

From the Dean



(L-R) Taylor, Takx, Franklin and Funderburke

Congratulations to our Black Law Students Association chapter (FSU BLSA) for placing third in the National Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition earlier this month! FSU BLSA team members are Tawanna Franklin (3L), Joshua Funderburke (1L), Jemma Takx (1L) and Mikayla Taylor (1L), and they were coached by alumna C. Erica White ('01). FSU BLSA was one of 19 law school teams from around the nation to compete. Our students qualified for the national competition, which was held in Brooklyn, New York, by placing second out of 15 teams in a regional competition in February. More than 100 teams competed regionally for a chance to qualify for the national competition. We are so proud of these talented student advocates and thankful for the efforts of their coach!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Faculty Profile: Jennifer Parker LaVia

A member of the clinical faculty, [Jennifer Parker LaVia](#) directs our new Veterans Legal Clinic at the College of Law. Previously, she was a member of the first-year writing faculty and has taught Legal Research and Writing I and II, Legal Writing for LL.M.s, Advanced Legal Writing, Civil Rights, Professional Responsibility and Topics in Florida Practice. Prior to joining the FSU faculty in 2002, she worked for Holland & Knight in Tallahassee, where she focused on appellate practice and ethics. LaVia is a co-author of *Florida Legal Research*. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Duke University and a J.D. from the University of Florida. During law school, LaVia was a research editor for the *University of Florida Law Review* and was elected to Order of the Coif.



"I am so thankful for the chance to lead the Veterans Legal Clinic because it has allowed me to combine my two passions, teaching law students and representing indigent clients. The clinic is also a wonderful opportunity for law students to gain practical legal skills while making a real difference in their community."

Alum Profile: Matthew K. Foster ('94)

[Matthew K. Foster](#) is a partner at Brooks, LeBoeuf, Bennett, Foster & Gwartzney, P.A. in Tallahassee. He practices personal injury law, focusing on helping injured victims of sexual abuse, auto and trucking accidents, and negligent security cases. Foster has been named one of the nation's "Top 100 Civil Lawyers" by the National Trial Lawyers Association. Foster also serves as an adjunct professor at FSU Law and regularly teaches Trial Practice. In addition, he devotes much of his time to coaching the law school's Mock Trial Team. He recently pledged \$25,000 to establish the Mock Trial Coaches' Endowment at the law school. The income distributed from the endowment will be used for Trial Team expenses, such as travel to national competitions. Additionally, the fund establishes the Best 3L Mock Trial Team Member Award, to be conferred annually.



"It's a privilege to be just a small part of our trial program at the College of Law. Watching these students matriculate into exceptional client advocates is truly a rewarding experience."

Student Profile: 3L Marlie Blaise

Desired Practice Location: Any borough in New York City

Graduation Date: May 2018

Field of Law Sought: Labor & employment Law, immigration law, civil rights, any areas of litigation and appellate advocacy.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Marlie Blaise was raised in Orlando. She earned a bachelor's degree in family and child sciences with a minor in psychology from FSU and will graduate from FSU Law in May. Blaise is a member of the Moot Court Team. In 2017, her team finished first in the national Bryant-Moore Civil Rights Moot Court Competition. She was also a semi-finalist in the 2018 Gabrielli National Family Law Competition. Blaise has served as Moot Court IM competition co-chair and editorial chair. During her 2L year, Blaise was the Black Law Students Association member at large. She has also served as a student ambassador for the FSU Law Admissions Office. Currently, Blaise is a judicial extern at the Public Employees Relations Commission, where she attends labor and employment-related hearings and assists hearing officers with drafting recommended orders. She has also clerked at the Florida Department of Financial Services. Last summer, Blaise was a legal intern with the American Civil Liberties Union in New York City. She researched matters relating to criminal law reform and capital punishment, and traveled to Idaho to gather evidence in the ACLU's suit against the state of Idaho for having inadequate services for indigent defendants. During the spring of her 2L year, Blaise worked for FSU's Family Law Clinic. Blaise plans to take the New York Bar Exam after graduation. If you are interested in hiring Blaise or helping her make connections in New York, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).




"The externship and extra-curricular opportunities at FSU College of Law have allowed me to obtain hands-on experiences that I wouldn't have otherwise received in the classroom. With my experience assessing cases at the trial level and further evaluating them at the appellate level, I feel confident knowing that I will be entering the legal profession with a valuable set of skills. I vow to use my skills to not only make a positive impact in the lives of others, but to contribute in a way that will have a lasting effect on the legal profession."


Summer Program Applications Due Today

Do you know someone who may be interested in our Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program, May 21-June 15, 2018? The free program is a month-long immersion into legal study for rising sophomores, juniors and seniors in college—pass this along to someone you think may be interested! The application deadline is Friday, March 30. Check out [our brochure](#) and [visit our website](#) for more information.

PALM BEACH ALUMNI RECEPTION
WEDNESDAY APRIL 18 FROM 6-7:30 PM AT THE PALM BEACH YACHT CLUB
PLEASE EMAIL ALUMNI@LAW.FSU.EDU TO RSVP BY APRIL 11



DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER AWARD
NOMINATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018
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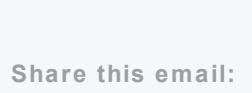
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