

Katherine Claire Steefel

University of Denver Sturm College of Law · Assistant Professor of the Practice of Law
katherine.steefel@du.edu

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of the Practice of Law (Lecturer)

University of Denver Sturm College of Law

2023-present

Courses:

Externships
Lawyering in Practice, Externship Seminar
Appellate Criminal Law
Supervise students drafting amicus brief to U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals

Externship Program Responsibilities:

One of two full-time faculty members overseeing program of more than 720 externship field placements annually. Teach and support approximately 75 law student externs per semester (and during the summer) at field placements, advise students on prospective field placements, and train supervisors.

Service:

Member, Modern Learning Committee (2024-present)
Member, Clerkship Committee (2023-24)

PUBLICATIONS

Unconstitutional But Not Unconstitutional Enough, 111 CORNELL LAW REVIEW (forthcoming)

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) (forthcoming)

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

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

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
<i>Scholarship</i>	Chancellor's Scholarship Recipient (full-tuition public interest scholarship)
<i>Law Review</i>	<i>Denver Law Review</i> , Symposium Editor, "Justice Reinvestment: The Solution to Mass Incarceration?"
<i>Awards</i>	Faculty Prize: Kenneth L. Smith Award for Top GPA for Graduating Class Highest Grades in Federal Courts, Evidence, and Social Change Lawyering Reese Persuasive Writing Award for top brief in legal writing course National Jurist: 2017 Law Student of the Year Outstanding Graduating Student
<i>Externships</i>	Johnson & Klein, Rathod Mohamedbhai, U.S. Department of Justice: Civil Rights Division-Special Litigation, U.S. Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights, Colorado Juvenile Defender Center, Advancement Project

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

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

<i>GPA</i>	3.67
<i>Major</i>	International Politics/Latin American Studies certificate

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
- Litigated constitutional issues arising in criminal cases
- 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)
- Assisted in investigation and witness interviews in civil rights cases
- 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 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

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

- Bar Admissions: Colorado, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, and the United States District Court for the District of Colorado
- Colorado Bar Association, Colorado Women's Bar Association