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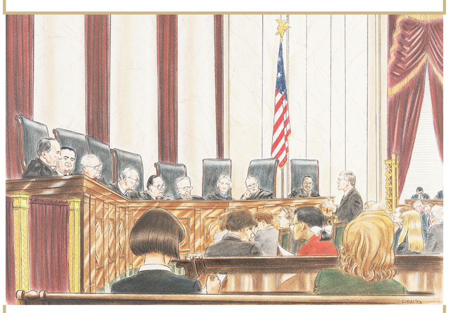
FSU LAW FOCUS

October 23, 2026

From the Dean



On Friday, November 13, we will welcome scholars, advocates, and policymakers to FSU Law for our inaugural **International Human Rights and the Death Penalty Symposium.** This daylong program will give our students and the broader community an opportunity to examine the legal and human rights questions surrounding capital punishment and learn directly from people whose work has shaped death penalty law and policy.

We are honored to welcome keynote speakers **Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj**, former president of Mongolia, who led his nation's efforts to abolish the death penalty, and **Sister Helen Prejean**, the internationally recognized advocate and author of Dead Man Walking. The day will also include a screening of the documentary ***Window on Death Row,*** followed by a panel discussion. The film is about Joaquín José Martínez, the first Spanish citizen exonerated from a U.S. death row. Martínez will participate in the discussion, moderated by filmmaker Linda Freund.

Other featured speakers include **Corinna Barrett Lain** of the University of Richmond School of Law, **Robin Maher** of the Death Penalty Information Center, **Mario Marazziti**, a former member of Italy's Chamber of Deputies, national litigator **Mark Olive**, and **William "Bill" Schabas** of Middlesex University London.

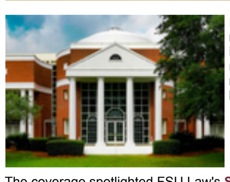
I hope you will join us for a thoughtful discussion of the constitutional, legal, and human rights questions surrounding capital punishment.

The symposium is free and open to the public, with a livestream option available for those unable to attend in person. CLE is available.

Register Here

Dean Erin O'Connor

FSU Law News



FSU College of Law has been recognized among the **20 most innovative law schools in the nation** in *preLaw* magazine's 2026 rankings, with the recognition also highlighted by *Above the Law* and *The National Jurist*.

The coverage spotlighted FSU Law's **Stoops Center for Law and Business** and **Institute of Law, Technology & Innovation** , recognizing programming that explores emerging technologies and evolving legal questions surrounding artificial intelligence, privacy, and cybersecurity.

Click here to read the *Above the Law* article.

Click here to read the *National Jurist* article.

FSU College of Law's **Institute of Law, Technology & Innovation,** in collaboration with **Lab22c**, has released the sixth edition of **The Florida AI Docket,** a publication providing legal analysis, legislative tracking, and commentary on artificial intelligence governance in Florida.

Click here to read **Issue 6 of the Florida AI Docket**, which examines a range of current AI policies, lawsuits, and election-related issues.

FSU Law Upcoming Event

Join the **FSU Law Election Law Center** on November 3 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. as we watch the Election Day results live at **Hayward House Bistro**.

All students, faculty and alumni are welcome to join in at 228 S Adams St, Tallahassee, FL. Hor d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to reserve your spot.

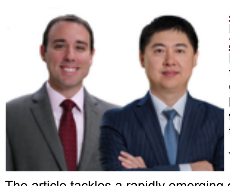
RSVP Here

FSU Law Faculty News

Rima Nathan, Clinical Professor, Co-Director of Clinical Externship Programs, and Director of the Claude Pepper Elder Law Clinic, recently received the **Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Aging and Law Section's Emerging Scholar Award.**

The award recognizes emerging scholars whose contributions, service, and leadership advance legal education and the legal profession, particularly through innovative perspectives and advocacy on issues affecting older adults.

Professor Nathan will be recognized at the **AALS Annual Meeting** in New York City during the AALS Awards Ceremony on January 6, 2027, and the Aging and the Law Section's program on January 8.



Justin Sevier, Charles W. Ehrhardt Professor of Litigation, and **Henry Zhuhao Wang,** Mason Ladd Professor of Law, co-authored a forthcoming article with 3L Gino Cerrone, **"The Authentication Illusion: Synthetic Evidence and the Limits of Human Judgment,"** in the 42nd volume of the ***Berkeley Technology Law Journal.***

The article tackles a rapidly emerging challenge for courts: as generative AI makes fabricated images, videos, audio, and text increasingly indistinguishable from authentic evidence, can judges, lawyers, and jurors actually tell what is real? In an original study of **1,783 participants, including judges, lawyers, and law students**, the authors found that participants performed **worse than chance overall** at distinguishing authentic from AI-generated evidence, while legal training offered no meaningful advantage and confidence was a poor indicator of accuracy. Building on these findings, the article argues that evidence law's traditional reliance on human judgment creates an "authentication illusion" and proposes a new hybrid framework for courts confronting contested synthetic evidence.

FSU Law adjunct faculty member **Judge Martin Fitzpatrick** recently took students from his Florida Civil Practice course to the federal courthouse, where they put their classroom knowledge into practice by presenting arguments on motions to dismiss.

The hands-on experience gave students an opportunity to strengthen their oral advocacy skills, gain familiarity with courtroom procedures, and apply the legal principles they have studied throughout the course, which covers Florida civil practice from the commencement of an action through final judgment.

FSU Law Event Recaps

FSU Law recently welcomed **Professor Andrew Mergen,** the Emmett Assistant Clinical Professor of Environmental Law and Faculty Director of the Emmett Environmental Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard Law, to deliver the **Fall 2026 Distinguished Environmental Lecture**.

Drawing on more than 33 years of experience with the **U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division**, Professor Mergen shared insights from his career in environmental litigation and the role of the law in addressing complex environmental challenges.

Click here to watch the recording.

(L-R: Glenn Ladwig, Kathryn R. Judson, and Bill Holliman)

FSU Law's **Career Services and Professional Development Office** and the **Intellectual Property Law Society** recently co-hosted **"Pathways to Practice,"** a panel exploring career opportunities. Panelists included **Glenn Ladwig,** associate general counsel at FSU; **Bill Holliman,** president at Holliman, P.A.; and **Kathryn R. Judson ('19),** an associate at Finnegan.

Drawing on their professional experiences, the panelists discussed career paths in patent prosecution, patent litigation, trademark and copyright law, and proceedings before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board. They also offered practical advice on the differences between transactional and litigation practices, the patent bar exam, and how students with diverse academic backgrounds can pursue careers in intellectual property law.

*(L-R: Top Row - Jacob Eisler, Holly Brewer, Leslie Goldstein, Barbara McGraw, Mark A. Graber, Edward J. Larson
Bottom Row - Craig Green, Sanford Levinson, and Alexander Tsesis)*

As the nation approaches the **250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence**, FSU College of Law recently hosted the **Declaration of Independence Conference**, bringing together scholars from across the country to explore the document's lasting influence on American law, government, and constitutional principles.

Organized by FSU Law D'Alemberte Distinguished Chair in Constitutional Law **Alexander Tsesis**, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law Regents Professor **Mark Graber**, and University of Notre Dame Professor Emeritus **Michael Zuckert**, the conference examined the Declaration's promises of equality and individual rights, how those ideals have been interpreted throughout American history, and their continuing relevance to debates over constitutional government and the limits of political power.

Although Hurricane Isaias forced the cancellation of this year's **Claude Pepper Elder Law Moot Court Competition,** we are pleased that the outstanding work of participating students can still be recognized. In partnership with the AARP Foundation, FSU College of Law awarding prizes and honors based on the brief scores submitted by each team before the competition was canceled.

Congratulations to this year's winning teams:

- **First place:** Team 12 — Florida International University
- **Second place:** Team 8 — University of Chicago
- **Third place:** Team 14 — University of California College of the Law, San Francisco
- **Fourth place:** Team 4 — Texas Tech University
- **Fifth place:** Team 11 — Texas Tech University

While the teams were unable to compete in person, their preparation, legal analysis, and written advocacy deserve recognition. We congratulate this year's winners and thank all participating teams and the AARP Foundation for their continued commitment to advancing education and advocacy on issues affecting older adults.

FSU Law Student News

(L-R: Ray Treadwell, Joe Jacquot, Ryan Newman, and David Axelman)

FSU Law student organization, the **Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies** recently hosted **"Florida Victory Lap: The Conservative Consolidation of the State Judiciary,"** a panel featuring two former general counsels to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis: **Joe Jacquot** and **Ryan Newman**, along with **David Axelman**, the governor's current deputy general counsel. Moderated by **Raymond "Ray" Treadwell**, First District Court of Appeal Judge, the discussion offered students a firsthand look at the legal responsibilities and challenges of advising Florida's executive leadership.

The panelists shared insights into their career paths, their experiences navigating complex statutory and constitutional questions, and the role of legal counsel in shaping executive decision-making. They also discussed the importance of understanding Florida's Constitution and administrative law, along with the professional skills needed to advise government leaders during periods of significant legal and political change.

The **Judge Advocate Student Association** recently hosted **JAG Day** in the D'Alemberte Rotunda, bringing together representatives from all branches of the military to connect with students interested in careers as judge advocates.

Students had the opportunity to learn about military law, explore career paths within the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, and hear directly from military representatives about their experiences and the opportunities available to aspiring military attorneys.

FSU Law Social Spotlight

This week, we featured a post from **@FSULawAdmissions** highlighting the experiences of FSU Law student ambassadors. Meet **2L Kyla Escoe**, who shares why she became a student ambassador and how she helps prospective students learn more about the FSU Law community.

With applications for the **Student Ambassador Program** now open, current students have the opportunity to get involved, connect with prospective students, and share what makes their FSU Law experience meaningful.

FSU College of Law has produced a **60-Year Commemorative Coin** to recognize participation in supporting the law school during its 60 year anniversary.

Alumni can earn a 60-Year Commemorative Coin by Donating $250+ ***AND*** joining and engaging on FSU Law Connect, **OR** attending an in-person Alumni Event. These actions must be taken **between January 1 and December 31, 2026** to be eligible for the coin.

Find Details on Eligibility Requirements for FSU Law's 60-Year Coin.

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