenance of their minor children.

Contempt: See “Enforcement of Judgments.”

Custody: Legal responsibility for the primary care and decision making for a minor child.

Dissolution of Domestic Partnership: Termination of a domestic partnership, including possible division of assets acquired during partnership.

Dissolution of Marriage: Termination of a marriage; see Divorce.

Divorce: A court judgment totally dissolving the marriage of two parties.

Domestic Violence: Abuse between family or household members.

Enforcement of Judgments: Ensuring compliance with court judgments and orders, including support orders, sometimes through contempt proceedings.

Parenting Plan: The legal relationship between a minor child, the legal custodian, and a non-custodial person.

Parenting Time: A schedule for each parent’s separate time with minor children or a description of the process by which the parents set a schedule.

Paternity Proceedings: Proceedings to establish the identity of a child’s father, parenting time, custody, and child support.

Preuptial Agreement: Pre-marital agreement used to alter rights and duties that parties would otherwise acquire through marriage.

Restraining Order: Orders under the Family Abuse Prevention Act where the court may provide for temporary custody of minor children, require that a party move from the other party's residence, restraining a party from entering a reasonable area surrounding the other party's residence, restraining a party from molesting, interfering with or menacing the other party or the other party's children.

Separation: Suspension of the parties' obligation to live together; the marriage itself is not terminated, but all other matters such as custody, parenting time and division of assets are decided.

Support Modification: Increase, decrease, or termination of support.

Spousal Support: Financial support by one spouse for the other. Sometimes called Alimony.

Stalking Orders: Types of court protective orders issued in certain situations where a person alarms or coerces another person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engages in repeated and unwanted contact with another person.

Support Enforcement: Enforcement of an existing support order, possibly including contempt of court proceedings.

Visitation: See Parenting Time.