

DePaul University
Asylum & Immigration Clinic

Gretchen Ekerdt

Associate, Kempster, Corcoran, Quiceno, Lenz-Calvo, Ltd.

Gretchen Ekerdt began practicing immigration law in Chicago in 2011 and joined Kempster, Corcoran, Quiceno & Lenz-Calvo, Ltd. in 2017.

Ms. Ekerdt's focus on immigration law includes family and employment cases, as well as

removal defense. She was recognized as an Emerging Lawyer in immigration law by Leading Lawyers in 2018, and selected by Super Lawyers as a 2019 Illinois Rising Star. While in college, Ms. Ekerdt studied in León, Spain. During law school, she interned at the National Immigrant Justice Center and the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender.



*Clinic Participation:
2009-2010
Graduated:
2011*

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

Collaboration with my friend and clinic partner Alix Strunk; our weekly meetings with Sioban; and lengthy telephone calls and meetings with our asylum applicant client. I also remember sharing a wall with the death penalty clinic students who were working on Casey Anthony's defense (as exciting as asylum law can be, those kids were doing something pretty exciting too).

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

Go to the statute first. How to earn a client's trust. How to approach talking to clients about trauma.

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

It feels like a family in Chicago among immigration lawyers, because so many Chicago immigration lawyers went to DePaul and were in the clinic. I remember I completed NIJC's online form for a summer internship, and no one had gotten back to me. Linus Chan put a word in for me and, I had an interview right away. We all got to volunteer at Midwest Regional during our year in the clinic, when Sioban, I believe, was the Chapter Chair. My 3L clerk job at Maria Baldini-Potermis's office was advertised through the clinic, and that turned into an attorney job after I graduated.

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

If you are interested in immigration law, or even general administrative law, do the clinic.