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From the Dean



On Sunday, May 1, we celebrated our newest graduates with a commencement ceremony and reception. This was an especially joyous occasion because, for the first time since 2019, we were able to hood our graduates in person with hugs and handshakes. During the ceremony, we celebrated more than 200 J.D., close to 100 J.M., and a dozen LL.M. graduates who displayed remarkable resilience throughout their time at FSU Law. The graduates heard words of encouragement from FSU President Richard D. McCullough, followed by an inspiring commencement speech by Judge Robert Luck, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Luck congratulated the graduates, their loved ones, and their educators. He urged graduates to reflect on their journeys to this momentous occasion, and spoke about the importance of service, professionalism, civility, and “taking time to smell the flowers.”

After the conferral of degrees, we presented a special memorial degree to the family of Daniel Taghdiri, a member of the graduating J.D. class who passed away unexpectedly in February after a battle with cancer. We also announced a scholarship, the Daniel E. Taghdiri Memorial Fund, created by Daniel’s family to honor his longstanding commitment to serving underserved communities. Also at the ceremony, we presented Professor Nat Stern with the 2022 Open Door Faculty Award, graduate Frank McGriggs with the inaugural Juris Master Leading the Way Award, and graduate Catherine Bauman with the 2022 Raising the Bar Award. Congratulations to our award recipients and all of our new alumni. We are looking forward to watching you soar!

Erin O'Connor
Dean Erin O'Connor

Kenyan Supreme Court Cites Prof. Landau’s Work

In April, [Professor David Landau's](#) scholarship and a co-written amicus brief were relied upon by the Kenyan Supreme Court in its decision to stop the Kenyan president from making constitutional changes through the Building Bridges Initiative. Several of the court’s decisions especially relied on Landau’s scholarship with Professor Rosalind Dixon concerning the distinction between a tiered constitutional design and a judge-made doctrine of unconstitutional constitutional amendment.



“I’m really happy that the Kenyan Supreme Court found our work and our amicus brief useful for their analysis, especially in such an important case, one which bears on the fairness of elections in the country,” Landau said.

Landau, the Mason Ladd professor and associate dean for international programs, is internationally recognized for his scholarship. His work has been published in many of the nation’s most prestigious law journals. It has also been cited by the high courts of several other countries, including the Supreme Court of Israel, the Supreme Court of Canada, the Constitutional Court of Colombia, the Constitutional Tribunal of Chile, and the Supreme Federal Tribunal of Brazil. His scholarship focuses on constitutional design, constitutional theory, and comparative constitutional law.

Alum Profile: Leron E. Rogers ('99)

Leron E. Rogers is a partner at Fox Rothschild in Atlanta. His practice includes complex litigation and business and commercial transaction matters, primarily in the areas of entertainment, intellectual property, technology, and media. Rogers counsels institutional and individual clients on a range of issues related to crisis management, business disputes, litigation prevention, and non-litigation matters, frequently in the capacity of outside general counsel. His clients include financial institutions, technology companies, physician practice groups, restaurant groups, manufacturers, transportation companies, entrepreneurs, professional athletes, and entertainment companies. Some of Rogers’ notable clients include Rick Ross, Def Jam Records, Kanye West, Vibe Magazine, the Miami Marlins, and members of many other professional sports teams. He frequently presents on entertainment law, licensing, and issues involving the convergence of media and technology. Rogers was recently selected to the Billboard Top Music Lawyers list for the third consecutive year. The list spotlights “the savviest legal counselors in the business” called upon to advise clients on the surging tide of catalog sales as well as IPOs, NFTs, Web3, and other new ventures in the metaverse. Rogers is a former board member and chair of entertainment for the Entertainment and Sports Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia. He also serves as chairman of the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association and co-chair of the Music Industry Relations Collective for the National Museum of African American Music.



“I began my entree into sports and entertainment while at Florida State Law. Those relationships that started in law school have been very valuable throughout my career.”

Student Profile: 2022 Grad Christian Mairena

Desired Practice Location: Tampa, Florida area
Graduation: May 2022
Field of Law Sought: Business law; corporate law; international trade and finance

Christian Mairena is originally from Pembroke Pines, Florida, and he earned his bachelor’s degree from Florida State University, where he majored in political science and international affairs. Mairena became a double ‘Nole when he graduated on May 1. During the summer before his 3L year, Mairena was a judicial intern for Judge Jason Ashford (’93), of the State Court of Houston County in Georgia. As a judicial intern, he conducted legal research and reviewed appellate briefs, trial records, and other legal documents. He also discussed his findings with Judge Ashford and drafted judicial orders.



At FSU Law, Mairena was a staff editor for the *Florida State University Law Review*, the *Florida State University Business Review*, and the *Journal of Land Use and Environmental Law*. He earned a Book Award in the International & Foreign Legal Research course, and he graduated with honors and with a pro bono service distinction. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Mairena, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at c.mairena1991@gmail.com.

“FSU Law has provided me many opportunities to enrich myself on academic and practical levels. Through my diverse studies and extracurriculars, I have developed strong research and writing skills, as well as a keen attention to detail. Now that my time in law school is over, I am eager to hit the ground running in my legal career.”

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