

# Lisa M. Needham

## PROFILE

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Attorney with a proven background in legal writing and editing. Ten years of experience teaching legal research, writing, and oral advocacy skills to law students. Experienced in creating content focused on complex legal matters and technologies. Continuously remain abreast of legal trends through extensive research and analysis. Areas of expertise include:

Legal Writing & Editing • Teaching • Legal Research & Analysis • Proofreading • Legal Technologies • Compliance • Motion Practice • Data Practices Law • Elections Law • Appellate Work • Consulting

## EDUCATION

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MITCHELL HAMLINE COLLEGE OF LAW (St. Paul, MN)

Juris Doctor (J.D.), magna cum laude, 2002

Class rank: 27/232; GPA: 3.42

Assistant Editor and Staff Member for the William Mitchell Law Review (1999-2001)

COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT (St. Joseph, MN)

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History & Philosophy, cum laude, 1991

## LEGAL WRITING AND TEACHING

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### MITCHELL HAMLINE COLLEGE OF LAW

Co-Director, Lawyering Program/Assistant Professor of Legal Writing 2017-Present

- Oversee first-year legal writing and representation program.
- Focus on providing instruction via a hybrid online model using real-time interactive methods such as Zoom and Skype and asynchronous tools embedded in a learning management program.
- Develop innovative year-long curriculum focused on practical lawyering skills in writing, research, interviewing, and client counseling.
- Supervise team of 34 adjunct professors drawn from various practice areas.
- Work directly with students who need additional instruction.

Adjunct Professor—Legal Writing & Appellate Advocacy 2008-2017

- Courses taught:
  - Lawyering (2008 – 2017)
    - A year-long course working with students on writing skills in a practice-oriented context.
  - Legal Research and Writing I and II (2014 – 2015)
    - Semester-length courses working with students who need additional assistance in some basic writing skills
  - Appellate Advocacy (2010 – current)
    - Semester-length course focusing on appellate brief-writing and oral argument.
- Extensive experience teaching in both hybrid online and in-person settings.

- Experience teaching legal research, writing, and study skills to students who require additional instruction.
- Develop motion practice and appellate advocacy problems designed to teach students research, writing, and oral advocacy skills.
- Hold one-to-one student conferences to review written work.
- Deploy multiple pedagogical techniques, including team-based learning, problem-based learning, lectures, and peer-to-peer feedback exercises.

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#### LAWYERIST MEDIA

Deputy Editor and Contributing Writer

2013-2018

- Edited legal practice publication that focuses on solo and small-firm attorneys.
- Authored both short and long pieces covering a wide array of issues, including legal technology, legal news, employment and diversity trends in law, access to justice, and legal education.
- Conducted multi-state surveys to determine/verify state regulations affecting lawyers.

#### **Selection of relevant publications:**

“Measuring the Access to Justice Gap” (8/27/16)

<https://lawyerist.com/measuring-access-to-justice/>

Discussion and critique of National Center for State Courts’ *Landscape of Litigation in Civil Courts* report, which found that nearly 70% of civil defendants are not represented by attorneys.

“What Skills Should New Lawyers Have?” (8/3/2016)

<https://lawyerist.com/123266/skills-new-lawYERS/>

An overview of the “Educating Tomorrow’s Leaders” survey, which asked 24,000 attorneys about what they looked for when hiring new employees.

“So You Think You Can Teach? How to Prep for Your First Law School Class” (4/27/2015)

<https://lawyerist.com/81876/think-can-teach-prep-first-law-school-class/>

A guide to teaching your first class as a law school adjunct.

“How Laws Are Written So You Ignore the Important Parts” (6/13/2014)

<https://lawyerist.com/71054/laws-written-ignore-important-parts/>

An examination of how typography and legalese make the law difficult to parse, even for lawyers.

#### **PRACTICE EXPERIENCE**

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Staff Attorney, Education Minnesota

2015-2016

- Represented individual teachers and school staff for the largest union in Minnesota.
- Assisted in contract negotiations for a number of Minnesota’s local teacher unions.
- Managed client expectations and achieved favorable settlements of two class-wide grievances.

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| Consultant, Minnesota Department of Education  | 2014      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaired appeal panels and reviewed case files.</li> <li>• Served as final decision-maker for the Department and wrote agency decisions in the Food and Nutrition Services Division, an area of administrative law which is highly technical and highly regulated.</li> </ul>  |           |
| Charter Compliance Liaison, Minnesota Department of Education  | 2009-2013 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported efforts in handling complex federal litigation relating to charter schools in Minnesota.</li> <li>• Advised charter school districts on compliance with state and federal legal requirements.</li> <li>• Provided legislative research, interpretation, and analysis regarding charter school law, special education law, and First Amendment issues.</li> </ul>                |           |
| Assistant City Attorney, Minneapolis City Attorney's Office  | 2005-2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided legal advice and client services regarding civil matters to Minnesota's largest municipality, specializing in data practices, election law, First Amendment issues, and city charter matters.</li> <li>• Served as elections attorney during the 2008 Senate recount.</li> <li>• Drafted numerous persuasive briefs and memoranda in both trial and appellate courts.</li> </ul> |           |
| Rulemaking Coordinator/Data Practices Officer, Minnesota Department of Education   | 2005      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafted rules related to K-12 special education and verified compliance with federal education initiatives.</li> <li>• Provided guidance to parents, teachers, districts, and Department members regarding data privacy.</li> </ul>   |           |
| Law Clerk for Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz, Minnesota Supreme Court  | 2002-2003 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted the Chief Justice in appellate matters before the state's highest court.</li> <li>• Reviewed appellate files, researched/prepared memoranda, and drafted opinions.</li> </ul>  |           |
| Certified Student Attorney, Criminal Appeals, Minnesota Attorney General's Office  | 2000-2002 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researched and authored 30+ felony-level criminal appellate briefs and post-conviction matters.</li> <li>• Performed oral arguments at the Minnesota Court of Appeals.</li> </ul>   |           |

## SOFTWARE / TOOLS

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Markdown, HTML, WordPress, Microsoft Office, Google Docs, Adobe Acrobat, Westlaw, LexisNexis, Casetext, Fastcase, Rocket Matter, Clio, MyCase, CosmoLex, Zoom, Canvas, Blackboard.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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- Pro Bono Representation: Nameless Coalition, a homeless shelter in Bemidji, MN, in anti-SLAPP litigation (2016)
- Volunteer Board Member, Common Cause Minnesota (2012-2014)
- Volunteer Board Member, She Rock
- Volunteer Board Member, Pro-Choice Resources (2009-2012)

## **CLE PRESENTATIONS**

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- Writing with Scalpel & Sutures: Surgical Editing for Precision and Clarity (CLE presented February 2, 2018).
- Effective Ways to Communicate with Email Newsletters, E-Books and Blogs (ABA TECHSHOW presentation March 16, 2017).
- Safely and Securely Negotiate Documents Electronically (ABA TECHSHOW presentation March 17, 2017).
- Effective Advocacy: Persuasive Legal Writing (CLE presented September 19, 2014).
- Social Media and Lawyer Ethics: The Medium is not the Message (CLE presented November 18, 2011).
- Lessons from Election 2008 (CLE presented May 15, 2009).
- The First Amendment and National Security: A Case Study Involving the Republican National Convention/St. Paul (CLE presented May 16, 2008).

## **LAW REVIEW PUBLICATIONS**

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- A Day in the Life of the Digital Music Wars: The RIAA v. Diamond Multimedia, 26 Wm. Mitchell. L. Rev. 1135 (2000).

## **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**