

# Michele Niermann

██████████ | ██████████ | Geneva, IL

---

## General Counsel | Local Government | Employment and Labor

---

### Professional Experience

#### **Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins, Ltd., Westmont, Illinois, Partner, 2023-Present**

##### *General Representation*

- Represent and provide legal advice to municipalities and other units of local government in all aspects of government operations, including corporate governance, home rule authority, Open Meetings Act, Freedom of Information Act, intergovernmental cooperation, contracts, procurement, business licensing and permitting, zoning, eminent domain, constitutional and statutory compliance, grant compliance, anti-discrimination laws, and labor and employment matters.
- Respond to investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, and U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, in connection with complaints of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Fair Housing Act.

##### *Employment and Labor*

- Advise clients regarding employment laws, labor contracts, discipline, and grievances.
- Develop employment policies, including paid leave, reasonable accommodation, and sexual harassment.
- Investigate employee harassment and discrimination complaints and recommend disciplinary and other responsive actions.
- Represent and advise elected officials, administrators, and department chiefs concerning police and fire disciplinary investigations and proceedings.
- Develop litigation strategy and represent local governments and officials in federal and state courts and in agency proceedings, including cases before the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois Department of Labor, Division of Occupational Health and Safety, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security.
- Negotiate separation and settlement agreements.
- Negotiate collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding with labor unions.

#### **Kane County State's Attorney's Office, Chief, Civil Division, Geneva, Illinois**

**Chief, Civil Division, 2020-2023**

**Deputy Chief, Civil Division, 2010-2020**

**Assistant State's Attorney, 1995-2010**

**Awards: Prosecutor of the Year, 2011**

Represent and advise the County of Kane, Illinois and its elected and appointed officials and management staff regarding litigation and risk management, statutory authority and governance, constitutional and statutory requirements, sunshine laws, ethics, parliamentary rules, intergovernmental cooperation, budgets, audits, taxes, federal and state grants, labor and employment, civil rights, First Amendment, Due Process, contracts, procurement, bond financings, zoning and development, landfill operations and compliance, emergency planning and response, public health, and elections.

##### *Leadership and Management Responsibilities*

- Supervise and lead ten-member team of attorneys and staff.
- Coordinate, manage and direct outside legal counsel.

## **Professional Experience (Continued)**

- Assign, coordinate, and manage defense of all litigation and claims against Kane County, its elected and appointed officials, and employees, within budget set by County Board.
- Oversee litigation strategy and conduct of trials, hearings, and settlement negotiations, managing risk and minimizing the expenditure of public funds.
- Coordinate and advise State's Attorney and staff concerning Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Compliance in connection with state and federal grants.

## ***Employment and Labor***

- Develop litigation strategy and represent the County and its officials in federal and state courts, before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois Department of Labor, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, and in labor arbitrations.
- Negotiate collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding with various unions, including AFSCME, Teamsters, MAP and PBLC.
- Advise clients on employment laws, labor contracts, discipline, grievances, and separation agreements.
- Represent and advise Sheriff concerning officer disciplinary investigations and proceedings.
- Develop employment policies, including COVID-19 protocols and sick leave, reasonable accommodation, sexual harassment, remote work, and worker safety policies and protocols.
- Investigate employee harassment and discrimination complaints and recommend disciplinary and other responsive actions.

## **Chapman and Cutler, Chicago, Illinois, Associate Attorney, 1991-1995**

***Project Finance.*** Act as bond and underwriter's counsel in tax-exempt bond financings. Draft and negotiate terms of bond and underwriting documents. Perform due diligence for underwriters. Coordinate bond closings.

***Environmental.*** Advise clients regarding compliance with environmental laws. Perform due diligence assessing environmental risks associated with real property. Represent clients in civil actions.

## **Bar Admissions**

State of Illinois; U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Trial Bar; U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit and D.C. Circuit

## **Education**

### **University of Illinois, College of Law, Champaign, Illinois**

Juris Doctor, 1991

Frederick Green Moot Court Competition, Semi-Finalist, Best Brief/Overall

Moot Court Board of Editors

Research Assistant

### **Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois**

Bachelor of Arts with Honors in English, 1988

Internship: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland

## **Professional Organizations**

**Illinois State Bar Association**, Committee on Government Lawyers, CLE Coordinator; Local Government Law Section, Social Chair

**Kane County Bar Association**, Local Government Law Committee, Employment and Labor Committee, CLE Speaker