

## From the Dean



(L-R) Incoming SBA President Cecilia Orozco, 3L Representative Brandon Sapala and Vice President Hillary Thornton in Chicago.

We are delighted to report that – for the seventh time since 2008 and for the second consecutive year – our Student Bar Association (SBA) has won SBA of the Year honors. They were named the top SBA in the nation by the American Bar Association (ABA) Law Student Division on Saturday, August 4. The award, which is also known as the National Achievement Award, was presented at the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. It recognizes the efforts of an SBA organization to create a better environment for law students and a more positive image of the legal profession. Our SBA was honored following a year of many achievements. SBA's robust programming included a Mental Health Week, a Diversity Week and a panel discussion on alcohol awareness to provide information on resources available to law students and lawyers. Students were also able to network with notable attorneys and judges, and to give back to the community through SBA events. SBA participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, raising more than \$1,600 to benefit the American Cancer Society, hosted blood and food drives to benefit the victims of three hurricanes, and formed a Dance Marathon team that raised almost \$3,000 to benefit children in need of specialized pediatric and medical care. Congratulations and thanks to the entire SBA board, especially Immediate-Past President Lilly Sharpe, for continuing SBA's tradition of helping to make the FSU Law community dynamic, inclusive and collaborative!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

## Faculty Profile: Rob Atkinson

Rob Atkinson, the FSU Law Greenspoon Marder Professor, focuses his scholarship on professionalism and philanthropy. He teaches Property, Professional Responsibility, and Jurisprudence, as well as special courses, including Law, Classics and Scriptures; Law and the Chinese Classics; and Law and the Indian Scriptures. In 2001, Atkinson received the Professionalism Award from the Florida Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism. Before joining the FSU College of Law faculty in 1987, Atkinson was an associate with Sutherland, Asbill, & Brennan in Washington, D.C., and clerked for Judge Donald S. Russell of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Spartanburg, S.C. Atkinson holds a B.A. degree in history and philosophy from Washington and Lee University and a J.D. from Yale Law School. He and his wife Stephanie have two children, Edward (FSU Law '08) and Jane (Texas MSW), and two grandchildren, Celeste (three) and Juliet (two).



*"I've always liked Dean Don [Weidner]'s thought that law is a box of tools we teach our students how to use. Since we'll be working on the place where we all live, we need plans, too. The ones Socrates and Confucius sketched out have worked the best for me."*

## Alum Profile: Deborah K. "Debby" Kearney ('81)

Prior to her retirement in 2015, Debby Kearney served the State of Florida for 35 years. Her unique career included holding general counsel positions for seven state entities throughout all three branches of state government, beginning with the 1998 Constitution Revision Commission, and then the Department of State, Florida Supreme Court, Florida House of Representatives, Department of Education, Department of Community Affairs and Department of Economic Opportunity. During her time at the Florida Department of State, Kearney oversaw 45 simultaneous emergency cases in the *Bush v. Gore* related litigation following the 2000 presidential election. Kearney also served as deputy general counsel to Florida Governors Bob Martinez and Lawton Chiles. Just prior to her retirement, Kearney was the ethics and compliance officer for Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. Her favorite aspect of her work was finding and supporting the strengths of the lawyers in the office and building a great legal team. She received numerous awards during her career, including the 2001 Florida Bar Claude Pepper Outstanding Government Lawyer Award. Kearney also was a guardian ad litem and mentored many young lawyers during her career. A long-time member of the law school alumni association, she served as its president from 1999-2000.



*"I'm forever indebted to the FSU law school for preparing me for a legal career that turned out to be far more varied, challenging, fulfilling and exciting than I ever expected. Two thoughts I'd like to pass along are: First, it's true that the harder you work, the luckier you get. Second, retirement is a wonderful reward for all those years of hard work. I'm enjoying it to the fullest. And if I may add a plug – please support Dean O'Connor's FSU Friends Opportunity Scholarship fund. It's a great cause and a good way to pay it forward for the opportunities and privileges our law school educations have allowed."*

## Student Profile: 2018 Grad Alec Powers

**Desired Practice Location:** Greater Orlando area or Tallahassee, but more interested in the right job than the location

**Field of Law Sought:** Would love to practice criminal defense law or personal injury/auto accidents; also developed an interest in energy/natural gas and oil/utility law

Alec Powers earned his bachelor's degree in criminology, with a minor in entrepreneurship from Florida State University. Originally from the Orlando area, Powers graduated from FSU Law this summer. During law school, he was a member of the Student Bar Association, he has worked at his father's law firm, Powers Personal Injury in Longwood, since high school. He was an intern the summer before his 1L and 2L years. Powers assisted in a variety of tasks for the firm, including face-to-face marketing with doctors, health care specialists and attorneys, briefing potential clients' claims and speaking with insurance adjusters, reviewing cases, meeting with clients and depositions, and attending depositions. Powers has a passion for competitive sports. He played basketball throughout high school and continued through FSU intramurals. Powers also plays golf, leisurely and in charitable tournaments. His involvement in sports helped develop a competitive spirit and an appreciation for working hard toward a common goal. He also enjoys volunteering and helping others any way he can. If you are interested in hiring Powers, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).



*"I have always had a passion for helping others and giving back to the community, which I hope will transfer into my practice of law."*

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION ALUMNI BREAKFAST**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 8-8:45 AM**  
**ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT**

**CONTACT THE FSU LAW ALUMNI OFFICE AT**  
**800.788.7097 OR ALUMNI@LAW.FSU.EDU**  
**FOR MORE INFO OR TO RSVP**

 *We need your support for student scholarships!*

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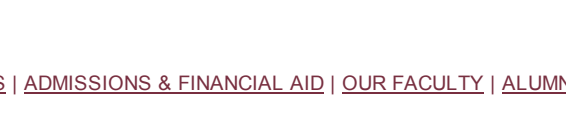
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SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT

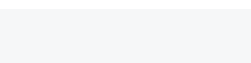
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