

Susan Sher

Former Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama; First Female Corporation Counsel for the City of Chicago

Susan Sher, Michelle Obama's former chief of staff, is a long-time friend of the Obamas and widely regarded as a solid strategic thinker. Originally hired as the President's associate counsel, Sher was part of President Obama's healthcare reform team before transitioning to the East Wing. There, she proved herself an integral player in the White House, from overseeing the First Lady's healthcare and anti-obesity agenda to coordinating with the West Wing on Michelle Obama's role in elections.

President Obama said in a statement, "Susan has brought tremendous skill and dedication to the First Lady's office, as well as my Administration's outreach to the Jewish Community and our efforts to pass healthcare reform." The *New York Times* also wrote that Sher was the First Lady's most effective advocate in the East Wing. In her lectures, she draws from her experience, sharing anecdotes from her time in the East Wing. She addresses healthcare, other current policy discussions, and the inner-workings of the world's most powerful residence.

Focusing on Healthcare. Before her service in the White House, Susan Sher was the vice president for legal and governmental affairs and general counsel of the University of Chicago Hospitals and Health System for more than a decade. She was responsible for all legal, government, regulatory, and community affairs at the hospitals. In this role, she was Valerie Jarrett's (the assistant to the President for intergovernmental relations and the public liaison) and Michelle Obama's boss. She was also on the Mt. Sinai Hospital Medical Center & Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital & Care Network board of directors and has been on a variety of task forces and committees involving nonprofit corporations and healthcare, including the Illinois Hospital Association, the Attorney General's Charitable Advisory Task Force, and the Donor's Public Trust Task Force.

Sher then joined the Obama administration in 2009, signing on as a White House associate counsel to both President Barack Obama and the First Lady. She provided legal advice on healthcare policy issues, and later in 2009, the First Lady asked Sher to step in as her chief of staff. She helped the First Lady promote the President's healthcare reform legislation and then the First Lady's own health and anti-obesity campaign.

Chicago Roots. Susan Sher was the first assistant corporation counsel for the city of Chicago from 1989 through 1993 and then became the corporation counsel, the city's top legal officer. In these roles, she was responsible for representing the mayor, city departments, boards, and commissions on all legal matters. She was Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's lead attorney for eight years. Before working for the City of Chicago, Sher was associate general counsel of the University of Chicago and, earlier, was a partner at Mayer Brown & Platt, where she specialized in labor and litigation.

She is a 1974 cum laude graduate of Loyola University of the Chicago School of Law. She also served the Obama administration as liaison to the Jewish community.