

From the Dean



(L-R) Trial Team members Kalie Maniglia, Rachel Akram, Zuriel Denmark, and Shaina Ruth won the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Civil Rights Competition last weekend.

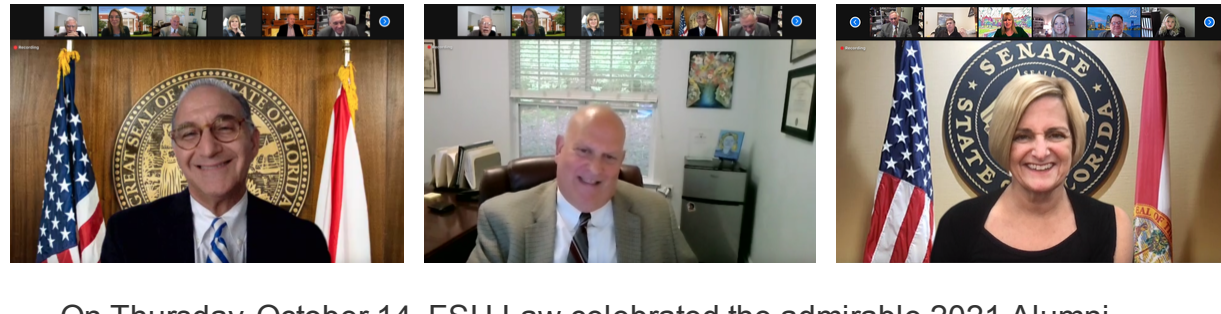
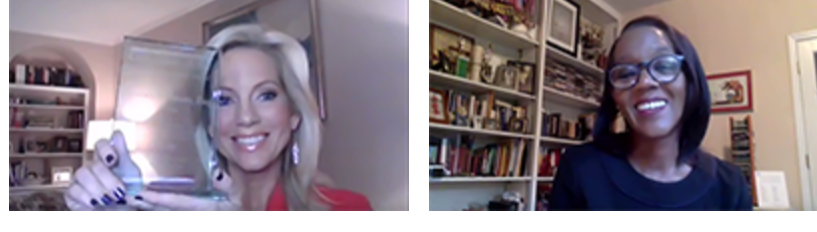
We are delighted to report that the FSU Law Trial Team has won first place in the Fourth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. National Civil Rights Competition! The competition took place virtually October 15-17 and was hosted by University of California Davis School of Law. Our students defeated a team from Harvard University in the final round of competition! Others competing among the 22 law schools were Emory University, Fordham University, New York University, University of Texas, and William & Mary. The competition problem involved litigation of Eighth Amendment claims of cruel and unusual punishment arising from the arrest and detention of homeless citizens interned indefinitely pursuant to a governor's executive order enhancing the punishment for vagrancy.

Winning team members were third-year law students Rachel Akram, Zuriel Denmark, Kalie Maniglia, and Shaina Ruth. In addition to winning the competition, Akram was named best overall advocate and Ruth won best cross-examination honors. Coaching the team to victory were FSU Law alumni Samuel Gilot ('16), an associate at Berger Singerman, and Louis Jean-Baptiste ('16), a partner at Webster and Baptiste Attorneys at Law. As law student Trial Team members, Gilot and Jean-Baptiste were on the team that won first place in the 2015 National Criminal Trial Advocacy Competition. Congratulations to our Trial Team students on bringing home another national title to FSU Law! We are extremely impressed by their hard work and advocacy skills, and grateful to their coaches for their inspirational mentoring.

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

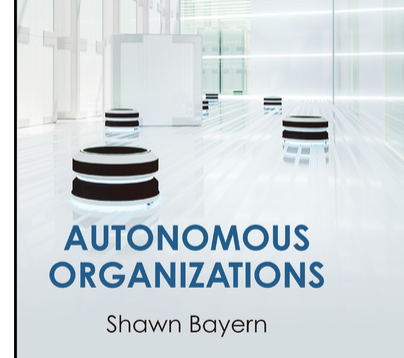
2021 Alumni Awards Celebration



On Thursday, October 14, FSU Law celebrated the admirable 2021 Alumni Awards recipients virtually. Shannon Bream ('96) received the Distinguished Alum Award for her professional accomplishments and outstanding service; Pamela Burch Fort ('77) was honored with the Alumni Association Service Award for her distinguished service to the College of Law over an extended period of time; Florida Senator Lorraine Ausley received the Class of '66 Award for distinguished service by a non-alum to the law school and the community; and Alan Abramowitz ('89) and Judge Steve Leifman ('87) both received the Exemplary Public Service Career Award for their dedication to public service and their exceptional character, integrity, humility, professionalism, and the highest regard for ethics. Award recipients are pictured above, clockwise from top left. The event was an opportunity to bring to light some incredible work being done by the honorees to benefit the law school, their communities, the state, and the nation. The virtual setting, which was utilized last year for the first time due to COVID-19, allowed honorees to make more robust remarks and family members and friends from around the country to attend the celebration. The 2021 award recipients talked about their remarkable careers and the impact that FSU Law has had on them professionally and personally. Many other alumni and friends also spoke about the reasons why recipients were so deserving of recognition. If you were unable to attend the event, you can view a [recording of the Zoom celebration](#) online. Congratulations to the award recipients and many thanks to the alumni who worked on the awards nomination processes.

Bayern Publishes New Book

FSU Law [Professor Shawn Bayern](#) recently published a new book, "Autonomous organizations," which sets out the legal, social, and political implications of software programs gaining legal personhood. Under current business law, it is already possible to give legal personhood, or a very close surrogate of it, to software systems of any kind. This means that robots could enter into contracts, serve as legal agents, or own property, and companies could be run by non-human agents. Bayern argues that autonomous or zero-person organizations offer an opportunity for useful new types of interactions between software and the law. The book explores the social and political aspects of these new organizational structures and their implications for legal theory. Bayern, the Larry and Joyce Beltz Professor of Torts and associate dean for academic affairs, focuses his research on common-law issues, primarily in contracts, torts, and organizational law. Before his legal career, Bayern was a software developer and wrote several books and articles about computer programming.



Professor Bayern said, "This book grew out of my work here teaching the Closely Held Business Organizations course. The book is an example of how the development of creative types of transactions can yield interesting new possibilities—in this case, the surprising ability of software systems or robots to interact with the legal system. Hopefully it will be of interest to business lawyers and technology lawyers."

Alum Profile: Nicholas R. Cleary ('19)

Nicholas R. Cleary began a two-year clerkship with Florida Supreme Court Justice Ricky Polston ('87) in July 2021. As a staff attorney for the court, Cleary assists with the processing of cases. He researches and analyzes legal issues; drafts legal memoranda, summaries, opinions/orders, and other court documents; and reviews opinions/orders before release. Cleary most recently completed a two-year clerkship with Judge Timothy D. Osterhaus at the First District Court of Appeal. During law school, Cleary was an extern at the First District Court of Appeal and Legal Services of North Florida and also worked as a law clerk at the Tallahassee City Attorney's Office. In his free time, Cleary serves in the music ministry at City Church Tallahassee, where he is a member.



"As a Tallahassee native, it's a real privilege to be able to work for the highest state court in Florida, only a block away from where I attended law school. My clerking experience has taught me much about the often-misunderstood third branch of government—specifically, how judges make decisions. Every day I learn something new about the law, and I hope to continue to be a lifelong learner throughout my legal career."

Student Profile: 3L Lauren Rolfe

Desired Practice Location: Anywhere in Florida

Expected Graduation: May 2022

Field of Law Sought: Criminal defense, specifically capital defense

Lauren Rolfe earned her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in criminology from Hofstra University. She is a first-generation law student and will graduate from FSU Law in May. Over the summer, Rolfe held an externship at the Promise of Justice Initiative in New Orleans, where she assisted with both civil and criminal cases by conducting research and drafting memoranda, interviewing clients over the phone and in person at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, drafting clemency letters, and interviewing jurors across the state in preparation for a client's new capital trial. Last spring, Rolfe volunteered with the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, where she drafted motions and memoranda, assisted with trial preparation, and attended trials and other preliminary hearings. During the summer and fall of 2020, Rolfe was an intern with the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Florida's Capital Habeas Unit. There, she researched various issues pertinent to capital post-conviction and federal habeas litigation, drafted memoranda and trial digests, and proofread briefs.

At FSU Law, Rolfe is president of the Black Law Students Association, where she served as social justice chair during her 2L year. She is also a member of the FSU Law Moot Court Team and a teaching assistant for Professor Christopher Busch's 1L Legal Writing and Research course. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Rolfe after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#).



"I chose the path of law because of my desire to help put an end to a criminal legal system that is punitive and harmful. I will be graduating with not only the skills needed to do that but also with some experience advocating for the most vulnerable clients. I look forward to applying what I have learned thus far to my legal career and continuing to learn and grow into an effective criminal defense attorney."