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From the Dean



Sia Baker-Barnes speaks with students

On Wednesday, January 25, we were honored to host alumna Sia Baker-Barnes ('00) for a special event with students. The event was part of our Raising the Bar Professionalism+ Program, and Baker-Barnes focused her remarks on lessons she has learned about leadership and professionalism. She spoke about her career in medical malpractice law and personal injury litigation and answered questions from the many students in attendance. Baker-Barnes is a shareholder at Searcy Denney in West Palm Beach and has achieved numerous multi-million-dollar verdicts and settlements. She also serves on The Florida Bar Board of Governors. This was a wonderful opportunity for our students to hear from someone who has accomplished a great deal during her career, in terms of both advocacy and leadership. Many thanks to Baker-Barnes for taking time out of her busy schedule to meet with our students, and to our BLSA and WLS student organizations for co-hosting this outstanding session.

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

Spring 2023 Fundathon Begins Next Week

ANSWER THE CALL

SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

FSU COLLEGE OF LAW



Starting on Monday, February 6, students will be calling and emailing alumni during our three-week Spring 2023 Fundathon. Students will contact graduates to solicit support for our Annual Fund, which is utilized for important needs at the law school, including student scholarships and student enrichment activities. Gifts can be earmarked to support specific causes, groups, and programs at the law school that are most important to the donor. A gift in any amount makes an impact on the law school and our students, so please consider giving to the Annual Fund if you have not already. Donations can be made when our students call, or you can [donate online now](#). To those who have already donated this year, thank you for your support!

Alum Profile: Hon. Stephanie Tanada ('08)

In December, Stephanie Tanada was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to serve as a judge in the San Bernardino County Superior Court. Tanada began her appointment on the bench on January 23, and she has a criminal assignment in the Victorville District of the San Bernardino County Superior Court. Tanada previously served as a research attorney for the Orange County Superior Court, was an associate at Jackson Lewis PC, and was a partner at Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP.



“I am both thrilled and honored to join the bench. I'm so thankful to the College of Law, its professors, and its staff for giving me the tools I needed to succeed from the very beginning of my career.”

Student Profile: 3L Vito Bavaro

Desired Practice Location: Sarasota, St. Petersburg, or Lakewood Ranch area
Expected Graduation: May 2023
Field of Law Sought: Trusts and estates or real estate law

Vito Bavaro, from Lakewood Ranch, Florida, earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Sport Management from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, and he will graduate from FSU Law in May. During law school, Bavaro has worked at Cole, Scott & Kissane in Tampa as a summer associate and at Gallagher and Hagopian in Sarasota as a summer intern. Last summer, at Cole, Scott & Kissane, Bavaro communicated with clients, attended depositions, trials, and mediations, and worked directly with insurance adjusters to help value injuries and property damage. He also conducted legal research and completed motions for summary judgment, motions to dismiss, and motions to suppress. During the summer before his 2L year, at Gallagher and Hagopian, Bavaro gained experience in personal injury law by maintaining communication with clients, conducting legal research, and attending depositions.



Bavaro would like potential employers to know that he is a former division one hockey player who thrives in a team-oriented environment. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Bavaro after graduation, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at vb21e@fsu.edu.

“During my time at FSU Law, I've grown as a person and gained valuable knowledge of the law and legal system. However, my biggest takeaway from law school is the importance of relationships. I value every relationship I've made, and if I can have even the slightest positive impact on someone's life, I believe that's a success.”

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