



OUTLOOK

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FSU COLLEGE OF LAW
BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK



FSU Law BAN Update

I hope this message finds you all well and thriving. As we forge ahead in 2024, I wanted to share some exciting updates and developments within our network following our recent executive board meeting and engagements with the Dean of the Law School.

In pursuing meaningful change and engagement, we've had constructive meetings with Dean O'Hara O'Connor. These discussions have been pivotal in aligning our goals with the broader objectives of the law school, ensuring that we continue to advocate effectively for our community's needs and aspirations. Our voice and efforts are paramount as the school begins to navigate a new climate relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

During our recent executive board meeting, we embraced the "systems and structure" approach for the remainder of our administration. This strategy will serve as a bridge, connecting the foundational ideas of our founders, the innovative strides taken by **Immediate Past President Conti Moore Smith** and her administration, and the forward-looking vision of **President-Elect Kenneth Pratt's** administration. Under the guidance of **General Counsel Sam Gilot**, we are set to finalize strong bylaws and craft policies and resolutions that will fortify our network's operations while retaining the flexibility to adapt to changing norms.

A key outcome of our discussions is the decision to enhance our communication strategy, which **Treasurer Sharee Davis Foster** will spearhead. We aim to engage our members more frequently with bi-monthly emails and active utilization of our social media platforms. This will

help disseminate information about BAN, its members, legal education updates, and other relevant content more effectively.

Another significant initiative is bolstering our support for the Black Law Students Association (BLSA). We are collaborating on upcoming events and working towards creating a comprehensive membership directory. This effort, championed by **Secretary Maria'h Givens**, aims to provide students and alumni greater access to our network and strengthen community connections.

We are excited to announce a **General Body Meeting scheduled for 9:00 AM EST on Friday, February 23, 2024**. This meeting will be an excellent opportunity for us to come together, discuss our plans, and hear directly from you, our valued members. Your insights and participation are crucial to our collective success. [Register for the meeting here](#).

At this meeting, we will also honor the recipients of our inaugural BAN Alumni Awards:

- Distinguished Alumni Award: **Markenzy Lapointe** (SFL)
- Jurist of the Year: **Judge Anthony Miller** (TLH)
- Most Outstanding Young Alumni Award: **Judge Jessica Goodwin Costello** (TPA)
- Enduring Legacy Award: **Ben Crump** (TLH)
- President's Award of Excellence:
 - **Jasmyne Henderson** (ORL)
 - **Salesia Smith-Gordon** (PAL)
 - **Kareem Spratling** (TPA)

I sincerely thank each of you for your ongoing support and commitment to the FSU Law Black Alumni Network. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our students, alumni, and the broader legal community.

I look forward to seeing you at the General Body Meeting and working together towards a promising year ahead.

In Unity,

G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL

President, FSU Law Black Alumni Network

BAN Featured Member: Sia Baker-Barnes



Sia Baker-Barnes shines as the newly elected President-Elect Designate of The Florida Bar

A Beacon of Leadership and Service

We're thrilled to share the exciting news! One of our own, **Sia Baker-Barnes** from West Palm Beach, has recently been elected as the president-elect designate of The Florida Bar, marking a historic milestone as the first Black woman to hold this esteemed position. Sia, a distinguished member of the Board of Governors and a shareholder at Searcy Denney Scarola Barnhart & Shipley, expressed her gratitude for the unwavering support from her peers. Her journey of servant leadership, backed by over two decades of commitment to voluntary bars and community organizations across the state, highlights her dedication to giving back, mentoring, and supporting her fellow legal professionals and the legal profession at large. Her tenure as the 95th president of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, combined with her certification as a civil trial lawyer and her long-standing role as a mentor to lawyers, law students, and those aspiring to join the legal field, underscores her exceptional contributions and commitment to our community and profession.

[Read More](#)

CLASS NOTES



Conti Moore Smith, Esq.

We are proud to spotlight the achievements of BAN's Immediate Past President, Conti Moore Smith, and her latest endeavor, Law Firm Mechanics. In 2022, Conti and her team embarked on a project to design a Mastermind Retreat exclusively for family law practitioners. Their vision came to fruition in Cancun, where the inaugural Family Law Mastermind Retreat!



Kweku Darfoor, Esq.

We are thrilled to celebrate the contributions of our BAN member, Kweku Darfoor, to the positive evolution of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) opportunities at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). Kweku has exemplified the spirit of giving back to the community by leveraging his position as the founder of Darfoor Law Firm to forge meaningful partnerships.



Jasmyne Henderson, Esq.

We are immensely proud to highlight BAN Co-founder Jasmyne Henderson, who has earned her well-deserved place on The News Service of Florida's prestigious inaugural 40 Under 40: Rising Stars list. Jasmyne's recognition among this select group of Rising Stars clearly affirms her exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to making a lasting impact in the field.



G.C. Murray II, Esq.

We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on our esteemed BAN President, G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL. G.C. Murray II has been repeatedly honored for his exceptional contributions, including receiving the MLK 2024 Excellence in Community Service Award from The MLK Foundation of Florida, Inc., and past accolades such as the Young Floridian of the Year Award and the American Institute for Public Service's National Jefferson Award.



The Honorable Jessica Goodwin Costello

Let's spotlight our esteemed BAN member, Judge Jessica Goodwin Costello, who recently had the incredible opportunity to present to an audience of two thousand family law practitioners from the Family Law Section of The Florida Bar and the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. Their session on DVI from the bench was informative!



Freddelle Menard, Esq.

We are happy to highlight our outstanding BAN member, Freddelle Menard, Esq., for achieving a remarkable milestone - being named among the prestigious 40 Under 40 Black Leaders! This incredible honor, bestowed upon her before age 30, is a testament to her unwavering dedication, hard work, and commitment to her profession and the community.

Share Your Good News

We encourage all our valued members to email us if they have any good news or achievements they'd like to share with our community. Your successes are our successes, and we are here to celebrate and amplify them!

BLSA Black History Month Gala | March 2, 2024

BLSA is excited to extend a warm and heartfelt invitation to our upcoming Black History Month Gala in collaboration with prominent Black pre-law organizations on campus, including the Society of Black Female Future Attorneys and Black Law Students Association, C.S.D. This event promises to be an unforgettable night to celebrate and honor the Black community's rich history, culture, and achievements. It's a fantastic opportunity to connect, appreciate, and have fun while embracing the significance of Black History Month. We can't wait to share this special evening filled with camaraderie, culture, and celebration with all of you. Save the date, and stay tuned for more details on what promises to be an inspiring and enjoyable event!

Can't make it? [Email](#) and support BLSA by purchasing an ad in their souvenir journal:

- Small Ad (1/3 of a page) = \$60
- Medium Ad (1/2 of a page) = \$80
- Large Ad (1 full page) = \$100

RSVP



BLSA Inducts Newest Class of Leaders

The FSU Law Black Law Students Association (BLSA) recently celebrated a significant milestone. It welcomed a new cohort of students into its esteemed organization, marking a vibrant beginning to their legal education journey. This momentous occasion was further highlighted by the presence of BAN President G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL, who delivered an inspiring keynote address, and The Honorable Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson, a distinguished member of the FSU Law Black Alumni Network, who had the honor of swearing in the new students. This induction ceremony symbolized the students' commitment to excellence and justice. It reinforced BLSA's long-standing tradition of fostering a supportive community that champions diversity, inclusivity, and the professional development of Black law students. Through mentorship, networking opportunities, and advocacy, the BLSA continues to empower its members to make impactful contributions to the legal field and society, ensuring that the legacy of leadership and service thrives for generations.



Distinguished Alum Serve on Alumni Panel

We are honored to announce that President-Elect Kenneth Pratt and the Honorable Judge Anthony Miller joined forces to serve on a distinguished panel for the FSU Black Law Students Association (BLSA). Their combined expertise, experience, and commitment to the legal profession will undoubtedly provide valuable insights and inspiration to the BLSA community. This collaboration underscores their dedication to supporting and nurturing the next generation of legal professionals and reflects our network's spirit of unity and mentorship.



<https://law.fsu.edu/BlackAlumniNetwork> | FSUCOL.BAN@gmail.com

***Newsletter Designed and Published by Sun God Comms on behalf of
the FSU College of Law Black Alumni Network***

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