

In order to assist our clients as well as possible, we have searched diligently for years to find an office space that would provide a pleasurable work environment for our employees, comfort for our clients, room for state-of-the-art technology and resources, and which was conveniently located. After years of searching, we thought it nearly impossible until we found the Carriage House. We immediately knew that this was a prime location to work and assist our clients.

The Carriage House was owned by the Little Sisters of the Poor. They used it as their carriage house adjacent to the convent. It is hard to imagine that the carriages were stored in our conference rooms and Jim's room was the hay loft!

The Little Sisters of the Poor originate from France. In 1883, Bishop Richter appealed to the Sisters to come to Grand Rapids and open a home for the poor. Six Sisters arrived in May 1884 and opened a home.

The *Grand Rapids Herald* (forerunner of the *Grand Rapids Press*) reported on April 29, 1934:

On May 1, 1884, Sister Marie Claire came, bringing five Sisters to open a home in a residence at Bridge and Fremont Avenue, N.W. The residence still stands. Sister M. Septemie was made the first Good Mother here, with Sister M. Rose of the Good Shepherd as assistant.

The furnishings of the home (which Father McManus had secured for the Sisters) that first night consisted solely of 25 iron beds, without mattresses, and a small kitchen range, all brought from Detroit. The Sisters were looking forward to sleeping on the bare floor when Father McManus sent in a straw tick, so by taking turns, all got a little rest.

The Sisters immediately started seeking donations to purchase a lot and a stone home located on 240 Lafayette which they purchased for \$9,000.00. This was the beginning of the Poor Home for the Aged. This home for the poor and aged expanded through the years, but it no longer exists at this time.

In the early 1970s, the main convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor was torn down. The Carriage House was saved and discussions were held that it was to be a memorial to the Little Sisters of the Poor and their work with the elderly and the orphans in Grand Rapids. However, this never materialized and the Carriage House was left without any serious maintenance for a period of more than twenty years.

In the late 1980s, due to St. Mary's Hospital expansion, additional parking was needed where the Carriage House stood on the East side of Lafayette Avenue. Due to the vigilant

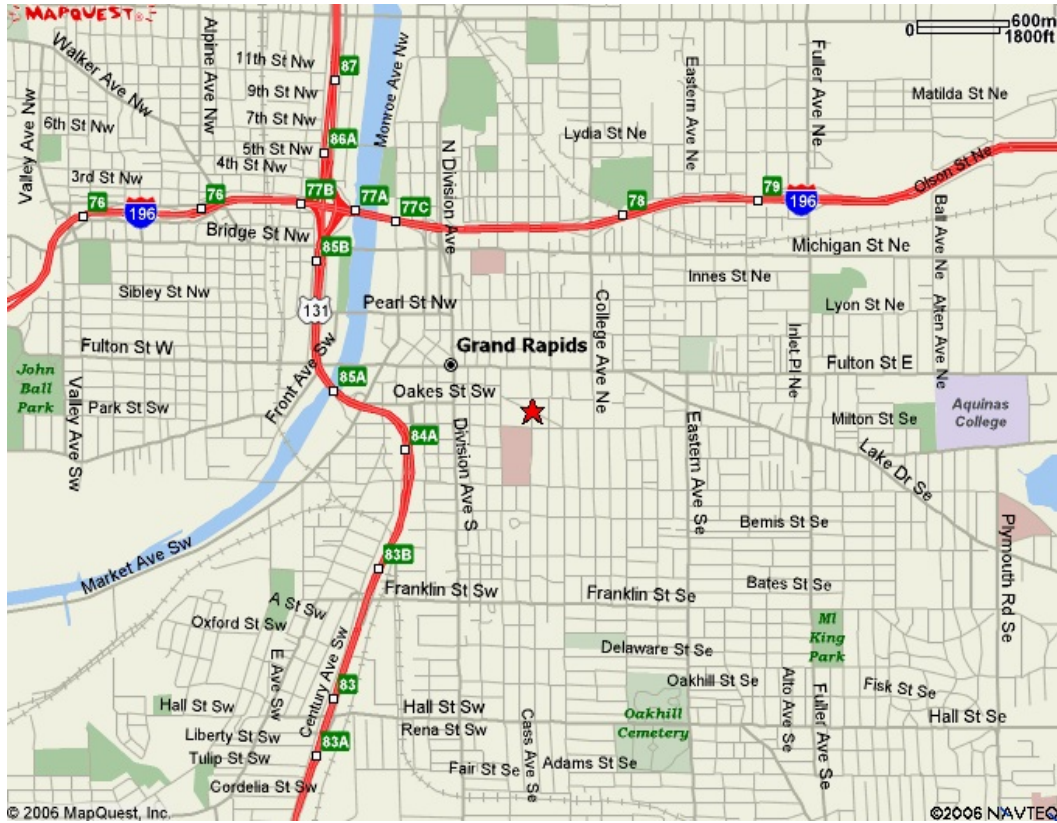
efforts of the Heritage Hill Association and its members, the Carriage House was saved from destruction. Instead it was moved to its' current location on 300 State Street.

On July 10, 1997, the Carriage House was moved while crowds of people watched when the 144 ton building took a ride. Street lights and power lines were removed and police blocked the roads. After extensive remodeling of the building, it became ready for office use.

In 2005, we purchased the building, which was leased to Rehab Pros at that time. In 2006, after a long wait, we were able to move into this magnificent building. The Little Sisters of the Poor are no longer in Grand Rapids. This building is the only testament to their work in Grand Rapids. This building is the only remaining Carriage House in the historic district. We are thankful and pleased to work in this building, and we appreciate you letting us share this rich history with you.

# DIRECTIONS TO OUR OFFICE

Kraayeveld Law Offices, P.C.  
300 State Street, Southeast  
Grand Rapids Michigan 49503



Our office is located on the corner of State Street and Lafayette. (It is kiddie-corner from Lack's Cancer Center.)

You may find reserved and free parking to the East and adjacent to our building on the Lack's Cancer Center parking lot which you can enter on Cherry Street which is South of our building. Please look for the "Reserved Parking Kraayeveld only" signs.

From US-131:

Take Wealthy Street exit 84A

Turn East onto Wealthy and proceed to Lafayette. Take Lafayette to State.

From I-196:

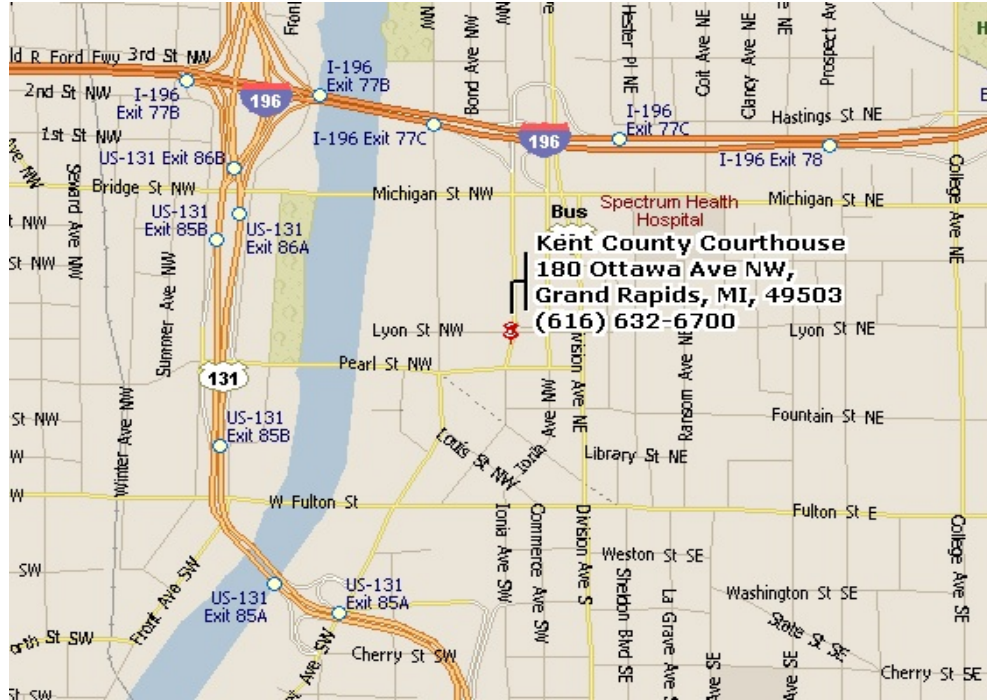
Take College exit 78. Travel South on College to Michigan Avenue. Take Michigan West to Lafayette. Take Lafayette South to corner of Lafayette and State.

# Directions to Kent County Courthouse

(17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, 61<sup>st</sup> District Court and Probate Court)

180 Ottawa, Northwest

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503



From East/West:

Take Freeway I-196 toward Downtown Grand Rapids;  
Take Exit 77C - Downtown - Ottawa Avenue.  
Ramp becomes Ottawa Avenue; cross Michigan Avenue.  
Next intersecting street is Lyons - the court building is on the  
Northeast corner of the intersection.

From North or South:

Take Freeway US-131.  
Take Pearl Street Exit 85B.  
Travel East across the Grand River to Monroe Avenue.  
Take Monroe North for one block to Lyons.  
Take Lyons East for one block to the corner of Lyons and Ottawa  
which is where the court building is

Parking:

- Government Center parking ramp - on Ottawa just North of the court house; \$0.95 for one-half hour
- Ellis parking - corner of Ottawa and Lyons; \$1.90 per one-half hour.
- Ellis parking - East of the Courthouse on Ionia Street; \$1.65 per one-half hour; maximum fee of \$7.50 per day.
- Parking Meters on the street are not recommended due to the time limit

# ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH YOUR CHILDREN

When a parent finds him or herself involved in a custody dispute, it is often immediately after separation. No doubt this is a time of extreme anxiety, and this is usually a very busy time due to moving and legal proceedings. However, this is also a time when your actions and activities with your children will be closely scrutinized. Some of you have taken a less active role in your children's lives for a variety of reasons and now the need has arisen for you to become actively involved. This will be an adjustment, but it will also be a wonderful time with your child, and usually these activities create lasting habits.

To assist you, we have compiled some low cost and fun activities. Keep in mind that expensive vacations are not necessary, and may even be frowned upon in some circumstances. Rather, your day-to-day activities are at stake. Do you take a walk through the neighborhood or do you watch TV?

We suggest that you try one to two *major* activities each month (i.e., museum, etc.). Of course, for each activity, they lose their value if you do not participate actively. After some adjusting, it will be great fun, and you won't regret your quality time with your child which may lead to an increase in the quantity of your time together!

The following list of activities provides a guide regarding the cost by listing \$ as under \$10, \$\$ is between \$10 and \$25 and \$\$\$ is over \$25 per person.

\$ The Grand Rapids Public Museum is a lot of fun for school-aged children. For younger children, they have Thursday storytelling with the Mighty Wurlitzer organ during the school year. More information can be found at [www.grmuseum.org](http://www.grmuseum.org)

\$ The Grand Rapids Children's Museum is a wonderful place to take your children. It is designed and has fun things for children of all ages - as little as a baby and until teenage years. Please do not hesitate to take *very young* children to this museum. Everything is very hands-on, sand, soap, blocks, mirrors, it is all there. This does not have to be a one-time visit. Rather, frequent exhibits promote frequent returns. On Thursdays from 5:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. admission is \$1.00 per person. For more information, please visit them at [www.grcm.org](http://www.grcm.org)

\$ The Grand Rapids Art Museum has a Saturday morning program for children called "A.M. at G.R.A.M." The program includes a variety of things such as arts and crafts, programs regarding different countries, snacks and foods, etc. The cost is usually \$2.00 per person. This is a great program. For more information, visit them at [www.gramonline.org](http://www.gramonline.org)

Free A great resource for seasonal or temporary activities is the "*Grand Rapids Family Magazine*". The best part is that it is FREE! You can pick up a copy at a host of locations, including D&W Food Centers, libraries, Centre Point and Woodland Malls. You can also subscribe to the magazine at a cost at [www.grfamily.com](http://www.grfamily.com) where you can also find the other distribution locations. Please make every effort to pick up a copy to be energized and jump into having fun with your child.

\$\$\$ The City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department has guides with all kinds of activities and classes. Most classes are around \$35 for residents and \$55 for non-residents. The guide can be downloaded at [www.cis.grand-rapids.mi.us](http://www.cis.grand-rapids.mi.us)

\$ John Ball Park Zoo is free in the Winter. Many animals stay out during the Winter, so this would be

a great time to get some exercise, forget about the custody worries and go for a walk through the Zoo! Even during the Summer, the rates are very reasonable. The Zoo has a teenage and adult volunteer program for the Summer, but teenage slots fill very fast. The Zoo has also Summer classes for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders. (\$\$\$) Sometimes they have “Overnight Adventures” which allows you and your child to sleep on the deck by the Chimps! (\$\$\$) Talk about bonding (with your child!). After you’re done with your Zoo trip, you must rest your tired legs with a picnic at John Ball Park. (Don’t pick up a pizza, rather go through the effort of fixing a lunch together beforehand!) No matter how nasty the divorce or custody dispute, this trip will surely relax you and provide great bonding. John Ball Park Zoo can be reached at [www.johnballzoosociety.org](http://www.johnballzoosociety.org)

\$ Other Winter fun can be found with an afternoon skating at Rosa Park Circle (skate rental is free and the entrance fee is a few dollars). A little more expense (\$), but still very reasonable, is an afternoon or evening of tubing at the Pando Ski area.

Free The Kent County Library has many programs. They have story times for various ages, which is a nice time for your child to get acquainted with the library and other children. They also have a lot of fun programs; some as wild as bringing your animals (no matter what: dog, pig or chicken) to the library! Their website provides you and your child great resources such as a “homework help” page. No matter your financial status, pending a custody case, all parents feel the financial crunch. Save money on books and get them for free from the library. Get the older the kids their own library card. It establishes great pride *and* responsibility. Their website can be found at [www.kdl.org](http://www.kdl.org) and their page for kids is at [www.kdl.org/kids/index.asp](http://www.kdl.org/kids/index.asp)

Issues such as library visits are often reviewed at trial or by FOC investigations. Accordingly, make every effort to go to the library once a week to have your child select some books regardless whether or not you are the custodial parent. If you are the non-custodial parent, please let the children take the books to the other parent’s home to finish reading. It shows your cooperation and good will. If they are not returned timely, please request the book in writing (e-mail between separated parents is a great tool).

Read to your children. No matter what age, children like you to read to them. Start a Classic and read a chapter every evening before bedtime regardless of how many evenings the child is in your custody.

Depending on your situation, if you have joint legal custody, you have a right to be involved with your child’s school and extracurricular activities. Even if you are not the custodial parent right now, you can suggest and pursue for your child to be signed up for certain activities, such as music lessons or sports activities. If you don’t succeed on your first try, follow up in writing.

With certain sports, you have a great opportunity to spend time with your child by coaching or in other ways volunteering for the team. This will provide you additional time with your child. To offer transportation to and from lessons, games, and practices may create some goodwill and eliminates many objections by the other parent. Alternatively, at a minimum go to all games and all practices if possible. You have a right to be there and your child will appreciate your interest. If you don’t know your child’s extracurricular involvement, you should immediately write the other parent and request this information and request the parent for continual updates.

For some ideas regarding sporting events:

\$\$\$ Softball/Baseball/TBall through the City of Grand Rapids, which is \$34 for residents, and allows you to coach or assistant-coach. See the City of Grand Rapids’ website for more information.

\$\$\$ Soccer: AYSO is a great organization which is based on volunteers. Their biggest group of teams is in the Ada/Cascade area; other geographical areas have teams as well. To check on teams visit them at

[www.soccer.org](http://www.soccer.org)

\$\$\$ *Swimming lessons*: visit your local school district if they have a pool. Many districts have parent-baby swim times and lessons for young children.

\$\$\$ YMCA: of course, the Y has a variety of programs and lessons available.

\$\$\$ *Gymboree* offers classes at many locations for a fee for parents and babies and small children.

Be involved with your child's homework. Let the teacher know that you are involved (write a note to the teacher, such as "Jane had difficulty with her math, and I had to help her," signed X). Attend all parent-teacher conferences. If the teacher sends home weekly newsletters, either get a copy from the other parent, or ask the school to send you the newsletter directly.

Walk and play in the park. Many townships have parks with playgrounds. Also don't forget about the bigger nature parks, such as Fallasburg Park. These parks are great for a walk. Don't make this a boring walk - collect pinecones and make a wreath or fire starters and let your child give items to the other parent (regardless of how angry you are). It may provide some cooperation during the next dispute and soften the bitterness of the custody case. One of the eleven best interest factors reviews your cooperation with and attitude towards the other parent.

Picnics. Go for a picnic in the park or to the beach and do so unexpectedly. For example, go on a Friday evening and watch the Sunset. It will be a great Kodak moment! Make sure that it will not interfere with bedtime and school the next morning.

Volunteer at school. *Anybody* can volunteer at public and most private schools. Sign up for computer class volunteering, and you get to see your child outside of your scheduled parenting time. With appropriate volunteering, the teachers will be great reference for you. (Do not ask them to be a reference until necessary and until you discuss with your attorney). If you are working full-time, you can often volunteer with fundraisers and after-school activities. Also schedule your vacation days to attend a class trip. Testimony regarding this factor of the best interest factors focuses on your involvement with your child's school and is always weighed very heavily.

Vacation. You don't have to go on expensive vacations. However, do not use your vacation days to go on a trip without your child. (Spending your one-week vacation without your child and at the Daytona 500 or with your new boyfriend is definitely a very negative factor in a custody case). A long weekend camping trip with a tent or in a cabin with your children and no TV can be very refreshing, beneficial and can include golf, fishing, swimming, etc.

Church. Many churches have many great programs available. Churches are the places to find support groups, such as divorce support groups, pre-school programs, single parent support groups, etc. This is a time that you will need your church family more than ever. Many churches have play groups and programs for children to attend while parents attend church, a support group, or study. This would be great for your child to socialize and learn. If you have not attended in a while, find a church and reconnect!

Most importantly:

\_\_\_\_\_ Make lots of photographs during your activities. Make an effort to take a picture during each outing. Also, place a disposable camera in all your vehicles. You may need a camera during disputes, and you will never be without a camera in case you forget to take them to your outings.

Keep a journal of your activities. The easiest journal to review for our staff and the judge is a simple wall calendar. Please keep this calendar private from your children.

Get an answering machine if you don't have one. You need to keep the lines of communication open

for the other parent to leave a message. It will avoid all excuses. As a secondary benefit, it will save you money on attorney fees. Your attorney can simply leave a message.

If you have e-mail, utilize it for communicating with the other parent. It should prevent you from saying something inappropriate. It is an easy way to communicate outside of the presence of the children, and it provides evidence should your case go to trial.

#### Golden Rules

- Keep the other parent updated. If you have joint legal custody, you are required to share all major decision making. You may wish to implement a notebook transferred with the child between the two parents; make copies periodically.
- Your entire life will be scrutinized. For every decision that you make, stop and think what a judge will think about it.
- Spend your time with your child wisely and keep track of what you do. You should be a model parent and be able to periodically report your activities with your child.

In conclusion, the cost should not prohibit you from having a fun and educational time with your children. If lack of time is a factor, you should clearly evaluate whether or not you should pursue custody. We tried to provide you with some ideas. Clearly, we cannot include everything for every age. We can't warn you of all pitfalls, nor would you want us to micromanage your life. If in doubt, please feel free to contact us.

# RECOMMENDED READING

Win Your Child Custody War: Child Custody Help Source Book--A How-To System for People Serious About the Welfare of Their Child (11th Edition)

By: Charlotte Hardwick

*This book is the most comprehensive source on custody cases. The disadvantage is the cost of nearly ninety dollars. However, the book will be of great assistance on a daily basis. The book includes simple, helpful tips. It deals extensively with what to expect from experts such as psychologists. It also has detailed descriptions which accusations and issues are really issues and which ones will not even be considered by the judge.*

644 pages

List price: \$87.55

Available at Amazon.com for \$87.55

Child Custody A to Z : Winning with Evidence

By: Guy J. White

*Instead of spending countless hours collecting documents and items that you will never use, buy and read the book and only provide your attorney with necessary items. It will save you money in excess of the cost of this book.*

232 pages

List price: \$21.95

Available at Amazon.com for \$21.95

Divorce Poison: Protecting the Parent-Child Bond from a Vindictive Ex

By: Richard A. Warshak

*This book offers guidance to parents whose ex-spouse will not stop the bad-mouthing or outright character assassination. Warshak provides a blueprint for an effective response to this behavior. In addition, the book deals with Parental Alienation.*

320 pages

List price: \$13.95

Available at Amazon.com for \$11.16

The Co-Parenting Survival Guide: Letting Go of Conflict after a Difficult Divorce

By: Elizabeth Thayer Ph.D., Jeffrey Zimmerman Ph.D.

*This book is recommended by several (local) psychologists. This is a concise and realistic book what you can and cannot do.*

194 pages

List price: \$14.95

Available at Amazon.com for \$9.72

101 Ways to Be A Long-Distance Super Dad ... Or Mom, Too!

by George Newman

*This is a little fun read without feeling burdened by all custody and parenting time fighting. It simply provides short little ideas how to stay in contact with your children, no matter how often you see them. Great book also for parents who often have their parenting time denied!*

List price: \$10.00

Available at some Christian bookstores and Focus on the Family ([www.family.org](http://www.family.org))

Successful Single Parenting: Bringing Out the Best in Your Kids

by Gary Richmond

*Drawing on his experience as a single-parent pastor, speaker and author Gary Richmond offers sanity in the form of this invaluable release. He delivers practical help and godly ways to balance your needs with those of your children in a loving family atmosphere.*

List price: \$11.00

Available at some Christian bookstores and Focus on the Family ([www.family.org](http://www.family.org))

Divorce and Money: Everything You Need to Know

By: Gayle Rosenwald Smith

*Divorce often causes people to make emotional decisions that can lead to dire financial consequences. They end up selling homes, losing businesses or paying off spousal debt without considering the move's long-term impact. "It is essential to look at the big picture. If you can't logically and rationally identify all the `things' you own, you will lose the opportunity to fight for them," says Smith in the book's introduction.*

288 pages

List price: 14.95

Available at Amazon.com for \$9.72

The Divorce Organizer & Planner

By: Brette McWhorter Sember

*The Divorce Planner Organizer includes: Suggestions on how to save on attorney fees. Tips on how to gather and organize information for easy access during legal proceedings. Advice on required documentation for homes, cars, investments, bank accounts, debts, insurance, and household expenses. A tracker to record alimony, child support payments, and children's medical, educational, and athletic expenses. A personal property inventory and wish list, a budget form, and fill-in contact information lists.*

224 pages

List price: \$16.95

Available at Amazon.com for \$11.02

A Guide-Book for the Newly Divorced Person

by State Bar of Michigan, Family Law Section

*A very detailed and concise book to read for the person who wishes to be informed to the maximum. Unfortunately, the book was published in 2004 and some of the case law quoted may be outdated. However, the caselaw is limited and it is still a very good read.*

63 pages

List price: \$12.00

Available: A&E Printers or our office

Family Legal Guide, third edition

by American Bar Association

*This comprehensive guide is prepared by the American Bar Association. This guide is a must-have for every family. It covers issues ranging from when to hire an attorney, general information how the legal system works, to general information regarding legal specialties.*

794 pages

List price: \$22.95

Available at Amazon.com: \$14.95

What Children Need to Know When Parents Divorce

by William L. Coleman

*Because it is often hard for children to express their feelings, fears and questions, it's easy to assume they are adjusting and coping well with divorce. The reality may well be just the opposite as they internally grapple with an overwhelming feeling of fault for the break-up. What "Children Need to Know When Parents Get Divorced" sets forth a simple, honest and easy-to-understand approach for broaching the discussion of this sensitive subject with the child you love. This paperback shares how to reinforce his or her importance and uniqueness, offer reassurance and communicate how to love both parents without guilt. Recommended for ages 6 to 12.*

List price: \$11.00

Available at some Christian bookstores and Focus on the Family ([www.family.org](http://www.family.org))

Help! A Girl's Guide to Divorce and Step Families

By American Girl Library

*This book prepared by the very popular American Girl's Library provides girls ages 8 and up with short and easy information regarding the divorce process, the court system, their position in these proceedings, the differences that will occur in the households and step-parent issues.*

128 pages

List price: \$8.95

Available at Amazon.com at \$4.15





