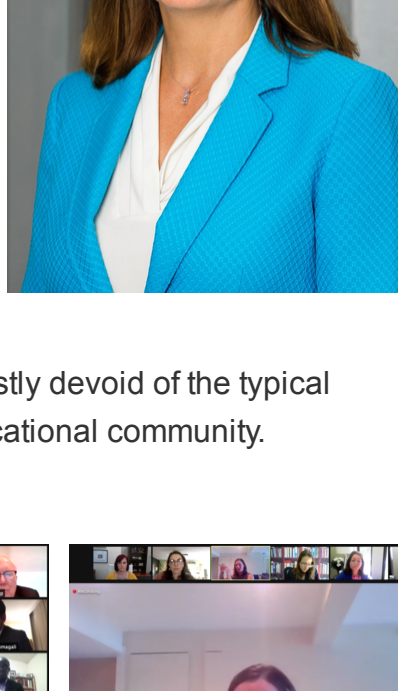
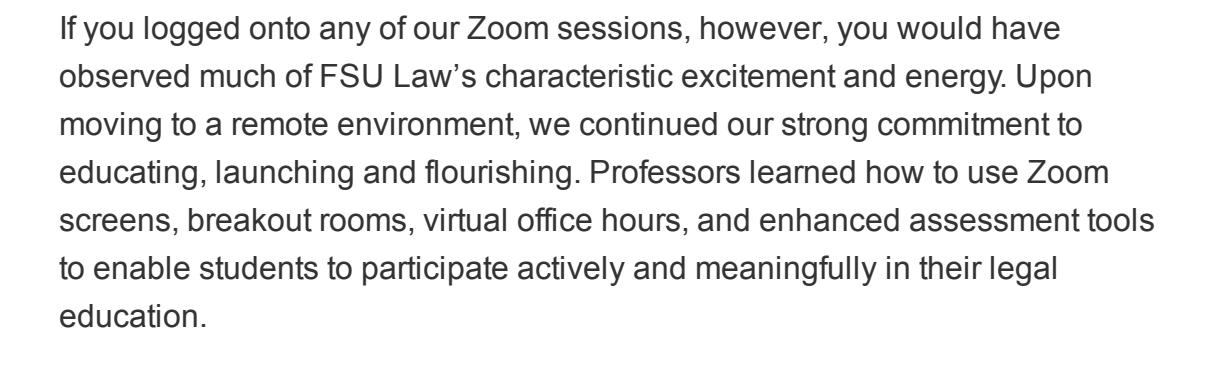


## From the Dean

The year 2020 has certainly been a bizarre one at the College of Law. We haven't had visitors to campus since March, and our celebrations with faculty, staff, students and alumni have been almost entirely virtual. Although many courses took place in person this fall, some students opted to participate remotely in those classes, and those who did join in person typically left campus after class in order to remove their masks and study safely. Classes and exams were entirely remote after spring break and throughout the summer, and final exams this semester also were entirely remote.

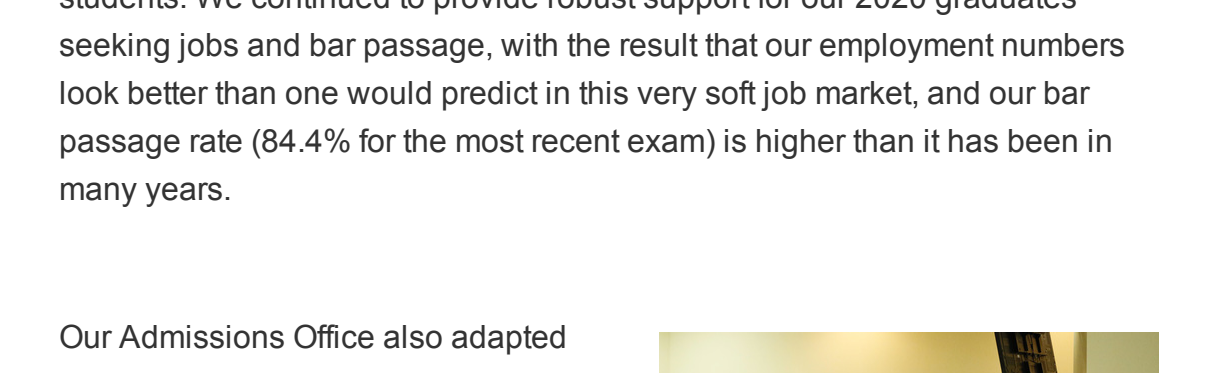


Consequently, our campus is eerily quiet and mostly devoid of the typical physical indicia of our vibrant and close-knit educational community.



(L-R) Judge Carlos Moore ('02), part of our Trailblazers in Law speaker series; Virtual Networking Reception hosted by the Szzyk Minority Mentoring Foundation, our Raising the Bar Professionalism+ Program and several student organizations; and Professor Courtney Cahill during the "Remembering Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Legacy Lives On" event

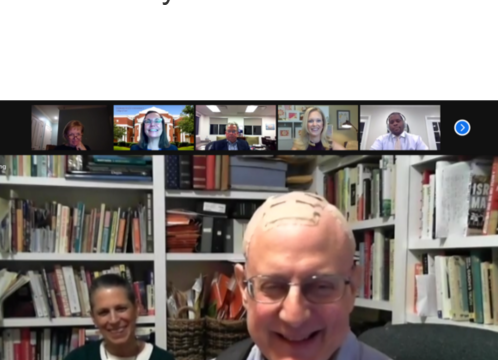
If you logged onto any of our Zoom sessions, however, you would have observed much of FSU Law's characteristic excitement and energy. Upon moving to a remote environment, we continued our strong commitment to educating, launching and flourishing. Professors learned how to use Zoom screens, breakout rooms, virtual office hours, and enhanced assessment tools to enable students to participate actively and meaningfully in their legal education.



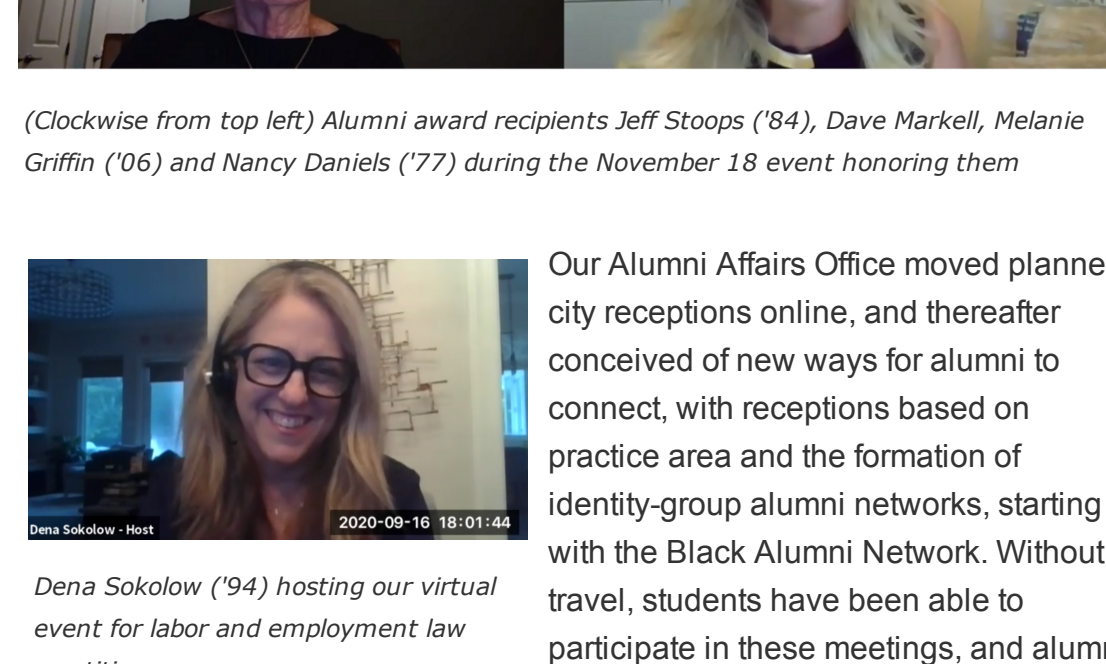
(L-R) Christina Strasser ('17) during our Law & Business Speaker Series; Justice Alan Lawson ('87), a panelist during the "Candid Conversation with the Florida Supreme Court" event; and Harvard Kennedy School Professor Khalil Gibran Muhammad, part of our Black Law Students Association's "TPD, Police and Their Origins: Defunding, Demilitarizing and Dismantling" panel

The Student Advancement Office quickly adapted to providing student support and enrichment from a physical distance while strengthening our connection to students. We continued to provide robust support for our 2020 graduates seeking jobs and bar passage, with the result that our employment numbers look better than one would predict in this very soft job market, and our bar passage rate (84.4% for the most recent exam) is higher than it has been in many years.

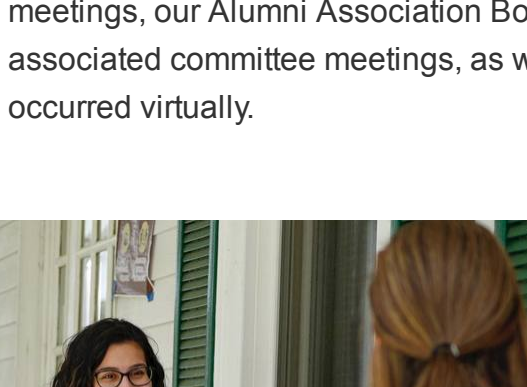
Our Admissions Office also adapted well. We canceled spring events and campus visits for admitted students, replacing them with virtual tours, one-on-one Zoom sessions, virtual class visits, and a series of virtual orientation and enrichment sessions for admitted students that spanned from March to August. We entered the pandemic worried about filling the incoming class without campus visits, which highlight the connectedness and the energy of our student body. Nevertheless, our 1L class is particularly strong this year; it boasts a higher median LSAT score (161), has a record percentage of female students (for the third year in a row) and is every bit as diverse as we have seen in recent years.



Professor Landau teaching 1L students on the first day of fall classes



(Clockwise from top left) Alumni award recipients Jeff Stoops ('84), Dave Markell, Melanie Griffin ('06) and Nancy Daniels ('77) during the November 18 event honoring them



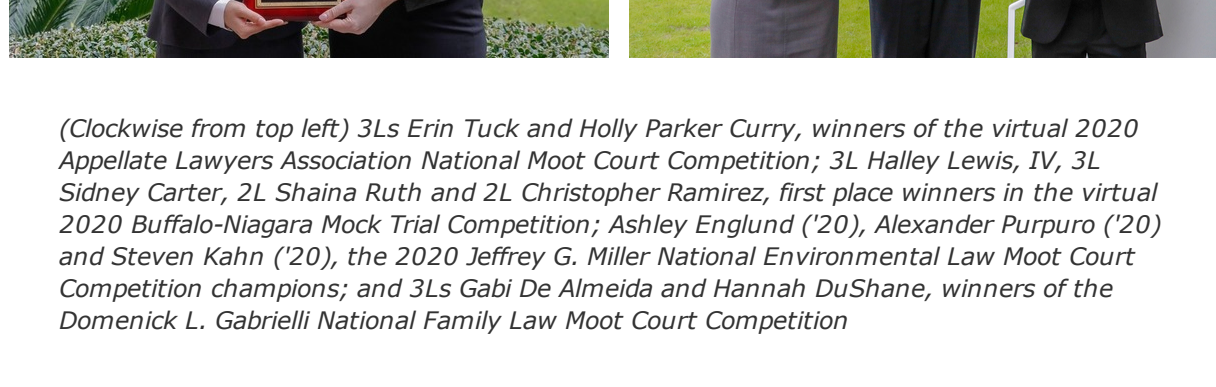
Dena Sokolow ('94) hosting our virtual event for labor and employment law practitioners

Our Alumni Affairs Office moved planned city receptions online, and thereafter conceived of new ways for alumni to connect, with receptions based on practice area and the formation of identity-group alumni networks, starting with the Black Alumni Network. Without travel, students have been able to participate in these meetings, and alumni have found additional, more enriching ways to engage with one another and the law school. Our Board of Visitors meetings, their associated committee meetings, our Alumni Association Board of Directors Meetings and their associated committee meetings, as well as our annual awards ceremony, all occurred virtually.



(Clockwise from top left) Students enjoying the socially-distanced picnic hosted by the Office of Student Advancement during Wellness Week; BLSA President and 3L Daynica Harley speaking during the community vigil in remembrance of the Black lives lost through tragic racial injustices; Halloween dog costume contest hosted by the FSU Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Sustainable Law Society; and the law school affiliates from the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar giving away smoothies on the Green

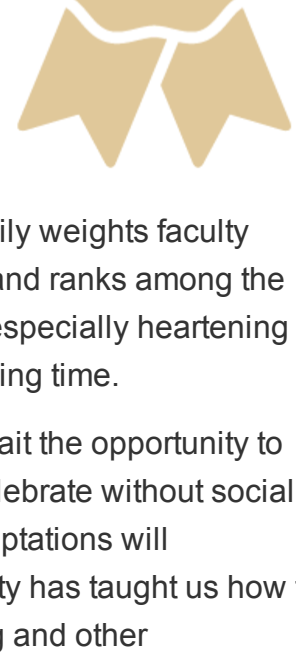
Our students have proved most resilient and in many cases are thriving rather than simply tolerating their virtual law school experiences. When the news media filled with the killing of our Black neighbors this summer, our student organizations, led by the Student Bar Association (SBA), created ally statements to support our Black Law Students Association (BLSA) students, and they hosted a vigil when the fall semester resumed. BLSA organization leaders continue to meet regularly, and they work continuously to support our students and front-line staff through the pandemic. Student organizations have found creative ways to socialize safely, with small outdoor gatherings, evening movies on the Green, and breakfast and smoothie provisions outside the Rotunda. Moreover, prominent voices throughout the nation have joined us for lectures and panel discussions on racial justice, the elections, COVID public health policies, ethical dilemmas, legal careers and much more. Our very strong student leadership was distinctively recognized when the Student Bar Association won, for the ninth time since 2008, the American Bar Association (ABA) award for the best SBA in the nation.



(Clockwise from top left) 3Ls Erin Tuck and Holly Parker Curry, winners of the virtual 2020 Appellate Lawyers Association National Moot Court Competition; 3L Halley Lewis, IV, 3L Sidney Carter, 2L Shaina Ruth and 2L Christopher Ramirez, first place winners in the virtual 2020 Buffalo-Niagara Mock Trial Competition; Ashley Englund ('20), Alexander Purpuro ('20) and Steven Kahn ('20), the 2020 Jeffrey G. Miller National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition champions; and 3Ls Gabi De Almeida and Hannah DuShane, winners of the Domenick L. Gabrielli National Family Law Moot Court Competition

Our advocacy teams also excelled this year, even in the virtual space. Our Moot Court Team won two national championships (the Jeffrey G. Miller National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition and the Domenick L. Gabrielli National Family Law Moot Court Competition) in February, before COVID led to mass cancellations of the rest of the spring competitions. Some fall competitions occurred virtually, and our team picked up a third national competition championship in that space (the 2020 Appellate Lawyers Association Moot Court Competition). Our 2L Advocacy Team also has performed excellently this year, and has achieved a national ranking for the first time (currently ranked 15th best trial team). In multiple competitions this year, a student has won the best advocate award, and the team took first place in the virtual 2020 Buffalo-Niagara Mock Trial Competition.

Our law school recognitions also continue to grow. According to statistics released by the ABA earlier this year, FSU is the 18th best law school in terms of the percentage of graduates who passed a bar examination in the primary jurisdiction on the first attempt. preLaw magazine ranked us the top law school in the nation for government careers, the seventh best for criminal law careers, among the top seven law schools for both public policy and human rights law, and the eighth best value law school. According to the World University Rankings, which heavily weights faculty scholarship, FSU Law is the 17th best U.S. law school, and ranks among the top 50 best universities for law in the world. It has been especially heartening to see so much positive recognition during such a challenging time.



Despite our very successful transition, we all eagerly await the opportunity to gather in person daily to learn, connect, compete and celebrate without social distancing and masks. That said, some of our recent adaptations will undoubtedly persist, because creativity borne of necessity has taught us how to improve our teaching, scholarly engagement, networking and other collaborations, and the meaningfulness of our celebrations. As you close out 2020, please take time to reflect on all the ways you showed resilience in your professional and personal life, and think about some of the positive changes that you will take forward after the pandemic fades. As we wish away a terrible year of suffering and loss for so many, let's also find gratitude for what we have maintained and pride in what we have achieved or improved despite current challenges. Happy New Year from FSU Law!

-Dean Erin O'Connor

*We're almost there!*

We are within \$50,000 of our **Pave the Way** campaign goal and need your support for student scholarships. Please visit [law.fsu.edu/pavetheway](http://law.fsu.edu/pavetheway) to learn more and give online today.

*We need your support for student scholarships!*

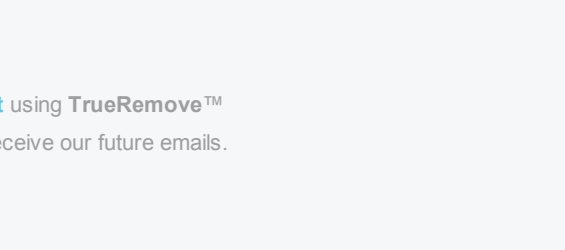
GET INVOLVED

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT

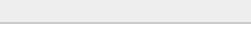
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