

From the Dean



Dean Emeritus Weidner accepts the 2019 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Faculty Award.

On Tuesday, January 22, Dean Emeritus and Alumni Centennial Professor Don Weidner received the university's 2019 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Faculty Award, which recognizes excellence and service in keeping with the principles and ideals of Dr. King. Don was selected after dedicating much of his career to the diversification of the legal field. As his nominators detailed in their letters of recommendation, Don has a profound and passionate commitment to equality and diversity. Alumnus Wayne Hogan ('72) cited Don's creation, development and sustainment of our summer program for undergraduate students, which has allowed more than 1,250 program alumni to explore and prepare for law school and legal careers. This program now named in Don's honor is the oldest and largest law school pipeline program in the nation. It was designed by Don to increase access to legal education for students traditionally underrepresented in law school and has provided opportunities to hundreds of minority students, many of whom have gone on to law school and launched very successful legal careers. It is no exaggeration to say that Don's vision, leadership and commitment to this program have been one of the most important driving forces behind the advances in diversity so far achieved in our profession. FSU Law's John W. and Ashley E. Frost Professor Nat Stern, in nominating Don, provided several additional examples of Don's commitment to equality and diversity, including vigorous efforts to increase minority representation in the student body and faculty, increasing the involvement of minority alumni in the life of the law school, hosting guests and speakers who embodied the ideals of diversity and equality, and selecting diverse administrators during his time as dean. Don also was strongly committed to eliminating any disparity in student success and career outcomes based on race or ethnicity at FSU Law. For these and many other reasons, it was my honor to help nominate Don for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Faculty Award. I hope you will join me in congratulating him on this much-deserved honor!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Faculty Profile: Douglas A. Kahn

Douglas A. Kahn is a visiting professor teaching Taxation at FSU Law this spring. Kahn is the Paul G. Kauper Professor of Law Emeritus at the University of Michigan, where he has taught since 1964. Kahn has taught Tax Planning for Business Transactions, Estate Planning, Taxation of Individual Income, Corporate Taxation, Partnership Tax and Legal Process. He coauthored two casebooks, one on corporate taxation and one on taxation of transfers of wealth, as well as several textbooks on those subjects and on individual income taxation. His coauthored book, *Principles of Corporate Taxation*, was published in 2010, and a new edition of his coauthored book, *Federal Income Tax*, will be published in 2019. His recent articles have been published in the *Florida Tax Review*, the *Virginia Tax Review*, *The Tax Lawyer* and the *Florida State University Law Review*. Prior to his career in academia, Kahn practiced in Washington, D.C., and served as a trial attorney with both the civil and tax divisions of the U.S. Department of Justice. Kahn is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and of The George Washington University Law School.



"An academic career includes both teaching and publication. The motivation for becoming an academic for the majority is the freedom to explore issues that interest you and publish the results. While I enjoy research and writing, and take pleasure in having influenced some areas of the tax law, my primary motivation was to teach. I truly love my time in the classroom."

Alum Profile: Travis Voyles ('17)

In December, Travis Voyles was appointed director of oversight for the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In this role, Voyles manages all of the agency's oversight matters within Congress, including congressional hearings, briefings and investigations regarding the EPA's programs, activities and policy implementation. Previously, he was working for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology. He was responsible for conducting investigations related to oversight matters of the committee and advising the chairman and the committee members on issues relating to federal scientific research and development, environmental and energy policy, and emerging technology and cybersecurity developments. In addition to his J.D., Voyles earned a certificate in environmental law upon graduation. As a law student, he was editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law* and an executive board member of FSU's Environmental Law Society. Voyles also holds a Master of City and Regional Planning with specializations in economic development, land use and environmental planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology.



"The nature of either side of congressional oversight relies on the ability to effectively manage multiple inquiries and investigations with ranging legal and policy issues. The experiences, professors, and fellow students at FSU Law all prepared me for these professional opportunities. It has been incomparable to see firsthand the working checks and balances among the federal legislative and executive branches."

Student Profile: 3L Maria'h Givens

Desired Practice Location: Tallahassee or surrounding areas

Expected Graduation: May 2019

Field of Law Sought: Criminal law

Originally from Sanderson, Fla., Maria'h Givens earned her bachelor's degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, where she majored in criminal justice. She will graduate from FSU Law in May 2019. Last summer, Givens worked as a certified legal intern for the Florida State Attorney's Office, Second Judicial Circuit. She participated in motion hearings, assisted in trials, handled plea negotiations and case management/docket soundings in court, assuming an attorney's full caseload. The summer after her 1L year, Givens interned for Anabelle Dias, P.A., a legal defense firm in Tallahassee. She also served as a mentor for the Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program. Givens is currently president of the FSU Black Law Students Association. She is a member of the FSU Trial Team, having participated in a national competition and earning second place in intramural competition. Givens has earned over 150 pro bono hours total with the State Attorney's Office for the Second Judicial Circuit and the Institute for Family Violence Studies. Givens also served as a mentor at Griffin Middle School and is a fellow with the Innovative Community Engagement Foundation. If you are interested in hiring Givens after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).



"I am so grateful to FSU College of Law for affording me the opportunity to develop real-world skills through externships, mock trial and leadership experiences."

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