

FILED

07/25/2025

Bowen Greenwood  
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT  
STATE OF MONTANA

Case Number: DA 25-0279

ORIGINAL

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

DA 25-0279

IN RE THE MARRIAGE OF:

LOREN MICHAEL HUTNICK,

Petitioner and Appellant,

v.

MELISSA ANN HUTNICK,

Respondent and Appellee.

FILED

JUL 25 2025

Bowen Greenwood  
Clerk of Supreme Court  
State of Montana

ORDER

This Court reviews briefs to ensure compliance with Rules 11 and 12 of the Montana Rules of Appellate Procedure. After reviewing the Appellant's opening brief filed on July 25, 2025, this Court has determined that the brief does not comply with the Rule and must be resubmitted.

Although we liberally construe pro se pleadings and hold them to a less stringent standard than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers, without references to the record and a signature, Appellant's opening brief does not comply with the minimal requirements for filing.

Therefore,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Appellant's opening brief be returned for revisions necessary to comply with the Montana Rules of Appellate Procedure. In particular, Appellant's brief must:

1. Include in the cover page, pursuant to Montana Rules of Appellate Procedure Rule 11(6)(b), (iii), (v) and (vi), which in addition to its current contents, contains:
  - a. the court and name of the judge in the case from which you are appealing;
  - b. the names and contact information of the respective counsel for the parties, or for the parties, if they are proceeding without counsel;

2. Include contents set forth in Rule 12. The brief should contain:
  - a. A table of contents and a table of authorities—pursuant to Rule 12(9);
  - b. A statement of the case—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(c);
  - c. A statement of issues presented for review—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(b);
  - d. A summary of the argument—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(f);
  - e. A state of the standard of review—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(e);
  - f. An argument—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(g);
  - g. A short conclusion—pursuant to Rule 12(1)(h).
  - h. A statement of the facts must contain references to the pages or the parts of the record at which material facts appear—pursuant to Rule 12(9);
3. The Appellant's brief must be individually signed, pursuant to Rule 13(2). Currently, while the Appellant's brief contains a signed certificate of service, the Appellant must also sign the brief itself.
4. The Appellant's brief must include a signed certificate of compliance, pursuant to Rule 11(4)(e).
5. The Appellant's brief must include an appendix, pursuant to Rule 12(1)(i).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a signed original and seven copies of the revised brief ordered herein be filed within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order with the Clerk of this Court and that one copy of the revised brief be served on each counsel of record;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Court is directed to provide Appellant with a copy of the *Civil Handbook* for litigants proceeding before this Court without an attorney.

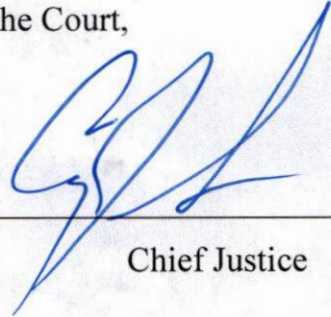
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the postage costs for returning the referenced copies of Appellant brief will be billed to Appellant by the Clerk of this Court and shall be due and payable upon receipt; and IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the times for any subsequent briefing contained in M. R. App. P. 13 shall run from the date of filing of the revised brief.

The Clerk of this Court is directed to mail a true copy of this Order to Appellant and to mail a true copy of this Order to all counsel upon whom the brief was served.

DATED this 25th day of July, 2025.

For the Court,

By

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chief Justice