HUSCH BLACKWELL



Darren Korte

PRO BONO COUNSEL

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OVERVIEW

As pro bono counsel, Darren advocates for parents and guardians in the family court system in the Kansas City area.

Darren made two discoveries as a law student: a love of the courtroom and oral argument, and a calling to juvenile work. Although he had first come to law school with an interest in legal research, he quickly realized that he loved trial work, where he could make a direct impact on outcomes for clients. A second-year course on juvenile law introduced him to his true passion—helping protect those who cannot protect themselves. The topic resonated with Darren's protective instincts, and he knew he could never sit idly by and watch legal matters go wrong for kids.

After graduation, Darren accepted a position with the Missouri Department of Social Services' Division of Legal Services representing Children's Division in all manners of child protection related cases throughout rural Missouri. In 2007, he changed roles and joined the Jackson County Juvenile Office. There, Darren represented the Juvenile Officer in each of the courtrooms, handling Abuse and Neglect cases, Termination of Parental Rights and Juvenile Delinquency. Darren's assignments also included the responsibility of making the filing decisions for the office. He gained extensive courtroom experience during his time with the Juvenile Office, trying hundreds of bench trials.

Today, Darren sits on the other side of the table for Husch Blackwell's pro bono family clients. He represents parents and guardians in cases like those he handled at the Juvenile Office, advocating for their and their families' interests. His 18-plus years inside government agencies provide invaluable perspective on

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clients' situations: Darren's experience means that he understands where a case is likely to go, the relative strength of the evidence, and a client's likely best course of action.

Darren's goal throughout his career has always been to keep the human side of the law front and center, treating people like people, instead of like cases and numbers. He greatly values the opportunity to work directly with the families impacted by the courts' decisions, and as a parent himself, he understands how crucial clients' cases are. Darren aims to achieve the best outcomes possible and to make difficult situations less difficult.

Experience

AS ATTORNEY FOR JACKSON COUNTY JUVENILE OFFICE

- Prepared multiple cases for trial on a weekly basis, including reviewing medical records, psychological records, and social work records; preparing witnesses for trial; and negotiating to obtain the best outcome for clients.
- Reviewed protective custody assessments and police reports, making filing decisions as abuse/neglect warrant attorney and delinquency warrant attorney.
- Reviewed, filed, and tried termination of parental rights cases.
- Managed the Family Treatment Court, helping to support families find long term sobriety and make long standing positive changes.

AS ATTORNEY FOR MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- Served as legal representative for the department in all juvenile and family law cases arising in the multiple counties, including filing and trying many termination of parental rights cases.
- Assisted the department and local juvenile officers in complex and protracted litigation involving abused or neglected children in areas such as Munchausen's by proxy, severe sexual abuse, and child fatalities.
- Conducted legal education training sessions for social workers on a quarterly basis.

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Recognition

- KCMBF President's Award, 2020
- Jackson County Juvenile Office Management and Professional Award, 2019

Education

- J.D., University of Missouri School of Law
- B.S., University of Illinois

Admissions

- Missouri

Community Leadership

Darren has volunteered with the Kansas City Metro Bar Association's Domestic Violence Alliance, serving as co-chair of the initiative's yearly seminar from 2018 to 2020. He is also a proud LGBTQ ally who has valued the opportunity to support his trans niece.



2025 Pro Bono Champion

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