

Katherine Claire Steefel

University of Kansas School of Law · Associate Professor of Law
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Law

University of Kansas School of Law

2026-present

Courses:

Criminal Law
Sentencing Law
Postconviction Remedies

Service:

Faculty Workshops & Lectureships, Member (2026-present)

Assistant Professor of the Practice of Law (Lecturer)

University of Denver Sturm College of Law

2023-2026

Courses:

Externships
One of two full-time faculty members who oversaw program of more than 720
externship field placements annually.
Lawyering in Practice, Externship Seminar
Appellate Criminal Law
Supervised students drafting amicus brief to U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals

Service:

Member, Modern Learning Committee (2024-2026)
Member, Clerkship Committee (2023-2024)

EDUCATION

University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, Colorado

J.D., May 2017

GPA/Ranking 3.88; 1 of 215
Order of the Coif
Scholarship Chancellor's Scholarship Recipient (full-tuition public interest scholarship)
Law Review *Denver Law Review*, Symposium Editor, "Justice Reinvestment: The Solution to Mass Incarceration?"
Awards Highest Grades in Federal Courts, Evidence, and Social Change Lawyering
National Jurist: 2017 Law Student of the Year
Outstanding Graduating Student

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Science, School of Foreign Service, May 2013, *Cum Laude*

GPA 3.67
Major International Politics/Latin American Studies certificate

PUBLICATIONS

Going Rogue on Jury Instruction (work in progress)

Unconstitutional But Not Unconstitutional Enough, 111 CORNELL LAW REVIEW 351 (2026)

From Whiteboard to Statement of Principles: The Development of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place, and Law's Principles, 101 DENVER LAW REVIEW 455 (2024) (essay)

Uniting the Head, Hands, and Heart: How Specialty Externships Can Combat Public Interest Drift, 25 CLINICAL LAW REVIEW 325 (2019) (peer reviewed law journal of NYU Law), co-authored with Alexi Freeman

The Pledge for the Public Good: A Student-Led Initiative to Incorporate Morality & Justice in Every Classroom, 22 WASHINGTON AND LEE JOURNAL OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE 49 (2016), co-authored with Alexi Freeman

SHORTER WORKS

The Extra Hurdle in State Courts to Prove a Statute Violates the U.S. Constitution, STATE COURT REPORT (project of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law)

Pro Bono, Public Interest and More: A Look at a Student-Led Initiative to Elevate the Public Good at Denver Law, THE DOCKET, Dec. 2016-Jan. 2017, at 26, co-authored with Alexi Freeman

OTHER LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Office of the Colorado State Public Defender, Denver, CO

Deputy State Public Defender (Appellate Division)

2020–2023

- Represented indigent defendants in appellate proceedings
- Drafted briefs filed in the Colorado Court of Appeals and Colorado Supreme Court
- Presented oral arguments to the Colorado Court of Appeals
- Visited incarcerated clients and communicated with clients and their families

Johnson & Klein, PLLC (criminal defense and civil rights law firm), Boulder, CO

Associate Attorney

2018–2020

- Drafted successful clemency petition for client serving sentence for first-degree murder
- Represented criminal defendants in state and federal court proceedings
- Successfully litigated motion to obtain discovery regarding claim of selective prosecution of protesters (prosecution ultimately dismissed criminal case against protester client)
- Co-counsel for resentencing of a juvenile who received unconstitutional life sentence

Justice William Hood III, Colorado Supreme Court, Denver, CO

Judicial Law Clerk

2017–2018

- Drafted opinions, concurrences, and dissents for Justice Hood
- Assisted with Colorado's Access to Justice Committee and Diversify the Bench efforts

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

August 2026, Presenter, *Going Rogue on Jury Instructions*, State Public Law Workshop, University of Colorado School of Law

July 2026, Panelist, *Defining Crime*, CrimFest!, Fordham University School of Law

May 2026, Presenter, *Externship Supervisor Training CLE*

August 2025, Presenter, *U.S. Supreme Court Term in Review*, Denver Law

November 2024, Presenter, *Postgraduate Judicial Clerkships Still Available for the 2025 Term*, Denver Law

October 2024, Presenter, *Designing (or Redesigning) an Externship Program: Exploring Three Different Models from One Clinician's Crew*, Externships 12 Conference, Boston University School of Law

October 2024, Presenter, *Judicial Clerkships and Externships: A Gateway to Career Success*, Denver Law

September 2024, Presenter, *Judicial Clerkships and Externships: A Gateway to Career Success*, Denver Law

September 2024, Presenter, *Postgraduate Judicial Clerkships: How to Prepare a Compelling Application*, Denver Law

September 2024, Guest Lecturer, *Mock Law School Class*, Metro State University of Denver

May 2024, Presenter, *Effectively Working with Law Student Externs, Clerks & Summer Associates CLE*

November 2023, Guest Lecturer, *Mock Law School Class*, Prospective Denver Law Students

October 2023, Presenter, *Judicial Clerkships and Externships: A Gateway to Career Success*, Denver Law

September 2023, Guest Lecturer, *Mock Law School Class*, Metro State University of Denver

May 2023, Presenter, *Externship Supervisor Training CLE*

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Colorado, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals