

From the Dean



We posthumously honored inaugural Exemplary Public Service Career Award recipient Kris Knab (’78) during our Homecoming 2018 reception. Her partner and children are pictured at the event with Knab’s portrait.

We are currently seeking nominations for our Exemplary Public Service Career Award, which recognizes alumni who have dedicated their careers to public service and who have demonstrated exceptional character, integrity, leadership, humility and professionalism, as well as the highest regard for ethics. This award is meant to honor public servants whose dedication to the profession may otherwise go unnoticed, and painted portraits of award recipients are displayed at the College of Law. Additional considerations include:

- Length of the nominee’s public service career
- Impact of the nominee’s public service career (number of people served, significant legal achievements benefitting a large number of people, etc.)
- Demonstrated ability to inspire others
- Motivated by a genuine concern for others, as displayed in various facets of the nominee’s personal and professional life

Thank you to the following committee members who will evaluate nominations: Associate Dean Nancy Benavides, Nancy Daniels (’77), Jim Douglass, Melanie S. Griffin (’06), Professor Larry Krieger, Professor Darby Kerrigan Scott (’07) and David Varet (’12). Please send nominations to the committee at lawdean@law.fsu.edu by May 13. All nominations should include the nominee’s name and an explanation of how they meet the award criteria. You may send additional documentation, including links to sources of information about the nominee. We are delighted to be able to recognize some of our most accomplished alumni with this award!

- Dean Erin O’Connor

Admitted Students Preview Day



Professor Mark Seidenfeld and admitted students at our Admitted Students Preview Day reception

Last week, we were pleased to host more than 100 admitted students at FSU Law during our Admitted Students Preview Day. It was a wonderful opportunity to show the students and their guests many of the benefits of attending law school at FSU and in Tallahassee. Dean Erin O’Connor welcomed students and talked about FSU Law’s unique strengths in four areas: 1) our blending of theory and practice, 2) our broad-ranging subject matter strengths, 3) countless professional opportunities available at the law school and in Tallahassee at relatively low costs, and 4) our close-knit, supportive community within a larger university setting. Students also attended a networking reception at the FSU Champions Club overlooking the football stadium, took a mock class with tax law expert Jeff Kahn, our Harry W. Walborsky Professor, toured the law school with current students, attended lunch with alumni, heard about “What Makes Lawyers Happy” from Co-Director of Clinical Externship Programs Larry Krieger, attended an ice cream social with professors, walked across the street for a visit at the Florida Supreme Court featuring alumnus Justice Ricky Polston (’87), and attended an inspirational session with Nobel Peace Laureate Tawakkol Karman. For a closer look at Admitted Students Preview Day activities, watch our [Instagram Stories video online](#).

Alum Profile: Shenika Harris (’04)

Shenika “Nik” Harris was recently appointed as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ first LGBTQ consumer advocate. In her new role, Harris will serve as the department’s liaison to the LGBTQ community. She will raise awareness of opportunities within the agriculture industry and help address discrimination and fraud targeted at the LGBTQ community. Harris previously served as assistant general counsel at the Florida Department of Transportation. She is the co-chair of the South Florida steering committee for the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization, where she also serves as a national board member. Harris was honored as Volunteer of the Year by the Human Rights Campaign in 2017. Previously, Harris served on The Florida Bar’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee.



“I am so excited to embark on my new position working with Commissioner Fried, employees of the department, and LGBTQ organizations around the state to improve the lives of LGBTQ Floridians. Commissioner Fried has made her commitment to our community clear by instituting a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity, and making creation of this position a priority for her administration. I am honored to serve her, the LGBTQ community, and the State of Florida. We all win when every person is treated equally.”

Student Profile: 3L Taylor Byrd

Desired Practice Location: Miami, Atlanta or Charlotte, N.C.
Expected Graduation: May 2019
Specialization: Litigation



Originally from Pensacola, Taylor Byrd earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Alabama. When she graduates from FSU Law in May 2019, she will also earn the Business Law Certificate, with honors. Since August, Byrd has been clerking at Ausley McMullen, where she drafts memoranda detailing research on a wide variety of practice areas. Last summer, Byrd was a summer associate at Nelson Mullins Broad and Cassel in Tampa. She drafted motions, drafted agreements and appellate briefs. The summer after her 1L year, Byrd clerked at Pollack, Pollack & Kogan, LLC in Miami, where she helped examine legal documents to draft discovery requests. That summer, she also attended the FSU Summer Program in Law at the University of Oxford in England. During the spring of her 1L year, Byrd was a legislative intern for the Florida Senate. She answered calls from constituents and drafted speaking points for bill proposals. Byrd is currently president of the FSU Law Trial Team and served as secretary last year. She represented FSU in the American Bar Association Negotiations Competition. Byrd is also president of Phi Delta Phi Honor Society, for which she served as treasurer last year. She also has served as the Phi Alpha Delta Mock Trial coach for the last two years. During her 1L year, Byrd competed on the Phi Alpha Delta Mock Trial Team that placed third out of more than 30 teams at a national competition. Byrd is a member of the Business Law Society, Intellectual Property Law Society, Women’s Law Symposium and Student Bar Association. During her 2L year, Byrd was on the Vis Moot Court Team, which won the Werner Melis Award Honorable Mention for Best Respondent’s Brief and placed second in the Atlanta Pre-Moot Competition. Her team also placed third in the Richard DeWitt Memorial Vis Pre-Moot Competition. Byrd served as secretary of the Association for Criminal Justice last year and previously was their 1L representative. If you are interested in hiring Byrd after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).

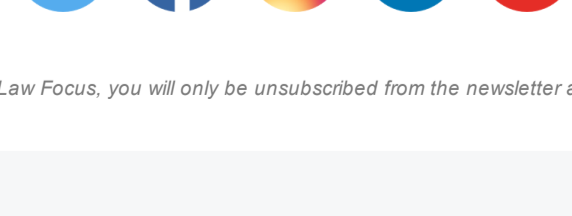
“I was drawn to the legal field because others depend on you to solve problems they otherwise couldn’t solve, the intellectually stimulating and challenging nature of the profession that prevents stagnation, and the weighty pressures which make accomplishments much more rewarding. In recognizing these qualities about the legal profession, paired with my desire to excel in anything I dedicate my time to, I will be a committed and vigorous associate.”

We need your support for student scholarships!

Visit law.fsu.edu/pavetheway to learn how you can change lives and pave the way for future FSU Law students while increasing the value of an FSU Law degree. As of April 1, 2019, we have raised \$1,076,630 toward our \$2 million campaign goal.

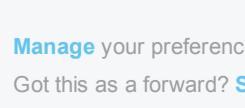
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