

Video Series Introduction

Hello. My name is John Craft, and I am the chairperson of Alabama WINGS. Before we get started with this video series, I want to tell you a little about WINGS. I also have some really exciting news to share about the future of WINGS and improving guardianships and conservatorships in Alabama.

WINGS stands for Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders. That's a real tongue-twister. WINGS are state-based, court-led partnerships intended to drive changes in guardianship policy and practice. WINGS is a collective effort to improve adult guardianship in the State of Alabama. And in doing so, we can improve the lives of people who have or may need guardians or conservators. Alabama WINGS is coordinated by the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts under the Supreme Court of Alabama. Since 2017, we have been working to improve guardianship and conservatorship practices in Alabama.

The mission of Alabama WINGS is this: to deliver information, resources, and tools throughout the legal system, and to the public, as a means of providing appropriate decision-making supports and protective services to individuals. That's another mouth-full. Put simply, our mission reflects two things. First, we are focused on education. Of lawyers and judges, of course. But also, educating the public and professionals who encounter the legal system, or need to know when a guardianship or conservatorship is necessary. The second thing our mission reflects is the delicate balance between protecting vulnerable adults and respecting their autonomy in decision-making. Guardianships and conservatorships are court-monitored "protective" arrangements for incapacitated adults. They are also a restriction on a person's liberty. We hope by the end of this series you will know when guardianships and conservatorships are appropriate, and what the decision-making alternatives are.

We encourage you to explore our website for additional information and resources. The materials are organized under sections for judges, attorneys, and the general public. Information about the Alabama WINGS Task Force can be found on the website as well.

Now for the good news. In October of 2020, the Alabama Supreme Court approved a new commission to pick up and continue the work of Alabama WINGS. The commission is called the Alabama Supreme Court Commission on Adult Guardianships and Conservatorships. We are tremendously excited about this commission. It will allow us to improve guardianships and conservatorships in a long-term and sustainable way. You may not hear the WINGS name used as much, but our mission remains the same.

Finally, before we get into the videos, we want to acknowledge the generous support provided by the Alabama Law Foundation. This video series is produced with funding from the Alabama Law Foundation. Thank you!

I hope you learn from and enjoy our videos.