

Circuit Court for Frederick County
Case No. C-10-FM-23-000667

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 351

September Term, 2025

DAVID MORGAN

v.

VICTORIA MORGAN

Berger,
Leahy,
Zarnoch, Robert A.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

Opinion by Zarnoch, J.

Filed: January 14, 2026

*This is an unreported opinion. This opinion may not be cited as precedent within the rule of stare decisis. It may be cited for persuasive value only if the citation conforms to Rule 1-104(a)(2)(B).

On March 21, 2025, the Circuit Court for Frederick County granted an absolute divorce to appellant, David Morgan (“Husband”), and appellee, Victoria Morgan (“Wife”). The court also distributed the parties’ marital property and granted Wife’s request for indefinite alimony and a monetary award.¹ Husband timely appealed that judgment and presents the following issues, which we have rephrased as follows:

1. Whether the trial court erred in its statement of the grounds for divorce;
2. Whether the trial court erred or abused its discretion in making a monetary award;
3. Whether the trial court erred or abused its discretion in awarding indefinite alimony.

For the reasons set forth below, we shall affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

The parties married on May 5, 2007 in St. Augustine, Florida, and have three minor children. The parties lived in Florida throughout the marriage until their separation. Shortly after their marriage, the parties moved into Husband’s grandfather’s former house, which was owned by Husband’s mother and step-father, located in Micanopy, Florida. Husband and Wife verbally agreed to pay Husband’s mother and step-father a total of \$60,000 for supplies and improvements to the home, which they paid in monthly installments of \$700. The parties also paid the property taxes and utilities for the home. Wife paid \$5,000 from funds she inherited to install an air purification system in the home. The parties disagreed as to the necessity of the air purification system.

¹ The court also entered awards as to custody and child support. The parties are not challenging those awards on appeal.

In 2009, Husband’s mother and step-father conveyed to the parties a life estate in the home, where the parties resided together with their children throughout the marriage. The parties stipulated to the admission of a special warranty deed granting life estates in the property to Husband and Wife.

Both parties attended college. Wife has two associate’s degrees and Husband has a bachelor’s degree. During the marriage, Husband pursued a master’s degree in business, but he did not complete it. During the marriage, Wife attended massage therapy school, but she did not pursue a career in massage therapy because Husband was unsupportive of the career.

Both parties have been employed throughout the marriage. At the time of the marriage, Wife was employed as a store manager for Publix. Subsequently, both parties worked for Nationwide Insurance, but they decided to leave Nationwide and work for Publix. Following the birth of their first child, the parties agreed that Wife would transition to part-time work at Publix. During the marriage, Wife’s highest income was \$30,000 per year.

Husband worked full-time during the marriage with the exception of 2019, when he went from full-time employment in management at Publix to working part-time, one day per week, in order to find other employment because he was “exhausted and needed a break.” When Husband went to part-time employment, Wife returned to full-time employment at Publix as a bakery manager. The parties enjoyed a comfortable standard of living during the marriage, living within their means and generally avoiding debt.

Wife began experiencing problems in the relationship prior to the birth of their first child in 2010. She described Husband as easily angered and annoyed during her pregnancy. In 2012 following the birth of the parties' second child, Wife began noticing Husband drinking more frequently. He drank "a big bottle of Jack Daniels" every three days. Husband's behavior became erratic and he often acted aggressively.

When Wife was pregnant with their third child, she found a compromising photo on Husband's phone of her best friend, "A.," who was also the wife of Husband's best friend and a godparent to the parties' children. Wife subsequently found Husband and A. engaged in a kiss in the parties' home. Husband told Wife that it was an accident and that he was only trying to comfort A. In 2020, Wife confronted Husband regarding compromising photographs and disturbing emails she discovered between Husband and A. Husband told Wife that he was sorry and it would never happen again.

Nonetheless, Husband continued his relationship with A. He spent time with A. away from his family while deceiving Wife that he was out with friends. Wife confronted Husband about romantic messages on his phone, and he acknowledged that the messages were from A. Wife also noticed that Husband had begun engaging in "worrisome" activities on his computer.

Wife told Husband to move out of the house after Christmas, which he did. In 2022, Wife fell and hit her head on a sidewalk, resulting in a concussion and a jaw injury that required surgery. Wife asked Husband to stay and help her with the kids while she recovered.

After Wife’s recovery, Husband refused to move out of the house, and Wife described his drinking during this time as “out of control.” Husband drove the children while drunk and attempted to drive Wife and the children while drunk on one occasion before Wife ordered him to pull the car over so that she could drive. One morning, Husband attempted to leave for work highly intoxicated and Wife hid his car keys to prevent him from driving. Husband became enraged and wrestled Wife to the floor, demanding the car keys. Once Husband found the keys, he left the home and drove to work. Wife testified that Husband often consumed alcohol heavily before family activities, birthday parties, and vacations. Wife found empty beer cans, whiskey bottles, and wine boxes in Husband’s car and at home in cabinets and his dresser. Wife discussed Husband’s drinking with him, and he attended therapy “off and on during [their] marriage.”

In August of 2022, Wife brought the children to Maryland for an extended visit with her family while Husband remained in Florida. At the end of that summer, Wife informed Husband that she planned to remain in Maryland and enroll the children in school. Wife found employment at Safeway and established residency in Frederick County. On April 26, 2023, Wife filed a complaint for absolute divorce.

The circuit court held a merits trial on December 11, 2024, January 17, February 11, and February 18, 2025. Both parties were represented by counsel.

At the time of trial, both parties were forty-three years of age. Husband testified at trial that he continued to live in Florida and reside in the marital home. Husband believed that the marriage had deteriorated because the parties grew apart. He and Wife worked a lot and disagreed as to what was best for the children. He did not deny Wife’s allegations

of his infidelity. He testified that he has continued his relationship with A. and that she moved in with him in October 2024. A. does not contribute to the expenses of the home. Husband denied having any issues with alcohol currently and further denied that his alcohol consumption during the marriage was a factor in the demise of the marriage.

Husband is currently employed by Ben E. Keith, a food distribution company, earning \$72,000 per year. During the marriage to the present time, Husband has maintained part-time employment with Publix, which he schedules at his discretion, typically one day per month, which allows the opportunity to purchase company stock for investment purposes.

Wife currently works full-time at Safeway as an overnight stock clerk earning \$16.25 per hour with up to eight additional hours of overtime, earning approximately \$2,903 per month. Wife testified that she does not have enough income, including child support and alimony, to meet her monthly expenses, and she has a monthly deficit of \$3,534. Wife has borrowed \$25,000 from her parents to meet her expenses.

On March 21, 2025, the court entered a thirty-eight-page written opinion, followed by a written order. The court granted the parties an absolute divorce. Among other things, the court awarded Wife indefinite alimony² in the amount of \$750 per month and a monetary award in the amount of \$80,000. The court ordered, pursuant to the parties' agreement, that they "take all steps necessary" to equalize all retirement and other accounts.

Husband filed this appeal.

² The court identified the alimony as "permanent alimony."

DISCUSSION

1.

Grounds for Divorce

Husband contends that the circuit court’s statements regarding the grounds for divorce in Maryland were ambiguous, and therefore clearly erroneous. Specifically, he points to the circuit court’s statement that irreconcilable differences is not a ground for divorce in Maryland unless accompanied by a six-month separation.

Wife argues that the circuit court’s reference to irreconcilable differences was a harmless typographical error because the court properly granted the divorce on the ground of a six-month separation, as authorized by Section 7-103 of the Family Law Article (“FL”) of the Maryland Code (1984, 2019 Repl. Vol.). We agree.

The court found that the parties separated in August 2022 and remained separated for approximately two and a half years. The court stated that “Maryland law requires only one ground to be met for an absolute divorce to be granted” and determined that the ground for divorce was met by the parties living separate and apart without cohabitation for six months, without interruption, before the filing of the divorce complaint.

The grounds for an absolute divorce set forth in the FL § 7-103 were amended effective October 1, 2023. The General Assembly eliminated adultery, desertion, conviction of a crime, twelve-month separation, insanity, and cruelty of treatment, and replaced them with only three grounds: six-month separation, irreconcilable differences, and mutual consent. *See* FL § 7-103 (2024 Supp.); Floor Report, H.B. 14 at 2.

In this case, the court granted the divorce on the ground of a six-month separation

and that finding was supported by ample evidence in the record. Husband is not challenging the court’s decision to grant the parties a divorce. Therefore, any error in the circuit court’s explanation describing the grounds for divorce was harmless. *See Barksdale v. Wilkowsky*, 419 Md. 649, 662 (2011) (explaining that error does not warrant reversal unless it results in “likely” or “substantial” prejudice).

2.

The Monetary Award

In challenging the monetary award to Wife, Husband argues that the circuit court failed to properly value the parties’ assets and apply the statutory factors required by FL § 8-204. He contends that the circuit court’s order also failed to provide a consistent manner for equalization of the parties’ non-retirement assets.

Wife contends that the trial court properly valued the parties’ marital property, considered the relevant statutory factors, and did not abuse its discretion in making its award.

When granting a divorce, “the court may resolve any dispute between the parties with respect to the ownership of personal property.” FL § 8-202(a)(1). In making a proper division of marital property upon divorce, a trial court must utilize a three-step process. *Abdullahi v. Zanini*, 241 Md. App. 372, 405 (2019); FL §§ 8-203–205. First, the trial court must identify which property is marital and nonmarital. *Abdullahi*, 241 Md. App. at 405 (citing FL § 8-203(a)). Second, the court must determine the value of each asset. *Id.* (citing FL § 8-204(a)). Third, the court must decide whether distribution of the marital assets

according to title would be unfair, and if so, the court may adjust any inequities in property ownership by granting a monetary award to rectify any inequity. *Id.* at 405-06; FL § 8-205.

Pursuant to FL § 8-205(b), the court must consider each of the following factors before making a monetary award:

- (1) the contributions, monetary and nonmonetary, of each party to the well-being of the family;
- (2) the value of all property interests of each party;
- (3) the economic circumstances of each party at the time the award is to be made;
- (4) the circumstances that contributed to the estrangement of the parties;
- (5) the duration of the marriage;
- (6) the age of each party;
- (7) the physical and mental condition of each party;
- (8) how and when specific marital property or interest in property described in subsection (a)(2) of this section, was acquired, including the effort expended by each party in accumulating the marital property or the interest in property described in subsection (a)(2) of this section, or both;
- (9) the contribution by either party of property described in § 8-201(e)(3) of this subtitle to the acquisition of real property held by the parties as tenants by the entirety;
- (10) any award of alimony and any award or other provision that the court has made with respect to family use personal property or the family home; and
- (11) any other factor that the court considers necessary or appropriate to consider in order to arrive at a fair and equitable monetary award or transfer of an interest in property described in subsection (a)(2) of this section, or both.

FL § 8-205(b); *see also Abdullahi*, 241 Md. App. at 406; *Hart v. Hart*, 169 Md. App. 151, 161 n.6 (2006).

The purpose of a monetary award “is to counterbalance any unfairness that may result from the actual distribution of property acquired during the marriage, strictly in accordance with its title.” *Abdullahi*, 241 Md. App. at 406-07 (quotation marks and citations omitted). “Ordinarily, it is a question of fact as to whether all or a portion of an asset is marital or non-marital property. Findings of this type are subject to review under the clearly erroneous standard embodied by Md. Rule 8-131(c)[.]” *Collins v. Collins*, 144 Md. App. 395, 408-09 (2002) (quoting *Innerbichler v. Innerbichler*, 132 Md. App. 207, 229 (2000)). “It is well settled that the trial court has broad discretion in determining whether to grant a monetary award and, if so, in what amount.” *Malin v. Mininberg*, 153 Md. App. 358, 430 (2003). We review the ultimate decision to grant a monetary award for an abuse of discretion. *Abdullahi*, 241 Md. App. at 407; *Collins*, 144 Md. App. at 409.

A. Valuation of Marital Property

Husband asserts that the circuit court erred in “recreat[ing] the parties’ Amended Joint Statement of Marital and Non-Marital Property (“Amended 9-207”),” by preparing its own “9-207 Appendix” which, he argues contained mathematical and typographical errors in the valuation of the parties’ marital property items.

Wife responds that Husband’s arguments challenging the court’s 9-207 Appendix are “flatly incorrect.” Wife states that the circuit court correctly utilized the Amended Property Statement submitted by the parties at the end of trial and docketed on February 11, 2025, which replaced the parties’ original 9-207 Property Statement. Wife points out

that Husband failed to include in the record extract the parties' Joint Amended Property Statement and the trial exhibits.

With respect to the first step in the process outlined above, the circuit court found that all of the parties' property was marital property. In valuing the marital property, the court accepted the parties' valuations as to the parties' retirement accounts, investment accounts, and vehicles as set forth in the Amended Property Statement. Husband complains that duplicate entries on the court's 9-207 Appendix resulted in an increase in value that far exceeded the actual total value of the parties' assets.

Our review of the 9-207 Appendix reveals that the circuit court categorized the assets as non-retirement and retirement and further identified them as titled in Husband's name, Wife's name, and jointly-titled. Though there appears to be some cross-over in the categories, the court's 9-207 Appendix does not include a sum total value of the parties' assets, nor does it contain total values by title. For this reason, it does not appear that the court relied on those values in calculating the parties' total marital assets. In its opinion, the court stated that it valued each of the parties' assets consistent with the agreed values presented in the parties' Amended Property Statement, calculating the parties' total marital assets to be \$576,756.91. We are unpersuaded by Husband's argument that any errors in the court's 9-207 Appendix worksheet require reversal. To the extent that the circuit court's 9-207 Appendix contained duplicate entries, they appeared to be harmless typographical errors, as they were not reflected in the court's opinion or order of judgment.

B. Application of the FL § 8-205(b) Factors

Husband contends that the circuit court reached incorrect conclusions in its analysis of several of the FL § 8-205(b) factors. He argues that the court’s finding that he had failed to comply with the November 17, 2023 pendente lite order requiring him to complete an alcohol evaluation was erroneous because he had completed the alcohol evaluation and submitted a report to the court prior to trial. He contends that the court’s mistaken belief that he had not complied with the court’s order to obtain an alcohol evaluation “formed a substantive basis for the trial court’s decisions regarding . . . alimony and the monetary award.”

The court took judicial notice of the November 17, 2023 pendente lite order, specifically the provision requiring Husband to obtain a comprehensive drug and alcohol evaluation and provide a copy of the evaluation to the court. The court found that no such evaluation had been presented to the court and no report was offered in evidence during the trial. Husband did not, however, introduce the completed alcohol evaluation into evidence at trial.

The court’s erroneous finding that Husband had failed to complete the alcohol evaluation does not warrant reversal of the monetary award. “In a civil case, the party asserting error must show prejudice.” *Md. Dep’t of Health v. Myers*, 260 Md. App. 565, 613, *cert. denied sub nom. Sanders v. Md. Dep’t of Health*, 487 Md. 267 (2024); *Miller v. Mathias*, 428 Md. 419, 446 (2012) (explaining that “an error that is not shown to be prejudicial does not warrant reversal”). Prejudice can be shown if “the error was likely to

have affected the verdict below; an error that does not affect the outcome of the case is harmless error.” *Flores v. Bell*, 398 Md. 27, 33 (2007).

The varying accounts of Husband’s alcohol use was a central issue in the parties’ divorce. In discussing the monetary and non-monetary contributions of the parties to the well-being of the family, the court found that there had been times during the marriage when, “due to [Husband’s] excessive consumption of alcohol, he has not been able to consistently contribute to the good of the family in the same manner as [Wife].” The court also found that Husband’s “debilitating use of alcohol created significant turmoil in the household[,]” and had contributed to the estrangement of the parties. Based on the court’s “review of the collective evidence,” the court determined that Husband “has ongoing struggles with alcohol that affect his perception, judgment, and behavior” and that it was “tragically clear that [Husband’s] abuse of alcohol has had a devastating effect on this family.”

The court supported its findings by citing numerous facts demonstrating the effect of Husband’s alcohol consumption on the family. In considering the circumstances that contributed to the estrangement of the parties, the court accepted Wife’s “detailed observations regarding [Husband’s] frequent mood swings from overly happy to angry, aggressive, assaultive, degrading, and insulting at times, coupled with screaming fits and bursts of rage” and her accounts of finding alcohol containers hidden in Husband’s car and dresser drawers. The court recounted Wife’s description of instances where Husband had driven the family while “highly intoxicated” and struggled with her for his car keys to drive to work while intoxicated. Husband’s bank statements also reflected his alcohol purchases.

Husband acknowledged that there had been times during the marriage when he had consumed alcohol to excess and made ““poor choices.”” He testified that he had obtained alcohol treatment, and found it helpful, but felt that he was no longer in need of ongoing treatment.

There was ample evidence in the record to support the circuit court’s finding that Husband’s excessive alcohol consumption had negatively affected Wife and the children and interfered with his ability to meaningfully contribute to the well-being of the family. Husband has failed to show prejudice regarding the court ordered alcohol evaluation that would warrant reversal in this case.

We also disagree with Husband’s contention that the circuit court erroneously assigned a value to the Florida property when making a monetary award to Wife, and that the circuit court erroneously found that Wife’s life estate in the marital home had been “extinguished,” contrary to the terms of her life estate interest under Florida law.

The circuit court did not make a finding that Wife’s life estate had been “severed,” as Husband claims, nor did the court assign a value to Wife’s life estate. The court specifically stated that it could not speculate as to the fair market value of the parties’ life estates in the property, which it valued at zero due to a lack of evidence demonstrating the fair market value of the home.³

³ There is no contradiction between the court’s decision to value the life estates at zero because of a lack of evidence of a specific dollar value and its conclusion that, as a general matter, the life estates conferred a significant financial benefit to the parties.

As one of many equitable factors supporting the court’s decision to make a monetary award, the court considered the circumstances leading to Wife’s decision to move to Maryland with the children and forego her life estate. The court recognized that the parties’ life estates conferred a significant financial benefit and financial security on the parties. Wife’s decision to forego that security was “not one she reached voluntarily or without necessity” as the living conditions in the home were such that “[n]either [Wife] nor the minor children could safely remain in the home any longer.” The court also considered the direct impact that Husband’s action of allowing A. to live in the home with him, completely free of any financial obligation, had on Wife’s life estate. The circuit court properly considered and weighed all relevant evidence, including the evidence surrounding Wife’s life estate, “in balancing the equities between the parties” in order “to avoid any disparate circumstances[,]” as it was required to do under FL § 8-205(b). *See Doser v. Doser*, 106 Md. App. 329, 350 (1995).

C. Monetary Award Order

Husband argues that the terms of the court’s monetary award order are confusing and contradictory and therefore require reversal. He did not seek clarification of this issue from the circuit court, electing instead to raise it for the first time on appeal.

The court identified the non-retirement assets titled in each party’s name and ordered that the parties equalize their non-retirement assets. The court also awarded Wife a monetary award of \$80,000 “to equalize marital assets between the parties[.]” The court further ordered that, “in the event [Husband] satisfies the monetary award judgment . . . by

withdrawing funds from an account he has access to, the monetary award judgment shall be satisfied prior to equalization and not made part of [the] equalization of marital assets[.]”

The court’s order is clear that, should Husband pay the \$80,000 monetary award from a non-retirement account titled in his name, that payment is to be made prior to the equalization of the parties’ accounts. The remaining balance of the accounts would then be subject to equalization.

3.

The Alimony Award

Husband argues that the circuit court erred in awarding Wife indefinite alimony based on the evidence presented at trial. Specifically, he asserts that the evidence did not support a finding that it would be impossible for Wife to rehabilitate and become self-supporting, nor did it demonstrate that the parties’ standards of living would be unconscionably disparate.

An alimony award will not be disturbed on appeal “unless we conclude that ‘the trial court abused its discretion or rendered a judgment that is clearly wrong.’” *Kaplan v. Kaplan*, 248 Md. App. 358, 370 (2020) (quoting *Brewer v. Brewer*, 156 Md. App. 77, 98 (2004)). “We ‘accord great deference to the findings and judgments of trial judges, sitting in their equitable capacity, when conducting divorce proceedings.’” *Id.* (cleaned up) (quoting *Malin*, 153 Md. App. at 415). Provided “the trial court’s findings of fact are not clearly erroneous and the ultimate decision is not arbitrary, we will affirm it, even if we might have reached a different result.” *Malin*, 153 Md. App. at 415.

Maryland generally favors fixed-term “rehabilitative alimony” rather than indefinite alimony. *Kaplan*, 248 Md. App. at 371. But the trial court has discretion to award indefinite alimony in “exceptional circumstances, *i.e.*[,] ‘if the standard of living of one spouse will be so inferior, qualitatively or quantitatively, to the standard of living of the other as to be morally unacceptable and shocking to the court.’” *Id.* (quoting *Karmand v. Karmand*, 145 Md. App. 317, 338 (2002)). “Generally speaking, alimony awards, though authorized by statute, are founded upon notions of equity,” and “equity requires sensitivity to the merits of each individual case without the imposition of bright-line tests.” *Tracey v. Tracey*, 328 Md. 380, 393 (1992).

In determining whether an alimony award is appropriate, and the amount and duration of the award, the court must consider the following factors:

- (1) the ability of the party seeking alimony to be wholly or partly self-supporting;
- (2) the time necessary for the party seeking alimony to gain sufficient education or training to enable that party to find suitable employment;
- (3) the standard of living that the parties established during their marriage;
- (4) the duration of the marriage;
- (5) the contributions, monetary and nonmonetary, of each party to the well-being of the family;
- (6) the circumstances that contributed to the estrangement of the parties;
- (7) the age of each party;
- (8) the physical and mental condition of each party;
- (9) the ability of the party from whom alimony is sought to meet that party’s needs while meeting the needs of the party seeking alimony;

- (10) any agreement between the parties;
- (11) the financial needs and financial resources of each party, including:
 - (i) all income and assets, including property that does not produce income;
 - (ii) any award made under §§ 8-205 and 8-208 of this article;
 - (iii) the nature and amount of the financial obligations of each party; and,
 - (iv) the right of each party to receive retirement benefits; and
- (12) whether the award would cause a spouse who is a resident of a related institution as defined in § 19-301 of the Health-General Article and from whom alimony is sought to become eligible for medical assistance earlier than would otherwise occur.

FL § 11-106(b). The alimony statute permits an award of indefinite alimony if the court finds either of these two additional factors:

- (1) due to age, illness, infirmity, or disability, the party seeking alimony cannot reasonably be expected to make substantial progress toward becoming self-supporting; or
- (2) even after the party seeking alimony will have made as much progress toward becoming self-supporting as can reasonably be expected, the respective standards of living of the parties will be unconscionably disparate.

FL § 11-106(c).

Our review of the record reveals that the circuit court carefully considered the evidence in analyzing the relevant FL § 11-106(b) factors in support of its decision to award indefinite alimony. With respect to the first factor, the ability of the party seeking alimony to be wholly or partially self-supporting, the court found that Wife was employed full-time

as an overnight stock clerk at Safeway, earning approximately \$30,000 per year. The court also considered that the night shift paid a slightly higher hourly rate, the Safeway store was very close to Wife’s home, and working at night allowed her time during the day to meet the children’s needs. The court noted that Wife had continued to look for better employment opportunities, but she had not found any position to date that allowed her to meet her parental demands.

In terms of the time necessary for the party seeking alimony to gain sufficient education or training to enable that party to find suitable employment, the court noted that no evidence had been presented regarding whether Wife had greater earning potential or employment opportunities in massage therapy, should she seek re-training or licensure in that field. In her current position as a grocery clerk, a position she had held throughout the marriage, she was able to work full-time while also meeting the children’s needs as the primary caretaker.

The court reviewed the economic circumstances of the parties at the time of the award and determined that Wife’s monthly net income was \$3,534 and her monthly expenses were \$6,116, leaving her with a monthly deficit of \$2,582. The court found that Husband’s monthly net income was \$5,407.92 and monthly expenses of \$5,172.90, resulting in a monthly excess of \$235.02. The court pointed out that Husband’s bank statement reflected a Publix stock dividend deposit on November 1, 2024 in the amount of \$1,190.27, which was not referenced in his financial statement, and it was unclear the frequency with which he received stock dividend income. The court found that Wife had a greater monthly deficit than Husband, which it found was “even more pronounced when

[Husband's] reduced living expenses (by virtue of his life estate) are factored into the equation" and weighed against Wife's monthly rental payments. The court also noted that Wife required financial assistance from her parents on a monthly basis to help her meet her debts.

In finding significant financial disparity between the parties, the court noted that Wife has faced financial difficulties since the parties' separation, "while [Husband] enjoys, by comparison, a rather luxurious lifestyle, with extremely low overhead." The court noted that Husband's living expenses are minimal, at best, as he was not burdened by a mortgage, noting that his enjoyment of his life estate comes at the exclusion of Wife's ability to enjoy the same financial benefit. The court further noted that "[Husband] earns significantly more income than [Wife] and has always been the primary breadwinner[,]" and as a result, the economic disparity between the parties is "one evidenced by history and is unlikely to change."

"Trial court judges are vested with a great deal of liberty to weigh the relevant factors and arrive at fair and appropriate results." *Goshorn v. Goshorn*, 154 Md. App. 194, 209 (2003) (quotation marks and citation omitted). In analyzing the different income levels of the parties, the circuit court must determine whether the disparity is likely to change and to what extent. *Broseus v. Broseus*, 82 Md. App. 183, 195-96 (1990) (upholding award of indefinite alimony where wife earned 34.9% of her husband's salary, was not self-supporting, and could not be expected to obtain a better paying job without detracting from her parental responsibilities).

We disagree with Husband's contention that the court did not properly assess the

differences in the parties' income and Wife's ability to be self-supporting. Wife's salary was approximately 42% of Husband's salary. In determining whether the parties' lifestyles following divorce were unconsciously disparate, "the circuit court cannot merely 'do the math.'" *Simonds v. Simonds*, 165 Md. App. 591, 612 (2005); *see also Boemio v. Boemio*, 414 Md. 118, 144-45 (2010) (affirming trial court's finding of unconscionable disparity based on consideration of factors beyond just income differential, including the parties' lifestyle before the separation and wife's supportive efforts in the marriage which allowed husband to advance his career).

In this case, the court's award of indefinite alimony was based on the parties' economic circumstances as well as other equitable considerations. Husband's alcohol consumption, erratic and dangerous behavior, and infidelity essentially forced Wife to leave the marriage and forego her life estate in the marital home and the parties' comfortable lifestyle for the safety of her and her children. The circuit court properly considered the statutory factors in determining that the parties' post-divorce standards of living would be unconscionably disparate absent an equitable adjustment in the form of indefinite alimony. We see no error or abuse of discretion in the circuit court's alimony analysis and its decision to award Wife indefinite alimony.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR FREDERICK COUNTY AFFIRMED.
COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.**