

KRISTEN CLARKE

Kristen Clarke is the Co-Director of the Political Participation Group at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. where she oversees and coordinates the activities of the organization's legal program in the areas of voting rights and election law. In 2009, LDF successfully defended the Voting Rights Act against a constitutional challenge in one of the most important civil rights cases to come before the U.S. Supreme Court in recent time: *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. One v. Holder*. That case, initiated in the D.C. District Court, involved collaboration among a number of local and national organizations.

Ms. Clarke provided significant legal advocacy during Congress's 2006 reauthorization of the expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act, and has also provided testimony to Congress regarding various voting rights and election reform matters. Her other voting rights litigation experience includes a challenge to a statewide redistricting plan in Louisiana, vote dilution claims, and National Voter Registration Act "motor voter" cases, among others.

Prior to joining LDF, Ms. Clarke worked for several years in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. She served as a trial attorney in the Voting Section of the Division and worked as a Federal Prosecutor in the Criminal Section of the Division where she handled a range of police misconduct, police brutality, hate crimes, human trafficking and obstruction matters. In addition, she served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia where she litigated numerous cases in the office's Domestic Violence Unit.

Ms. Clarke writes and comments frequently on issues concerning race, law and democracy. Her latest book, *Barack Obama and African American Empowerment: The Rise of Black America's New Leadership* (co-edited with Dr. Manning Marable) was released by Palgrave Macmillan in the fall of 2009. Her other publications include *Seeking Higher Ground: The Hurricane Katrina Crisis Race and Public Policy Reader* which was released by Palgrave Macmillan in December 2007. Her writing appears in a number of other books including *America Votes!*, an American Bar Association volume on modern American election law. Her most recent article, *The Obama Factor: The Impact of the 2008 Presidential Election on Future Voting Rights Act Litigation*, appears in the 2009 issue of the Harvard Law & Policy Review.

She received her A. B. from Harvard University and her J.D. from Columbia Law School.