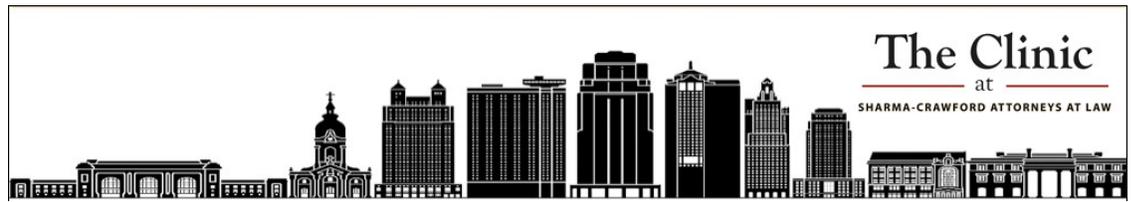




IMMIGRATION COURT TRIAL ADVOCACY COLLEGE CANCELLATION OF REMOVAL KANSAS CITY ♦ MAY 4-6, 2023



Faculty Bios

Genevra Alberti is the sole dedicated attorney at The Clinic at Sharma-Crawford Attorneys at Law, which is a nonprofit removal defense organization in Kansas City, Missouri, and is currently the only nonprofit specializing in representing those in removal proceedings in the Kansas City Immigration Court. She has held this position since The Clinic opened in January 2012, focusing her practice solely on removal defense. Genevra has presented on a variety of immigration-related topics and taught courtroom skills at multiple national and local conferences, and has guest-lectured on asylum law at Washburn School of Law and the University of Kansas School of Law. She is also a contributing author to the AILA Litigation Toolbox, 5th Ed. (2016) and 6th Ed. (2019). She currently serves as Chair-Elect of the Missouri-Kansas AILA Chapter, as chapter co-EOIR liaison, and as a member of the AILA national EOIR Liaison Committee. In 2020 and 2022, she was given one of her AILA chapter's two Pro Bono Champions awards. An east coast transplant, Genevra completed her undergraduate degree with honors at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (go Heels!). After spending three years working and traveling, she attended Washington University in St. Louis School of Law, graduating *cum laude*. During her time at Wash U., Genevra was admitted to the school's Transnational Law Program, enabling her to spend a summer interning at the European Council on Refugees & Exiles in Brussels, Belgium and a semester studying abroad in Trento, Italy. In her free time, she is busy raising a small human/dictator.

David Bell graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (Wharton School) with a degree in accounting and finance. After college, David earned his law degree and LL.M. (Taxation) from New York University School of Law. After three years at the firm now known as Stinson LLP, David went to work as a trial attorney with the Public Defender's Office in Kansas City, Missouri. David remained with the Public Defender's Office for six years. While at the Public Defender's Office, David received the Charles M. Shaw Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy and was named one of the 16 Up & Coming Lawyers by the Missouri Lawyers Weekly in 2006. David joined the law firm of Wyrsh Hobbs & Mirakian, P.C. in July 2007 and he is now a shareholder. His primary practice is criminal defense in state and federal courts.

Melody Brannon is the Federal Public Defender for the District of Kansas. She has been with the FPD for 25 years and served the last nine years as Defender. The Kansas FPD has three offices employing 41 people and manages the CJA panel of about 80 attorneys. Ms. Brannon began her career as a public defender in the Oklahoma County Public Defender Office in 1990 and worked in death penalty defense at both trial and habeas levels in Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. As Federal

Defender, she has implemented a holistic defense paradigm and created extensive CLE, mentoring, and internship programs. She is on the board and faculty of the National College of Criminal Defense and the co-chair of Defender Services Advisory Group.

Nathan Dayani graduated in 2011 from the University of Kansas School of Law, at which he was awarded for outstanding achievements in both lawyering and moot court. After law school, he clerked for the Kansas Court of Appeals, and then worked as an associate attorney at an insurance-defense firm before joining the Johnson County Public Defender's Office in May of 2015. Since then, he has become a respected trial lawyer, obtaining acquittals in a host of felony jury trials, winning dispositive motions on several other cases, and obtaining dismissal on dozens more. He objects to vegan ribs.

Kelly Driscoll received her Juris Doctorate from Washburn University School of Law in 2005. After spending a year in private practice, Kelly started working for the Board of Indigent Defense Services (Hutchinson office) in August 2006, where she remained for almost 9 years. In July 2015, Kelly transferred to the Johnson County Public Defender's Office and in October 2015, was promoted to Deputy. Kelly handles all types of felony criminal matters, focusing primarily on person felony crimes. She has tried approximately 45 cases. In addition to her work at the PD's office, Kelly is an instructor at Hutchinson Community College, where she teaches online courses to those working towards a paralegal degree. She lives in Olathe, Kansas with her husband, son, 4 dogs and 1 mean cat.

Angel Graf is the Directing Attorney for the Las Vegas Office of the Immigration Center for Women and Children (ICWC). ICWC is a non-profit legal organization providing free and affordable immigration services to underrepresented immigrants in California and Nevada. ICWC strives to provide security and stability for children who are abused, abandoned, or neglected and for immigrants who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other violent crimes. Angel received her B.A. from Elmhurst College, her M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University, and her J.D. from DePaul University College of Law. In a previous life, Angel worked in International Development and Human Rights. In 2008 she decided to pursue Immigration Law and during her time in Law School volunteered, worked, and interned with several organizations including Life Span Center for Legal Services and Advocacy, World Relief Chicago, the DePaul Immigration Clinic, and ProBAR. In 2012 Angel joined the Kansas City Immigration Court as an Attorney Advisor through the Department of Justice Honors Program. She left government service in 2014 to join ICWC in San Francisco, CA, where she worked until 2019, helping to develop their growing removal practice. In June of 2019 Angel opened the ICWC office in Las Vegas, Nevada where she oversees a diverse caseload of removal defense, humanitarian-based protection, and affirmative relief. Angel also provides trainings on issues related to humanitarian relief and removal.

Lindsay Gray Lindsay Gray is the CEO of VECINA, a nonprofit organization focused on mentoring pro bono attorneys representing asylum seekers, refugees, and unaccompanied children. The organization provides training and mentoring for attorneys who do not have experience with immigration law but want to fight back against the terrible injustices perpetrated against immigrants. Lindsay is based in Austin, Texas and for the past nine years has run a small immigration firm representing clients in a wide variety of immigration matters. Prior to becoming an immigration lawyer, Lindsay was a public defender for the Colorado State Public Defender's Office. There she represented hundreds of clients in many aspects of litigation, including bond

hearings, motions, and over twenty jury trials. Outside of her law practice, Lindsay is an adjunct professor of law at Washington University in St. Louis, where she teaches Immigration Law in the online LLM/MLS program. Lindsay loves spending time outside with her husband, Steve, and her two daughters, Lilah (10) and Ellie (8).

Davorin J. Odrčić is a 2001 graduate of Notre Dame Law School. He is based in Milwaukee with a focus on removal defense and post-conviction relief for noncitizens. Davorin is the former chapter chair for the Wisconsin chapter of AILA. He is the author of the *Immigration Consequences of Wisconsin Criminal Offenses*, which was published by the State Bar of Wisconsin in 2015. Davorin also served as program chair for the Wisconsin State Bar's seminar titled *Beyond Padilla v. Kentucky: The Immigration Consequences of Criminal Convictions*. The seminar earned the State Bar a national award for Outstanding Achievement in Programs by the Association for Continuing Legal Education (ACLEA).

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice conferred the Distinguished Public Service Award on Davorin regarding his pro bono legal service for the family members of the victims of the violence at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. For the past four years he has been selected in *Best Lawyers®* in the field of immigration law. In 2022, Davorin also proudly won numerous eating contests across Wisconsin.

Sarah Owings is a graduate of The University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee, where she majored in English and Russian, and became interested in international human rights and the history and causes of migration. She attended the College of Law at Georgia State University, where she earned a Juris Doctor degree in 2007. During law school, Sarah participated in an externship with the Chief Counsel for Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Atlanta, where she learned how the U.S. government prosecutes individuals in removal proceedings.

After law school, Sarah began working as an associate attorney with The Antonini Law Firm, which later became The Antonini & Cohen Immigration Law Group. In 2017, she opened her solo practice, and within a year she was joined by another partner, forming Owings MacNorlin, LLC.

Sarah has been involved in immigration advocacy and support efforts at the state and local level throughout her career. She served as a board member for the Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network from 2010 until 2012. She joined the Georgia-Alabama AILA chapter Executive Committee in 2012, and served as chapter chair from 2016-2017, during the initial months of the Trump presidency. That year, Sarah was the recipient of AILA's national advocacy award, in recognition of outstanding efforts in support of AILA's legislative and media advocacy agendas. In 2017, Sarah was elected to the AILA Board of Governors, and is currently serving her second term on that board as an elected director. Sarah also served as Vice Chair of AILA's national EOIR/ICE liaison committee, which subsequently split into two committees in 2022. She still serves as a member of the national ICE liaison committee, and has engaged in local liaison work throughout her career.

Sarah is also a member of the board of Immigrant's List, a political action committee dedicated to promoting reforms of our immigration system, stopping anti-immigrant policies, and electing pro-reform candidates to office.

Sarah has experience in representing foreign nationals in a variety of immigration proceedings including removal defense, family-based petitions, humanitarian forms on relief, and asylum

proceedings. She is frequently asked to speak at continuing legal education programs and to provide commentary to the media on the rapidly changing immigration landscape. In addition to doing a lot of talking about immigration, Sarah takes an active role in addressing crises – including volunteering her time representing foreign nationals who were subject to: detention at the airport during the travel ban, to family separation, to the illegal border metering policies in Tijuana, and to the expanded use of rural private detention centers across the Southeastern United States. She resides in Atlanta.

Hon. Susan G. Roy began her legal career through the Department of Justice Attorney General Honors Program, as an Attorney Advisor at the Board of Immigration Appeals. She then became an Assistant Chief Counsel and National Security Attorney for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. From 2008-2010, Sue served as an Immigration Judge in Newark, NJ. She then entered private practice and is a solo practitioner specializing in complex immigration cases.

Sue is the Immediate Past Chair of the NJ Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and is a past Chair of the NJ State Bar Association (NJSBA) Immigration Law Section. She also serves on the AILA national EOIR Liaison Committee. Sue is a member of the Round Table of Former Immigration Judges, which has authorized over 45 amicus curiae briefs in immigration cases before the Supreme Court, the Circuit Courts and cases certified to the U.S. Attorney General. In 2019, she, along with the other Round Table members, was a recipient of the AILA Advocacy Award, and in 2017, she was awarded the NJ Federal Bar Association's Pro Bono Advocacy Award.

In addition, Sue has been a speaker and/or moderator on CLE panels for AILA national, regional and local conferences, as well as for the NJSBA, NJICLE, NYSBA and the Federal Bar Association. She has been a guest speaker at numerous laws schools, and is an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers University Law School, Newark, where she teaches Asylum Law.

Michelle L. Saenz-Rodriguez is the co-founder of Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates in Dallas, Texas. Now in her 31st year of practice, Michelle is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the State Bar of Texas. She started as a Judicial Law Clerk under the Attorney General's Honor Program for 7 Immigration Judges in Harlingen, Texas. She and her law partner (and husband), George Rodriguez, opened their own firm 27 years ago and have remained passionate advocates for immigrants from around the world.

Michelle is former Chair for the Texas Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She is an Elected Director for the AILA Board of Governors and has served in that capacity for 4 years. She is also a member of IMMLAW which is a top tier group of immigration lawyers nationwide. Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates has been named one of the "Top Tier Immigration Law Firms in America" for almost two decades. Michelle has recently been awarded the 2020 W Page Keeton Award for Excellence in Continuing Legal Education from the University of Texas Law School. She is a member of the Bishop of Dallas Diocese Immigration Task Force. Michelle also serves as the EOIR Liaison in Dallas, Texas.

Elina Magaly Santana is co-founder of Santana Rodriguez Law, P.A., an immigration firm based in Miami, Florida. Elina focuses her immigration practice on Family-based and Marriage-based Residency, Waivers, Naturalization, and Deportation Defense (including Asylum & Cancellation of Removal). She is best known in the immigration community for her waiver expertise and her work defending against marriage fraud accusations. Elina is currently the immediate past Chair of the

AILA South Florida Chapter. She is also a Board Member for Capital Good Fund, a social change organization that uses financial services to tackle poverty in the U.S., including providing non-predatory immigration loans to families in need of funds to hire a lawyer and pay filing fees. Elina is one of the proud administrators of the "Nerdy Immigration Lawyers" Facebook group and manages 22 immigration-specific WhatsApp mentoring groups containing 2000+ attorneys nationwide. She is an avid networker and a dog lover who volunteers with rescue groups in her free time. Elina earned her JD from Boston University (BU) School of Law and her BA in both Sociology and Spanish Literature at New York University (NYU) with high honors. She is a fluent Spanish speaker who was raised in Miami, Florida by a proud Cuban-American immigrant family. Also, no matter how many pictures of your kids you show her, she will still think her dogs are cuter.

Hon. Paul Schmidt was appointed as an Immigration Judge at the U.S. Immigration Court in Arlington, Virginia in May 2003 and retired from the bench on June 30, 2016. Prior to his appointment as an Immigration Judge, he served as a Board Member for the Board of Immigration Appeals, Executive Office for Immigration Review, in Falls Church, VA, since February 12, 1995. Judge Schmidt served as Board Chairman from February 12, 1995, until April 9, 2001, when he chose to step down as Chairman to adjudicate cases full-time. He authored the landmark decision *Matter of Kasinga*, 21 I&N Dec. 357 (BIA 1996), extending asylum protection to victims of female genital mutilation. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lawrence University in 1970 (cum laude), and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin School of Law in 1973 (cum laude; Order of the Coif). While at the University of Wisconsin, he served as an editor of the Wisconsin Law Review. Judge Schmidt served as acting General Counsel of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") (1986-1987; 1979-1981), where he was instrumental in developing the rules and procedures to implement the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. He also served as the Deputy General Counsel of INS for 10 years (1978-1987). He was the managing partner of the Washington, DC, office of Fragomen, Del Rey & Bernsen (1993-95), and also practiced business immigration law with the Washington, DC, office of Jones, Day, Reavis and Pogue from 1987-92 (partner, 1990-92). Judge Schmidt also served as an adjunct professor of law at George Mason University School of Law in 1989 and at Georgetown University Law Center (2012-14; 2017-). He has authored numerous articles on immigration law, and has written extensively for the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Judge Schmidt is a member of the American Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, and the Wisconsin and District of Columbia Bars. Judge Schmidt was one of the founding members of the International Association of Refugee Law Judges ("IARLJ"). In June 2010, Judge Schmidt received the Lucia R. Briggs Distinguished Achievement Award from the Lawrence University Alumni Association in recognition of his notable career achievements in the field of immigration law. Since retiring, in addition to resuming his Adjunct Professor position at Georgetown Law, Judge Schmidt has established the blog immigrationcourtside.com, is a member of the Round Table of Former Immigration Judges, is an Americas Vice President of the IARLJ, serves on the Advisory Board of AYUDA, and assists the National Immigrant Justice Center/Heartland Alliance on various projects, as well as speaking, lecturing, and writing in forums throughout the country on contemporary immigration issues, due process, and U.S. Immigration Court reform.

Michael Sharma-Crawford is an aggressive litigator and compassionate advocate of fairness in immigration law. As a former law enforcement officer, Michael has a deep understanding of the challenges of immigration law enforcement, detainment issues and litigation. Michael frequently handles complex immigration proceedings where current statutes require greater experience and understanding. Michael frequently lectures at the AILA national and mid-year conferences. He has

also lectured about immigration law to the Kansas and Missouri Bar Associations, and Kansas and Missouri Public Defenders.

Michael was one of the attorneys who was counsel on the successful Supreme Court appeal, *Mellouli v. Lynch*, 135 S. Ct. 1980 (2015). He has successfully argued other cases before the Circuit Courts of Appeal and has handled many successful matters before the Board of Immigration Appeals. He is admitted to the District Courts of Kansas and Missouri and the Federal Appeals Court for the Second, Seventh, Eighth and Tenth Circuits. He is also a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Kansas Bar Association, Missouri Bar Association, Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association. Michael serves as ICE liaison for the local AILA Chapter. His former service includes the Board of Directors for Kansas Legal Services, the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Foundation, the Advisory Committee for the ABA Commission on Immigration and as a member of the USCIS Field Operations Liaison Committee for AILA.

Before becoming an attorney, Michael served nearly 15 years in the Sedgwick County, Kansas Sheriff's Department, and is scarily good at speaking "Good Ole Boy."

Rekha Sharma-Crawford is a principal and managing partner at Sharma-Crawford Attorneys at Law, where she is known for taking on extremely complex and high-profile cases that others have turned away. She regularly practices before the Federal Courts on cases involving affirmative immigration benefits as well as the Courts of Appeal. She was the lead counsel in *Jamal v. Sessions*, 18-cv-06015 (W. Dist. MO. 2018); *Bringas- Rodriguez v. Sessions et al.*, 18-70049 (9th Cir. 2018); *Matter of A-L-*, (AAO Jan. 12, 2017); *Matter of Lemus*, 25 I&N Dec. 734 (BIA 2012), *Matter of Lemus*, 24 I&N Dec. 373 (BIA 2007), clarified; *Lemus-Losa v. Holder*, 576 F.3d 752,761 (7th Cir. 2009) and was part of the legal team on the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Kansas v. Garcia*, 140 S.Ct. 791 (2020).

Rekha is a respected and published contributor to legal journals and other publications, and most recently published an article in the AILA Law Journal, along with Hons. Lory Rosenberg, Susan Roy and Paul Schmidt, entitled "Time for a Child Welfare Approach to Cancellation of Removal." Her expertise in immigration law is sought out by clients and colleagues, from judges to immigration officials to lawmakers. She was the Editor-in-Chief of The AILA Litigation Toolbox, a hands-on approach to litigating immigration issues and a contributing author for the AILA Waivers Book. In 2022, Rekha authored a children's book *Aaliyah The Brave, Empowering Children Coping with Immigration Enforcement*. The book, available in English and Spanish, was designed as a resource for parents, teachers, social workers, advocates, and lawyers. It helps readers understand the impact immigration enforcement can have on children and what emotions children may feel in the aftermath.

Rekha is a frequent speaker at the American Immigration Lawyers' Association (AILA) national and other conferences. She has also served on various national committees for AILA and is an Elected Director on the AILA Board of Governors. She also serves on the board for the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild. Finally, she is an Adjunct Professor teaching Immigration Law at the University of Kansas School of Law and Washburn University School of Law.

Rekha and her husband/law partner, Michael, established The Clinic at Sharma-Crawford Attorneys at Law in January 2012 to close the gap between low-income immigrants facing removal and the availability of qualified, affordable representation in the Kansas City Immigration Court.

In 2018, they helped develop and bring to life the annual Trial College, the first of its kind program designed to raise the practice of immigration removal defense.

The Missouri Bar Association honored Rekha and Michael with its Pro Bono Publico Award in 2017. In 2018, the Kansas Bar Association honored Rekha with the Courageous Attorney Award, an award presented from time to time to attorneys who have displayed exceptional courage in the face of adversity, thus bringing credit to the legal profession. In 2021, Rekha was nationally recognized by AILA with the Edith Lowenstein Memorial Award for excellence in advancing the practice of immigration law. Also in 2021, the Johnson County Bar Association honored Rekha with the 2021 Advocate Attorney Award.

Erich C. Straub is an attorney concentrating on family-based immigration and deportation defense. He has been licensed since 1994. He has been listed in Best Lawyers in America since 2006, including being named “Lawyer of the Year” for Milwaukee in 2016 and 2018. He served on the AILA Board of Governors from 2007 to 2009. He is a long-time supporter of The Clinic and is one of the founding members of the annual Trial College.

Lorilei W. (they/them) is a queer, trans non-binary Korean-American abolitionist, artist, and attorney dedicated to teaching legal advocates on how to engage in trauma-informed and antiracist advocacy in their individual capacities and collectively as movement advocates using an interdisciplinary approach informed by systems theory, design thinking, and management science. Lorilei's expertise is informed by over a decade of professional experiences ranging from volunteer to director at numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Southern Poverty Law Center, Legal Services NYC, and various Catholic Charities organizations. Lorilei has been a strategic accomplice to migrants across the nation, including in rural farms in Upstate NY, migrant camps in Tijuana, and multiple detention settings, from unaccompanied minors shelters to rural for-profit mass incarceration facilities in the Deep South. Currently, Lorilei serves as an associate attorney with the Raleigh Immigration Law Firm.

Given their deep expertise in immigration law, Lorilei served as co-faculty for the 2021-22 New York Law School Asylum Clinic and consultant to The Confined Arts, an arts and advocacy project out of Columbia Law School. They previously served as the Training Attorney for the Shriver Center on Poverty Law, where they designed and launched a national network of expert race equity legal advocates to lead sessions on racial justice advocacy, while also designing and leading sessions in trauma-informed advocacy, community-driven advocacy, structural racialization, systems thinking, practice management, and supervision. Lorilei's experiences building power in local community groups and among colleagues within nonprofit workspaces are the foundation for their approach and methodology on building sustainable, collaborative direct services advocacy models.

Lorilei is admitted to the state bars of New York and Texas, the US Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit, and the Southern and Eastern Federal District Courts of New York. They are a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and the University of Maryland. Lorilei is also an alum of the Robert H. Smith School of Business's Quality Enhancement Systems and Teams (QUEST) Honors Program, a multidisciplinary program through which they studied systems thinking, project management, organizational design, and marketing.