



Daniel Epstein Biography

Daniel Epstein is running for Illinois Supreme Court. Epstein is an Evanston native and resident, and—until leaving his job to run for the Court—worked for the #1 law firm for *pro bono* service in the country, Jenner & Block. He made a mark while there, serving clients in cases before the Supreme Court of the United States, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, United States District Courts across the country, state courts in Illinois and across the country, and both federal and Illinois administrative courts. Epstein represented people who had been abused. Some who came to this country seeking asylum from abusive tyrants (including a woman escaping indefinite servitude and health complications springing from female genital mutilation in East Africa), some by the courts (including a man who was convicted on a judge's whim—rather than evidence—and spent 17 years in prison before Epstein and others pressed his case to the Supreme Court of the United States and earned his retrial and eventual release), some by quack forensic scientists (including a man imprisoned for decades based on junk bite mark comparison), some by romantic partners (including a woman who courageously pursued orders of protection against her abusive boyfriend), and even some abused by the torments of their own mind (including a man who had spent his life shuttling between mental hospitals, homelessness, and prison). That work earned Epstein the 2016 Albert E. Jenner Pro Bono Award for providing exceptional legal services to the needy. And it also exposed Epstein to the host of problems that he's now seeking to help fix.

Epstein was published on some of those issues and on issues related to our courts more broadly. He co-authored an article published in the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* on how the Illinois Supreme Court's failure to implement digital recording in certain courts was effectively stripping Cook County's wrongfully evicted of their right to appeal. He also co-authored the 2018 Illinois Civil Practice Guide (which professors and practitioners alike use to teach and understand civil procedure in Illinois) and published an article in the *University of Chicago Law Review Online* that was the first to mathematically estimate the location of the federal pleading threshold—a distinction that landed him on the Social Science Research Network's Top Ten download list in the areas of Decision Theory; Law & Society: Civil Procedure; Law & Society: Courts; Law & Economics: Private Law; Legal Theories, Policies & Practices, Law & Society; Litigants & the Judiciary; Philosophy of Action; Pleadings, Motions & Pretrial Procedure; and Procedure: Courts. He also chairs the Chicago Bar Association's committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution; and co-founded Zeyo, a socially responsible online dispute resolution platform attempting to reduce legal costs so much that nobody can't afford to seek legal justice, and which proudly refuses to hear claims that would enable non-disclosure agreements to protect people who commit sexual assault or discrimination based on race, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

But Epstein's work extends beyond courtrooms and journals. He brought together police and public defender to found a nonprofit called Perspective to the People which partnered with 29th Ward Alderman Chris Taliaferro and a block club in Chicago's Austin neighborhood to provide free, citizen-owned security cameras to neighbors in an area with concerns about rising crime. He also serves on the board of directors for the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (which serves as "the Jewish voice for social justice in Chicago") and on the Young Professionals Council of the Lawndale Christian Legal Center (which provides legal services grounded in restorative justice for youth in the Lawndale area). Epstein was recognized by Chicago Scholars for his community work, honoring him as one of their 35 Under 35 Young Leaders Making an Impact; and he was honored by the Woman's Club of Evanston with the Linda Wade Community Service Award.

Prior to his career in law, Epstein worked in policy, politics, and government. Epstein lived in Washington, D.C. for five years, during which time he worked as the director of government relations for a global provider of early childhood education, promoting subsidies and tax credits to enable children from low-income families to attend high quality child care. He also wrote on the topic, including an op-ed in *The Washington Post*, titled "A Share in Children's Success: Using Market Forces to End Education Inequity," which earned him invitations to join the Institute for New Economic Thinking's Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group, ReadyNation's and Kauffman Family Foundation's Early Childhood Innovation Working Group, and Rep. Jared Polis' and the Merage Foundation's Human Capital Bonds Brain Trust. At the same time, Epstein founded a nonprofit called Word Up DC which attempted to provide educational services to inmates in the D.C. jail. Unfortunately, Word Up DC was frozen out when a new mayoral administration took office, but Epstein forged ahead, taking the reins of a nonprofit called America Educates and turning it into a fiscal sponsor that supported education programs across the globe. One of those programs was the Ikirwa School in the small Meru village of Midawe, Tanzania. To support the school, Epstein went to Midawe to briefly live and work alongside its founder, Gasper Mbise. While there, Epstein and Mbise engaged the school's Member of Parliament (Hon. Ole Medeye) to hold his first ever event with Meru people, and successfully compelled him to help bring electricity to the school's village. Prior to that work, Epstein worked in London as a research assistant to a member of the British House of Commons, where he developed anti-bullying legislation, campaign strategy to combat a rising white nationalist party in Britain's West Midlands, and his member of parliament's response to the July 7, 2005 tube bombings. Across the years Epstein also worked for the Illinois Department of Employment Security; interned for Representatives Schakowsky, Emanuel, and Shea-Porter; and served as the National Committeeman for the D.C. Young Democrats—in which capacity he proudly testified in support of D.C.'s pioneering Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009.

Epstein also excelled in his academic career. He earned his law degree from the University of Chicago Law School, where he won the Edward W. Hinton Moot Court Championship, and the Thomas R. Mulroy Prize for Excellence in Appellate Advocacy and Oral Argument. Epstein was also awarded entry into the Tony Patiño Fellowship (given to the student(s) displaying the most impressive leadership, service, and achievement), and served as co-president of the Public Interest Law Society and staff member on the Chicago Journal of International Law. While in law school, Epstein externed for Judge Edmond Chang in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and worked as a research assistant to Prof. Anthony Casey (in which capacity

he researched cross-guarantee and cross-default provisions). Epstein received his bachelor's degree *cum laude* from Washington University in St. Louis, where he studied economics and political science. His honors thesis earned him entry into the Omicron Delta Epsilon International Honor Society in Economics and was discussed in Jeff Jarvis' book, What Would Google Do? Epstein was a four-year member of Washington University's track & field team (competing in the 400 meter dash) and was a six-time awardee of the University Athletic Association's All Academic Recognition. Epstein is also a proud graduate of Evanston Township High School.

Epstein is a member of Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston. He also proudly notes that he is a third generation Chicago lawyer whose grandfather graduated from John Marshall Law School back when Dean Noble Lee collected tuition by accepting change from students as he walked the halls.