

# **Volunteer Attorney: Katie Cunningham**

## **What is your educational background leading up to law school?**

I graduated from DePaul University with a history degree. After graduation, I worked for a few years before attending law school at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. I graduated from law school in the spring of 2002 and started working that fall as an attorney in Chicago.

## **What made you decide to attend law school and become an attorney?**

I wish I could say that I had a detailed plan upon finishing undergrad, but the truth is that I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I had plans to take the LSAT and the GRE so that I could explore my options but I took the LSAT first, decided I was tired of test-taking, and applied to law schools.

## **Why do you volunteer with the MVLC?**

I enjoy volunteer work, and volunteering with the MVLC gives me the opportunity to use my legal skills to assist people that may not have the resources to hire an attorney. In addition, the MVLC structure (the provision of brief legal advice, the help from the student volunteers, and the ability to commit to as many or as few volunteer hours as one wants) makes it easy for volunteer attorneys. The clients that I've worked with or witnessed at the MVLC are so appreciative of the assistance they receive, and it feels good to be able to provide that assistance.

## **Has your experience volunteering at the MVLC enriched your practice as an attorney?**

Yes. Volunteering at the MVLC allows me to explore legal issues and work with clients that I don't encounter in my day to day practice. I think that any attorney, no matter how experienced, can benefit from tackling legal issues outside of his or her practice.

## **What was the best advice you heard in law school and/or what advice would you give current law students?**

The best advice I heard as a law student was to "be prepared" (which is also sound advice for working lawyers). I'd echo this advice to current law students, but I'd also advise them to make friends and to have fun, as often as possible.

## **What do you like to do in your free time?**

I like to read, bake, listen to podcasts, and explore my neighborhood (Bay View) while walking my dogs.