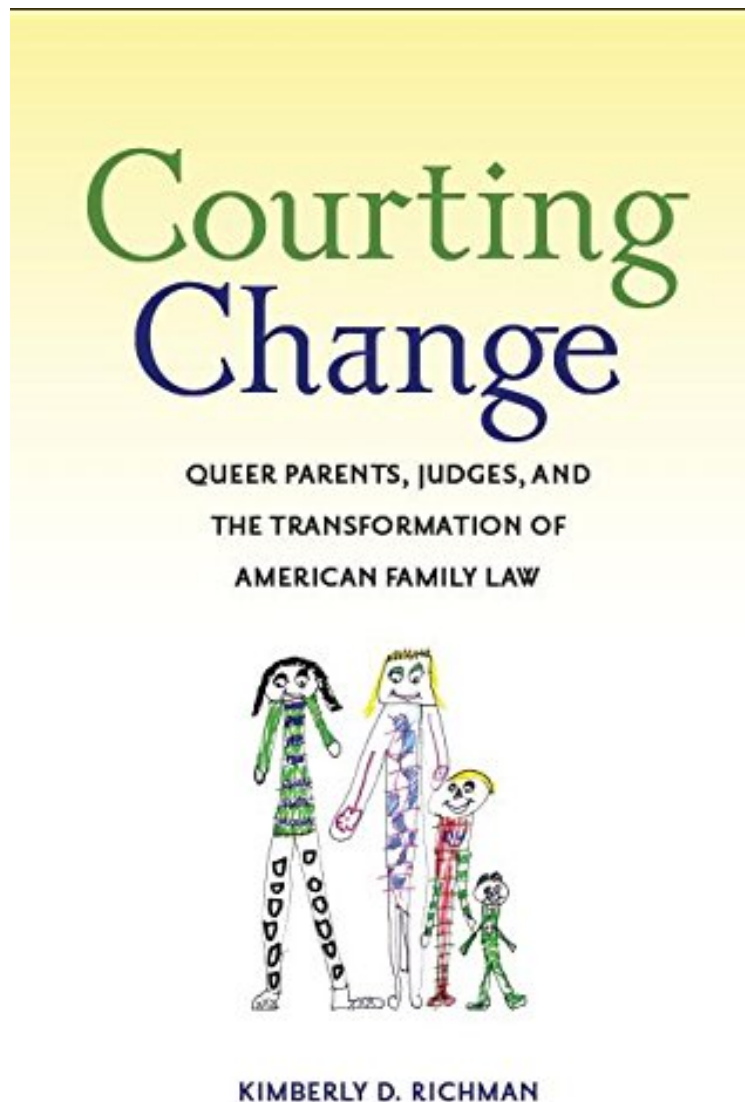


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# Courting Change: Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law

*Kimberly D. Richman*

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#4356604 in Books Kimberly Richman 2010-11-01 2010-11-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .70 x 6.00l, .84 #File Name: 0814776981278 pages Courting Change Queer Parents Judges and the Transformation of American Family Law | File size: 77.Mb

**Kimberly D. Richman : Courting Change: Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Courting Change:

## Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law:

Winner of the 2010 Pacific Sociological Association Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award  
A lesbian couple rears a child together and, after the biological mother dies, the surviving partner loses custody to the child's estranged biological father. Four days later, in a different court, judges rule on the side of the partner, because they feel the child relied on the woman as a psychological parent. What accounts for this inconsistency regarding gay and lesbian adoption and custody cases, and why has family law failed to address them in a comprehensive manner? In *Courting Change*, Kimberly D. Richman zeros in on the nebulous realm of family law, one of the most indeterminate and discretionary areas of American law. She focuses on judicial decisions both the outcomes and the rationales and what they say about family, rights, sexual orientation, and who qualifies as a parent. Richman challenges prevailing notions that gay and lesbian parents and families are hurt by laws of indeterminacy, arguing that, because family law is so loosely defined, it allows for the flexibility needed to respond to and even facilitate changes in how we conceive of family, parenting, and the role of sexual orientation in family law. Drawing on every recorded judicial decision in gay and lesbian adoption and custody cases over the last fifty years, and on interviews with parents, lawyers, and judges, Richman demonstrates how parental and sexual identities are formed and interpreted in law, and how gay and lesbian parents can harness indeterminacy to transform family law.

No one has written more comprehensively or searchingly about the topic of gay and lesbian custody and adoption than Richman. *Courting Change* is a must-read for scholars, students, and activists interested in family law and lesbian and gay rights. -Verta Taylor, University of California, Santa Barbara  
"You could learn about the law that governs LGBT parents and their children by reading all the 316 reported court opinions about them from the last half century or you could read this one book. Through her analysis of majority and dissenting opinions and her interviews with lawyers, judges, and parents, Richman deftly demonstrates that the legal standard best interests of the child and the terms family and parent necessarily and imperfectly evolve. The path forward requires understanding where we've been. Thanks to Richman, that path just got a whole lot clearer. -Nancy D. Polikoff, author of *Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage: Valuing All Families under the Law*"  
Richman's extensive archive and innovative approach supplies an instructive guide to how scholars can integrate various approaches to the law to influence judges, legal advocates, and other interested parties. -Law and Politics Book  
Richman's exemplary scholarship reminds us of the incremental gains made by queer advocates and just how much work we have left in front of us. -Law and Politics Book  
About the Author  
Kimberly D. Richman is Associate Professor of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of San Francisco.