

From the Dean



Ashenafi-Richardson accepts Distinguished Judicial Service Award from Chief Justice Canady



Maddalena and Florida Bar President Suskauer



Slicker and Florida Bar President Suskauer



LaVia and Florida Bar President Suskauer

I had the pleasure of attending the 2019 Pro Bono Service Awards Ceremony at the Florida Supreme Court last week. It was inspiring to help honor some of our most selfless and talented lawyers and judges. We are proud to count among the honorees our alumni Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson ('91), Julia K. Maddalena ('14) and William Denton Slicker ('76), and Professor Jennifer LaVia. Ashenafi-Richardson received the Distinguished Judicial Service Award for her outstanding and sustained support to the public, especially as it relates to support of pro bono legal services. She averages 15 to 25 hours a week in service to various legal or judicial programs, organizations and statewide committees. Much of her service has been directly related to providing free legal assistance to groups including battered women and hurricane victims. LaVia, who directs our Veterans Legal Clinic, was honored for her many years of pro bono service. She has served as a volunteer special assistant public defender, helped create a weekly legal clinic for residents of Tallahassee's homeless shelter and has provided pro bono services to local veterans since before she began directing our clinic. Maddalena was honored for her work to assist victims of Hurricane Irma and for her work with First Saturday Legal Clinic in Bay County, which she continued even after losing her office and home during Hurricane Michael in October. Slicker has volunteered with the Community Law Program in St. Petersburg almost since its inception in 1989. He has participated in numerous family law advice clinic sessions, handled countless cases, donated money to the organization and served as president of the board of trustees. Congratulations to all of the award recipients!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Faculty Profile: Martin B. Sipple

Martin B. Sipple, a shareholder with Ausley & McMullen in Tallahassee, is an adjunct professor teaching Trial Practice this spring. He is board certified by The Florida Bar in the area of business litigation, and regularly represents clients in both state and federal cases involving civil litigation and intellectual property matters. Sipple serves on the Florida Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Contract and Business Cases. Before joining Ausley & McMullen in 1997, he was an associate at Thompson Coburn LLP in St. Louis and also clerked for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois and the Nebraska Supreme Court. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1988 and his J.D. from Washington University School of Law, where he graduated Order of the Coif in 1991.



"I really enjoy teaching Trial Practice. The goal of the class is to teach skills that will enable the students to competently try a case, and also to win. More importantly, the curriculum involves the students getting on their feet and speaking during virtually every class period. Even if they do not become trial lawyers, all lawyers are required to give oral presentations from time to time, whether in the courtroom or in the boardroom, and I believe this class helps provide the skills and confidence students will need to succeed in whatever they do."

Alum Profile: David J. Gillis ('09)

In 2018, David J. Gillis proposed an amendment to existing Florida law and secured sponsorship from State Representative Dane Eagle (Cape Coral) for legislation seeking to make those acquitted or found not guilty at trial eligible for expunction of their criminal record. Gillis advocated for the bill after determining that a client, who was acquitted at a criminal trial, was ineligible for expunction because the law excluded eligibility for those with charges disposed of by trial, regardless of the outcome in the case. The bill passed unanimously in both the Florida House and Senate and was signed into law, effective October 1, 2018 (Florida Statute s. 943.0585). Gillis has since applied for expunction of his client's record, received preliminary approval from the state attorney and is awaiting approval by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.



Gillis focuses his practice on criminal defense, personal injury and general civil litigation at The Law Offices of David J. Gillis in Fort Lauderdale. Prior to opening his firm in 2016, Gillis practiced at Wicker Smith and was an assistant public defender in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Office of the Public Defender.

"When I learned that my client was ineligible for expunction because he was acquitted at trial, it struck me as contrary to our belief in the presumption of innocence and our faith in impartial juries. No person should have their record scarred with an unproven allegation and certainly not in those circumstances where the person is acquitted at trial. I'm grateful to Representative Eagle for working hard to fix this oversight and happy that Floridians who exercise their right to a trial, and are ultimately acquitted, will have this avenue available to them in the future."

Student Profile: 3L Rachel Eilers

Desired Practice Location: Tampa or Washington, D.C.
Expected Graduation: May 2019
Field of Law Sought: Interested in healthcare law, but open to other areas



Rachel Eilers will graduate in May 2019. Bachelor's degree in communication and political science from Auburn University. Eilers is currently participating in the Public Interest Law Center Children's Advocacy Clinic, where she has the opportunity to work with children and provide them full legal representation. She handles cases involving foster care, juvenile delinquency, healthcare, special education, disability and social security. Last summer, Eilers was a summer associate at Mandelbaum, Fitzsimmons, Hewitt & Cain, P.A. in Tampa. She researched and drafted interoffice legal memoranda on a variety of legal issues, and drafted complaints, motions and discovery requests. During the spring of her 2L year, Eilers externed at the Florida Department of Health Prosecution Services Unit, where she assisted in the prosecution of complaints before state licensure boards. She also reviewed investigative reports, drafted emergency suspension orders and administrative complaints, and assisted in probable cause panel meetings and presentations before state licensure boards. The summer after her 1L year, Eilers externed for the Honorable Anthony E. Porcelli of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. Eilers is a staff editor for the *Florida State University Law Review* and the former president of the FSU Health Law Society. She is vice president of the Moot Court Team and she and her partner placed as semi-finalists in their competition last year. She is also a student ambassador for the FSU Law Admissions Office. Eilers has been offered a federal clerkship in Tampa with Judge Porcelli for a year. If you are interested in hiring Eilers after her judicial clerkship, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).

"I am so grateful for my time at FSU Law. I gained invaluable hands-on experience through my externships and extracurricular opportunities that I know will translate well as I start my legal career. FSU Law encouraged me to grow as both an advocate and a professional, and I look forward to applying all that I learned to my federal clerkship and all future legal opportunities."

- GET INVOLVED
- SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE
- SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT
- MAKE A GIFT

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