

About the Author

Joseph A. Vail was a former immigration judge with the U.S. Department of Justice. While serving as a judge, Joe adjudicated almost 3,200 cases over a four-year period. Previously, while in private practice for 11 years, Joe represented noncitizens in deportation proceedings, averaging 125 cases a year. In July 1999, Joe started the immigration clinic at the University of Houston Law Center, where he also taught several courses on immigration law. Joe entered the field of immigration law in 1980 as a volunteer through Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA). He then worked for three years as a legal aid attorney with Gulf Coast Legal Foundation in Houston and later with AYUDA, Inc., in Washington, D.C. Joe was the recipient of the Texas state bar's Pro Bono Attorney Award for 1994 and the American Immigration Lawyers Association's Elmer Fried Excellence in Teaching Award for 2005. He was a 1980 graduate of Widener Law School and was board-certified by the state bar of Texas in immigration and nationality law.