

From the Dean



(L-R) Gomez and Nicholas

This past weekend, our Moot Court Team won first place in the 2019 William B. Bryant-Luke C. Moore Civil Rights Moot Court Competition! This is the second time in three years that FSU Law has won the Bryant-Moore Competition, which was held March 2-3 at Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. Our students competed against teams from law schools including Georgetown, University of North Carolina, University of Virginia and William & Mary. Winning team members are second-year law students Carlos Gomez and Ryan Nicholas. FSU College of Law alumnus Karla Ellis ('96), who practices at the Law Office of Karla D. Ellis in Tallahassee, and Clinical Professor Jennifer LaVia, who directs our Veterans Legal Clinic, coached the team to victory. In addition, third-year FSU Law student Rima Nathan was named the competition's best oralist.

Moot court students also won second place in this past weekend's Evan A. Evans Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition and August A. Rendigs, Jr. National Products Liability Moot Court Competition, with students winning best brief in the second competition. In addition, Trial Team students placed second in the American Association for Justice Student Trial Advocacy Competition on March 3. Several more FSU Law advocacy teams recently finished in the quarterfinals at competitions around the country. And in February, Trial Team member 2L Christina Henry was named best advocate at the John Costello National Criminal Law Trial Advocacy Competition. Please join me in congratulating all of our talented student advocates and in thanking their dedicated coaches!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Professor Laroche & 2L Daniela Donoso Address Gender Issues on National Level



Professor Carla Laroche



2L Daniela Donoso

Carla Laroche, FSU Law clinical professor and director of our Public Interest Law Center Gender and Family Justice Clinic, was recently appointed to the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls by Leon County Commissioner Nick Maddox. The 21-member commission promotes awareness of issues pertaining to women and girls in Tallahassee and Leon County, and serves in an advisory role, providing input to the City and County Commissions as needed. Laroche will join Clinical Professor and Director of the Immigration and Farmworker Project **Darby Kerigan Scott**, who is serving her second term on the commission. Laroche is also co-chair of the American Bar Association (ABA) Criminal Justice Section Women in Criminal Justice Task Force. This task force was created recently to investigate the unique concerns and challenges faced by women in the criminal justice profession and to provide recommendations to address these issues. Through the commission and the task force, Laroche addresses gender issues on a local and national level.

Additionally, FSU Law 2L Daniela Donoso was invited to join the ABA Criminal Justice Section Women in Criminal Justice Task Force. Donoso is the only law student on the 15-member task force that includes attorneys, judges and academics from across the country. Donoso's academic and community accomplishments made her a strong selection for the task force. She has participated in the FSU Public Interest Law Center Gender and Family Justice Clinic and Children's Advocacy Clinic. Donoso co-chairs the Student Advocacy Committee for the Big Bend Coalition Against Human Trafficking and has worked at the Center for the Advancement of Human Rights since she was an undergraduate student at FSU. Last summer, as a Calvin Patterson Scholar, she interned with the Americans for Immigrant Justice. Donoso's background and experience added to the already impressive task force membership.

Last week, Laroche and Donoso attended the task force's first in-person meeting in Albuquerque, N.M. The two-day meeting included a listening session in which women in New Mexico who practice or have practiced in criminal justice were invited to testify before the task force. They discussed a variety of issues, including institutional support, self-care, hiring, promotion and retention, the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity and religion, and access to data.

"As a clinical professor, I prepare my students to leave the comfort of the classroom and tackle head-on the issues their clients face in the real world," Professor Laroche said. "The tools the ABA Criminal Justice Section Women in Criminal Justice Task Force and the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls provide me will be invaluable in accomplishing that task. Discussions on how gender is viewed through the prism of the legal system will enable me to guide the students on how to best apply these tools. I am honored to be involved in these endeavors."

Alum Profile: Noah D. Valenstein ('08)

In February, Noah D. Valenstein was reappointed as secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, a position he has held since May 2017. He is focused on building relationships between diverse groups of stakeholders, including environmental and agricultural groups as well as local communities and businesses. Valenstein has a strong record of bringing groups together to overcome obstacles and work toward a shared goal of environmental protection. Prior to joining the Department of Environmental Protection as secretary, Valenstein served as executive director of the Suwannee River Water Management District. His previous environmental law experience also includes positions with the Executive Office of the Governor, the Florida House of Representatives and several environmental non-profit organizations.



"I am thrilled to continue leading the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and our nearly 3,000 dedicated staff. The talent, qualifications, experience and passion of our staff is second to none, and I'm incredibly proud to be a member of this team. This is an exciting time for Florida's environment and I look forward to executing Governor DeSantis' bold vision for tackling some of the complex issues our state is facing – especially our water quality challenges."

Student Profile: 3L Joshua L. "Lance" Hitt

Desired Practice Location: Planning to move to New York City, but open to Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, Ft. Myers or West Palm for the right opportunity

Expected Graduation: May 2019

Field of Law Sought: Financial compliance industry; also interested in transactional, corporate and real estate law



Originally from Nashville, Lance Hitt earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and political science from Baylor University. When he graduates from FSU Law in May 2019, he will also earn the Business Law Certificate. Currently, Hitt is interning remotely for Tangent Capital Partners, LLC in New York City. He is also clerking at Williams & Coleman, P.A., where he researches in the areas of tax, estates, business and real estate law. Hitt drafts wills, deeds, agreements, tax statements and responses to tax requests. Last summer, Hitt clerked for Mowrey Law Firm, P.A., where he researched in a variety of civil litigation cases, and wrote pleadings, motions and memoranda. During the spring of his 2L year, Hitt clerked for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Certified Public Accounting Division. In this role, he evaluated complaints filed with the department, and wrote closing orders and administrative complaints for panel review. That same semester, Hitt was also a legislative intern for the Florida Press Association, where he looked for bills affecting newspapers or speech and open government, and followed flagged bills. During the fall of his 2L year, Hitt externed with the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida Public Defender's Office. Hitt is also a member of the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, the Business Law Society, the Student Bar Association, Phi Alpha Delta and the Federalist Society. If you are interested in hiring Hitt after graduation, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

"I have really enjoyed my time at FSU. The school has taught me a great deal of not only how the legal world operates, but also how to balance a very busy schedule. My peers are the best part of law school. Going through the grind with them has been a privilege. I look forward to working extremely hard to make my mark in the legal community alongside my fellow FSU alums."



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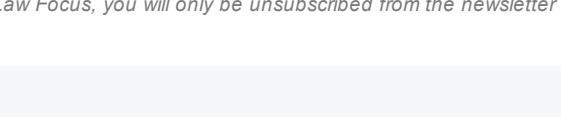
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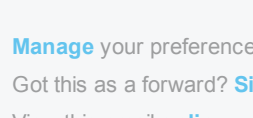
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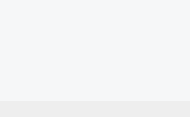
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