



# Kristi Nelson

Partner

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Kristi Nelson has over 25 years of experience litigating commercial and employment matters in state and federal courts including contract, fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, discrimination, wage claims, and unfair trade practices cases. She has defended numerous companies in employment discrimination cases arising under federal and state laws and represented plaintiffs in high-stake whistleblower claims. Kristi has tried cases and argued appeals in the federal and state courts for public companies, privately-held firms and individuals.

Kristi has also conducted numerous internal investigations of workplace misconduct. She served as an outside investigator for a major airline company, where she traveled nationwide conducting investigations of workplace misconduct, including alleged sexual harassment, discrimination and misappropriation of company assets. She has conducted internal investigations of sexual harassment, discrimination, FLSA violations, and other alleged workplace misconduct for large publicly traded companies, small privately held companies, and governmental entities. She used her experience conducting internal investigations to develop the curriculum for and teach a law school course on how to conduct effective workplace investigations. In 2014, she was appointed by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois to serve as counsel for the Special Master investigating and monitoring alleged illegal employment practices at State of Illinois agencies in *Shakman et al. vs. Democratic Organization of Cook County, et al.*, No. 69 C 2145.

In addition to conducting internal investigations of workplace misconduct, Kristi also has extensive experience counseling clients on compliance and employment matters, as well as drafting and negotiating employment and severance agreements. She is a Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP).

Kristi also serves as an arbitrator for the Circuit Court of Cook County's Commercial Calendar mandatory arbitration program and FINRA and is a panel member of the Business Conduct Committee and Probable Cause Committee for CME Group, which oversee matters related to conduct and trading practices that could threaten the integrity of the financial markets. Kristi is dedicated to providing pro bono legal services to persons in need. She served the maximum term as a member of the Board of Directors for Chicago Volunteer Legal Services and now serves as a member of its Advisory Board. She has represented clients pro bono in immigration, employment, unfair housing, criminal, and civil rights matters. She is passionate about helping women and children in need, and she won immigration



relief for women and children from Kenya, Togo, Somalia, Mexico, and Guinea. She recently traveled to the border of Mexico to represent detained mothers and children seeking asylum and other immigration relief and traveled to Somaliland to teach U.S. Constitutional law to high school students. In 2020, her dedication to providing pro bono legal services was honored by DePaul University College of Law through the DePaul Alumni Service Award.

Kristi obtained her J.D. from DePaul University College of Law, where she received an academic scholarship every semester and served as an editor of the Law Review. She graduated with 2 honors and was elected to Order of the Coif. During law school, Kristi used her psychology degree to work as a counselor at a children's psychiatric hospital and she worked as an extern for the Homicide Task Force, Cook County Public Defender's Office.

She lives in Chicago with her husband and two children. When she is not working or spending time with her family, she enjoys running and traveling. She has completed over a dozen marathons and 25+ triathlons.

