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Non-Custodial Mother and Unfit Mother are NOT Synonymous

By Beverly Morris

There are over 3 million mothers in the United States alone who do not have primary custody of their children. A large and growing percentage of these women are fit and loving mothers. In addition to paying child support, having visitation denied, and having their relationships with their children minimized, non-custodial mothers also face society's knee-jerk reaction to think they must have done something wrong to have lost custody. It is extremely difficult for us to meet new people or make new friends because we're so quickly labeled before someone takes the time to listen and get to know us.

My name is Beverly Morris, President and Founder of the National Association of Non-Custodial Moms, Inc. (NANCM). I founded NANCM in late 2004, approximately six years after my ex-husband used a legal loophole to move our children from Florida to Pennsylvania in 1998. After years of being emotionally distraught and feeling as if I was the only fit and loving mother in the world to lose custody of her children, I searched for support and found none. Now, less than two years later, tens of thousands have visited www.nancm.org from all over the world and hundreds have joined the organization and found support, understanding, encouragement, and love.

With the termination of the "*tender years doctrine*" and the family court system attempting to eliminate gender bias, more fathers are being designated as the primary custodial parent not because the mother is unfit, but because the father is probably in a better position, both financially and with a better job, to provide a more stable environment for the children. A large percentage of non-custodial moms were the children's primary care giver and didn't have a career or any other form of financial stability to show the courts how they could provide for the children. Some mothers still do win custody initially, but once they have to get a second job to make ends meet, they get taken back to court and lose primary custody because of the long hours they are away from their children. Please, the next time you meet a non-custodial mother, take the time to reach out a hand of friendship and take the time to get to know her before you rush to judgment. It's the greatest Mother's Day gift we could ask for.

Beverly Morris, President and Founder NANCM, Inc. - The National Association of Non-Custodial Mom, Inc.'s core belief is that children have a right to both parents in their life when and if both parents are fit and loving.

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