

To:
Guardian Ad Litem Standards Review
Office of the State Courts Administrator
Jefferson City.

From:
African Mutual Assistance Association of Missouri
(AMAAM)
St. Louis.

Submitted By:
Pritt O. Akutekha
(AMAAM)

10th September, 2009.

RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION FOR COMMENTS ON: GUARDIAN
AD LITEM STANDARDS IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI.

COMMENT/RECOMMENDATION:

African Mutual Assistance Association of Missouri (AMAAM) is a community based mutual assistance association that serves mainly immigrants and refugees from various countries in Africa as they settle within the State of Missouri. The Association hereby responds to your invitation for comments/recommendations as herebelow:

PROPOSAL:

The standards should include a mandatory requirement that;

**“The appointment of a guardian ad litem shall be made
with due regard to the culture and religious faith of the child.”**

In this case, the culture and faith of the child shall be determined in accordance with the professed or known culture and faith of the parents or the last known parent, whenever this is ascertainable.

RATIONALE:

Standards 3.0 and 13.0 of the current standards acknowledge the reality that the interests of the child are paramount. This should be retained. The two standards, aforesaid, as read with Article 1 Section 5 of the Missouri Constitution therefore guarantee the sanctity and protection of the rights of the child. In this case, the right to practice one’s culture and worship according to one’s faith is an unalienable right to which each child is entitled and it should therefore be expressly guaranteed by the Standards, subject to the provisions of any other Superior legislation.

SUPPORT FOR THIS VIEW:

Sixteen (16) other community-based and faith-based organizations in the State of Missouri have expressed support for our position on this matter. We shall be forwarding the list in due course.

This Communication has been issued by authority of:

Mr. Gedlu Metaferia

Executive Director

AMAAM.