

# 21st Century Families

by  
Deborah H. Wald

- Because of divorce, cohabitation and single parenthood, a majority of families rearing children in the next century will probably not include the children's original two parents. Moreover, most households will not include children. (Tom W. Smith, Director of the General Social Survey, University of Chicago)
- Middle-class people are more likely to marry and remarry than working class people, who are more likely to remain single or cohabitate. (Tom W. Smith, Director of the General Social Survey)
- The number of children living with single parents went from 4.7 percent in 1972 to 18.2 percent in 1998.(General Social Survey)
- While Americans take a dim view on childbirth outside marriage, they also do not see having children as the purpose of marriage. "As members of most other Anglo cultures, **Americans mainly see marriage as an institution for romantic love and companionship,**" said Smith.(General Social Survey)
- In the United States there are about **6 million women and their partners affect by infertility** and often seek solutions through artificial insemination.(California Davis Fertility Center)
- In 1990, an estimated **6 to 14 million children** in the United States had at least one gay or lesbian parent (Baker v State, 1999)
- The total number of Domestic Partnerships filed with our office from January 1, 2000 through May 31, 2007 is **43,756**. The total number of Termination of Domestic Partnerships filed with our office from January 1, 2000 through May 31, 2007 is **5,119**. (Special Filings/Domestic Partnership Unit, Office of the Secretary of State of California) (**less than 12% DP "divorced" within seven years**)
- Before 2005, in California, no appellate court had ever, awarded visitation or custody rights to the same-sex partner of a

lesbian mother, regardless of how involved the partner was in the child's conception and regardless of how central a parenting role the partner has played in the child's life after birth, unless the partner has legally adopted the child. (2005 California Supreme Court cases won: K.M. v E.G. 2004, Elisa Maria B. v Supreme Court 2004, and Kristine Renee H. v Lisa Ann R 2004)

## **California Family Law lags behind on meeting the needs of the 21st Century Family**