

DePaul University
Asylum & Immigration Clinic

Chris Kleiser

*Assistant Public Defender,
Knox County Public Defender*

*Clinic Participation:
1996-1997*

*Graduated:
1997*

Christina Kleiser joined the Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office in March 2006 and currently supervises the youth defense team. Ms. Kleiser is a graduate of DePaul University College of Law and worked for a number of public interest organizations in Florida and Ohio, specializing in child advocacy, criminal and immigrant defense, before joining the CLO. In addition to her work in Juvenile Court, she assists other attorneys in counseling their non-citizen clients regarding immigration consequences. She is a long-time member of the National Lawyers Guild's National Immigration Project and serves on the advisory council of the Defending Immigrant's Partnership and the Gault Center's Regional Advisory Council. Ms. Kleiser presents nationwide on issues related to youth defense and immigration consequences for non-citizens caught up in the criminal/juvenile justice system, and she is a certified faculty member of the Gault Center's Youth Defender Training Program.

What do you remember most about your time in the Clinic?

My client and the Immigration Judge who decided his case.

What lessons from the clinic do you still use today or have used in your professional career?

Thorough preparation; client centered, holistic advocacy.

How did your involvement with the clinic help you connect with other professionals in the field?

It helped me understand the need to work in an agency with skilled mentors; it helped me get my first jobs practicing removal defense.

What would you tell current or future DePaul law students about the clinic?

To not be afraid to reach out to DePaul grads in their field of interest to get a job after law school. I would love to host DePaul grads looking to move to the south to do public interest work.

Is there a message you would like to share with your fellow Clinic alums, faculty, or staff?

Thank you Craig Mousin and Alicia Alvarez for believing in me. I didn't have many mentors along the way and I always think fondly of my year in the clinic and being so lucky to have had you both as my clinic professors.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your clinic experience?

I'm just very grateful for the opportunity to have the experience of representing CS and helping him win permanency in the US.