



COLLEGE OF LAW

FSU LAW FOCUS

May 19, 2017

From the Dean

This spring, an anonymous donor made a \$500,000 gift to support scholarships to attract highly qualified students to the law school – \$450,000 of the gift is deferred and \$50,000 is a cash gift. Because our greatest fundraising need is for scholarships, gifts like this are extremely important to the law school. When applicants are determining where they want to attend law school, some put more weight on their scholarship offers than on rankings. The current generation of law school applicants is particularly concerned about incurring debt. Therefore, scholarships are an increasingly important recruitment tool and nearly all students admitted to FSU Law are offered a scholarship. Law schools around the nation are also giving more money to more students than even five years ago. In this competitive climate, applicants often decline their acceptance to FSU Law in favor of attending a lower ranked law school that is offering them a full ride. If you have ever considered giving a larger gift to the law school, please consider giving for scholarships. We appreciate everyone who has already given for this purpose. Without your support, we would not be able to attract the bright and talented students who ultimately matriculate to FSU Law.



- Dean Erin O'Connor

50-Year Anniversary: Featuring 1996



In the Winter 1996 issue of *FSU Law* alumni magazine, Professor John Yetter was interviewed about his recent speech to the Florida

Conference of Circuit Judges in Palm Beach, where he gave a short exam based on questions that arose during the O.J. Simpson trial. Yetter, a scholar of criminal law, also lectured to nearly 200 appellate judges in Jacksonville. "Some of the most interesting things about the trial involved the way the lawyers and judge related to each other, and the small legal issues that resulted from that interplay," Yetter said. Also in 1996, the College of Law's *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law* and the Environmental Law Society hosted the National Association of Environmental Law Societies Conference. The annual conference included panel discussions and presentations by the nation's foremost environmental law experts. FSU College of Law and the international law community lost a giant in August of 1996, when Professor Richard B. Lillich passed away. Lillich was recognized as one of the early leaders in the international human rights law movement and published more than 30 books and many articles. Today, FSU Law hosts an annual Richard B. Lillich Memorial Lecture in his honor.



Professor Richard B. Lillich

Alum Profile: Judge Heather Pinder Rodriguez ('98)



The Honorable Heather Pinder Rodriguez is a circuit judge on the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. She was appointed to the court in January 2012. From 2012-2014, she presided over criminal cases in Orange County and has since been assigned to hear domestic cases for Orange County. Prior to her appointment, Judge Rodriguez practiced law at Holland & Knight in Orlando, where she was board certified in construction law. Many of you know Judge Rodriguez from her involvement in the FSU College of Law, the Orange County Bar Association, Central Florida Association of Women Lawyers and The Florida Bar.

In March, during spring break, Judge Rodriguez coordinated a Judge Shadow Day for FSU law students in Orlando. Each student was assigned to sit with a judge for the morning and then everyone gathered at a special lunch sponsored by Judge Rodriguez and her husband, Woody Rodriguez ('95), for current and admitted students, judges and alums. During the lunch, Judges Sally Kest ('73), Jose Rodriguez ('77) and Keith White ('92), and alums Mark Buckles ('01), Kristopher Kest ('05), Mike Sjuggerud ('01), James Nuebel ('87) and several others shared their experiences and advice with the students. Judge Rodriguez believes that these types of events are vital to the success of our students and the profession. She and Woody Rodriguez are thankful to the busy judges and alums who shared their time with the students!

“As a young lawyer, Bruce Blackwell ('75) invited me to join our Alumni Board of Directors and impressed upon me the importance of supporting the institution that gave me the ability to pursue my passion for the law. Over time, I have come to realize that when we spend time with our students, it is just another way we can show gratitude to the institution that has given us so much.”

Pictured above: Attendees of the special lunch sponsored by alums Judge Rodriguez and Woody Rodriguez (front row, third & second from right) during the Judge Shadow Day in Orlando.

Student Profile: 2017 Grad Vincent Fernandez

Vincent Fernandez is a recent FSU Law graduate from Tampa. He graduated from the University of South Florida with a bachelor's degree in finance. Fernandez transferred to FSU Law after spending his 1L year at Barry University School of Law, where he was a founding member and treasurer for the Technology Law Student Association and Criminal Law Society. During his law school career at FSU, Fernandez was a member of the Student Bar Association and served as co-event coordinator for the Transfer Law Student Organization. This March he also participated in the Jessup International Moot Court Team. During the summer after his 1L year, Fernandez was a judicial intern for the chambers of the Honorable Michael J. Scionti, of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Unified Family Court, and in the chambers of Chief District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich, of the Middle District of Florida. Fernandez has also worked as the sole law clerk for the Florida Association of Health Plans. In this role, he analyzed proposed legislation affecting the Florida health insurance industry, drafted agendas, recorded minutes and communicated weekly summaries for legislation of interest to the Commercial and Medicaid Committees. He also composed an "end-of-session" report detailing the legislative history and disposition of all relevant bills. Fernandez also served as a research assistant for Assistant Professor Justin T. Sevier, where he researched case law and statistical data relating to hearsay and vicarious liability and edited drafts for submission and final publication. Fernandez's main areas of expertise are in the realms of governmental affairs and health care reform and regulation. However, he has tried to make himself as well rounded as possible and is open to other areas of law such as probate, securities and transactional work and general civil litigation. Although Tampa is his stomping ground and where his family lives, Fernandez is open to relocating anywhere. If you are interested in hiring Fernandez, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).



“During Trial Team practice, alumnus, adjunct professor and retired U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge Stephen T. Brown once said, ‘If Vinny is talking, that’s a good thing.’”

GET INVOLVED

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT

MAKE A GIFT

[ABOUT US](#) | [ACADEMICS](#) | [ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID](#) | [OUR FACULTY](#) | [ALUMNI](#) | [CAREERS](#) | [STUDENTS](#)

