

From the Dean



For more than twenty-five years, **Dean Nancy Benavides** has been at the very heart of the FSU College of Law. To generations of students, alumni, faculty, and staff, she is simply “**Dean B**”—a source of guidance, encouragement, and steady support. Her work has shaped not only the experience of our students but the culture of care and belonging that defines our community.

Dean B's leadership is rooted in compassion and consistency. She has welcomed every class with the same warmth and remained present for students in every phase of their journey—through challenges, growth, celebration, and beyond graduation. Her door has always been open, and her commitment has always been personal.

Last week, our community gathered to honor Dean B's many remarkable years of service to date. The celebration was joyful, heartfelt, and a reflection of the countless lives she has touched. Stories shared by alumni, faculty, and students spoke to the same truth: **Dean B has been the steady hand and generous spirit behind so many of our successes.**

We are deeply grateful for Nancy's dedication to the College of Law and to the generations of students she has helped shape. Her influence can be seen in the lawyers our students become—grounded, capable, compassionate, and prepared to lead. As we celebrated Dean B, we celebrated the values at the core of FSU Law: a commitment to one another, a belief in the potential of every student, and a shared responsibility for building community.

Please join me once again in thanking **Dean Nancy Benavides** for her extraordinary service and the legacy she continues to build here at Florida State University College of Law.

Watch a special video feature about Nancy's contributions to the College of Law.

Leave a message for her.



Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

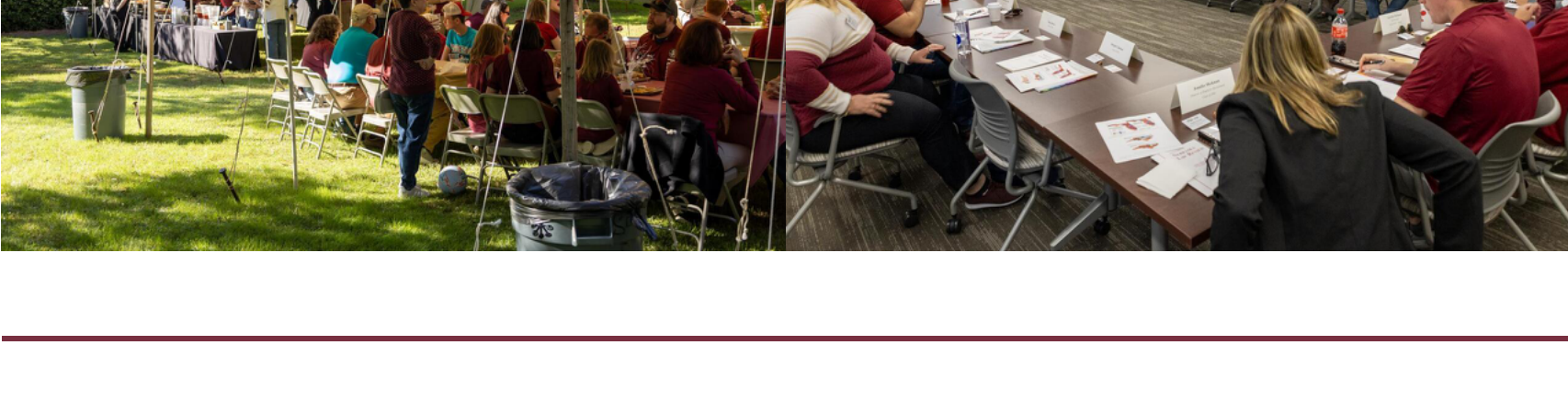
FSU Law Homecoming



Homecoming Weekend at FSU Law was a wonderful celebration of community and tradition! Alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends joined us for three days of events that brought our community together on campus. The weekend kicked off with social gatherings and class reunions, continued with our annual Homecoming Tailgate before the game, and concluded with our special **50-Year Alumni Brunch**, honoring the Class of 1975 and their lasting legacy in the legal profession.

Throughout the weekend, conversations were shared, memories were revisited, and new connections were made.

We are grateful to everyone who returned to campus to celebrate with us and look forward to welcoming you back again next year.



FSU Law News



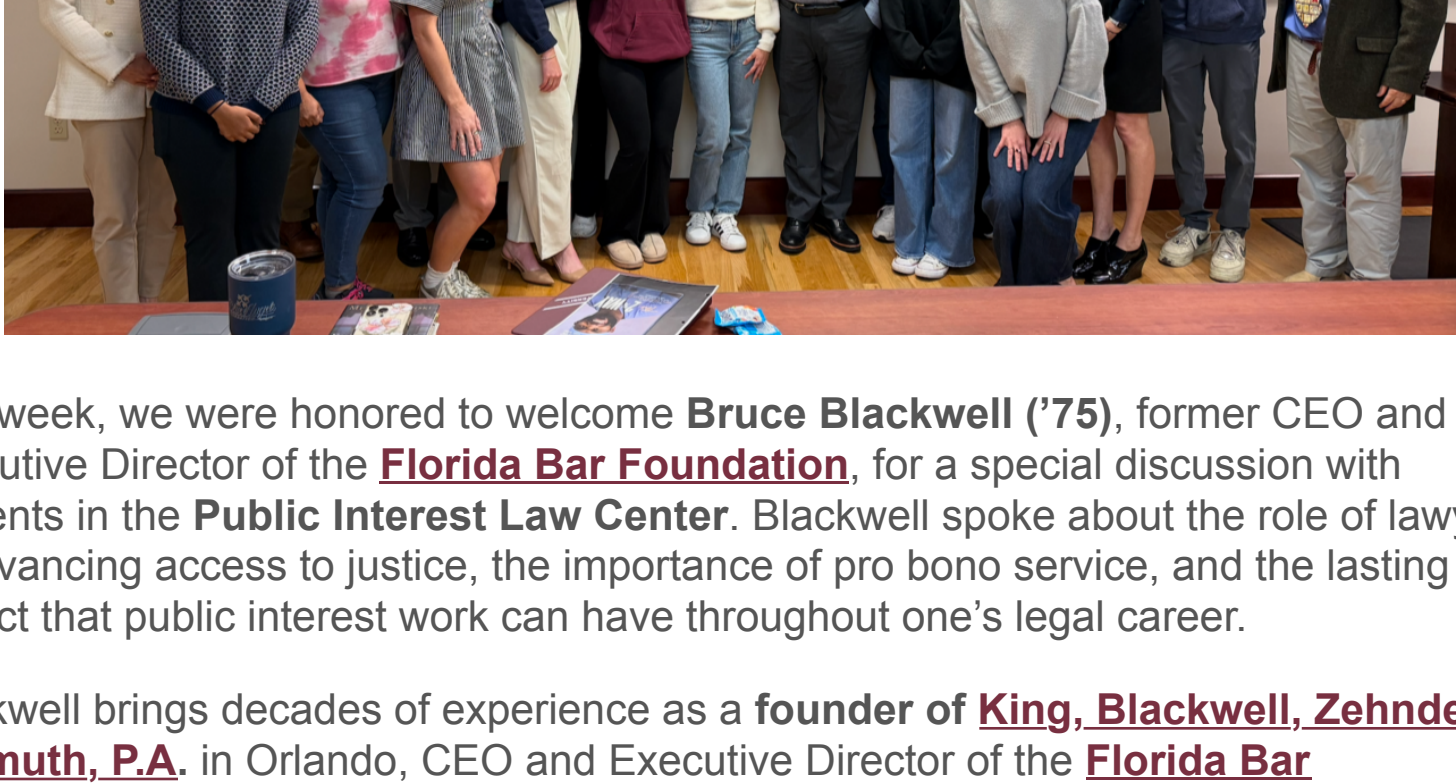
FIVE FSU LAW STUDENTS NAMED 2025-2026 FLORIDA GUBERNATORIAL FELLOWS

We are proud to announce that **five FSU Law students** have been selected for the **Florida Gubernatorial Fellows Class XXI**, one of the state's most prestigious public service leadership programs. The fellowship places ten emerging leaders within top state agencies for a year of immersive, hands-on experience in policymaking, public administration, and government operations.

- **Cole McLellan (2L)** – Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- **Alexa Kays (3L)** – Florida Department of State
- **Lucas Pirolli (2L)** – Executive Office of the Governor, Office of General Counsel
- **Andrew Otanes (2L)** – Florida Department of Commerce
- **Kate Rumisek (2L)** – Florida Department of Corrections

Throughout the year, fellows will work alongside senior agency leadership, contribute to policy research and development, and participate in leadership training. The program will conclude with each student presenting policy recommendations directly to state leadership.

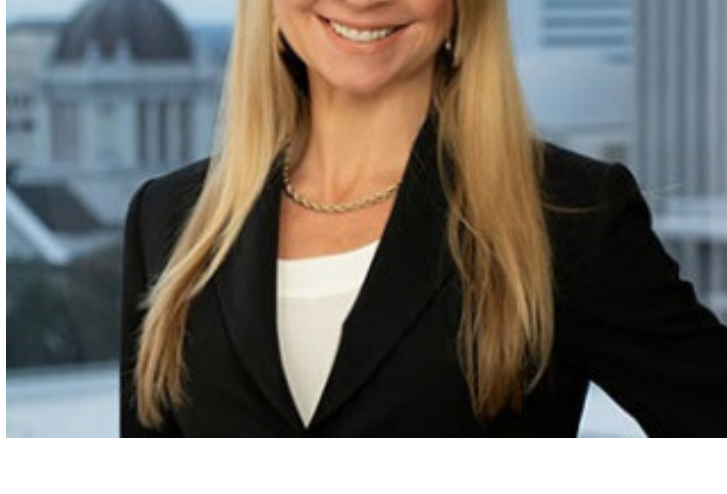
Click here to read the full article.



Last week, we were honored to welcome **Bruce Blackwell (75)**, former CEO and Executive Director of the **Florida Bar Foundation**, for a special discussion with students in the **Public Interest Law Center**. Blackwell spoke about the role of lawyers in advancing access to justice, the importance of pro bono service, and the lasting impact that public interest work can have throughout one's legal career.

Blackwell brings decades of experience as a **founder of King, Blackwell, Zehnder & Wermuth, P.A.**, in Orlando, CEO and Executive Director of the **Florida Bar Foundation**, and a lifelong advocate for expanding legal services to underserved communities. His visit offered students an invaluable opportunity to learn from a leader whose work has shaped both the legal profession and the public interest landscape in Florida.

FSU Law Faculty News



Professor **Denise Harle** was recently quoted in an *FSUView* article discussing the growing debate over press freedom following recent Pentagon crackdowns. In the piece, Harle, who directs FSU Law's **First Amendment Clinic**, shared insight on how government actions may affect not only traditional media but also the broader public's access to information. Her comments highlight the importance of protecting free-press principles amid evolving challenges to transparency and accountability.

Click here to read the full article.

FSU Law Alumni News

Alumna **Alexis Fulton (25)** is making an impact in elder advocacy thanks to her experience in FSU Law's **Public Interest Law Center** and **Claude Pepper Elder Law Clinic**. She was featured in an *FSU News* article, "**From Student to Advocate: Alexis Fulton's Journey in Elder Law**," where she discussed how her experience at FSU Law set her up to be able to pursue her passion.



While a student, Fulton worked with **Rima Nathan**, Director of the **Claude Pepper Elder Law Clinic**, to launch the **Elder Domestic Violence Assistance Project**, expanding legal support for older survivors of abuse. Her research contributed to the **Florida Elder Abuse Benchmark** for the Office of the State Courts Administrator—work that continues to influence policy and judicial understanding across the state.

Now serving as a **staff attorney with Legal Services of North Florida**, Fulton works alongside current FSU Law students on elder domestic violence cases, completing a full-circle journey from student advocate to mentor.

Click here to read the full article.

Frontiers in Law & Technology

Join us next week on **Wednesday, November 12**, at **12:30 p.m.** for a presentation with **Saif Ishoof**, Managing Partner of **Lab22c** and one of Miami's leading voices in innovation and civic engagement.



In his presentation, "**Leadership in the Age of Disruption**," he will explore what it means to lead effectively in a rapidly changing world shaped by artificial intelligence, shifting economies, and evolving social expectations. Ishoof will share real-world examples and practical strategies for developing adaptability, empathy, and forward-thinking leadership—skills essential for creating meaningful impact in today's dynamic environment.

This event is free and has been approved for 1.0 CLE credit, including 1.0 Technology credit, by the Florida Bar's Continuing Legal Education program.

[Register](#)



We are pleased to host **Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier** for a special **Fireside Chat on Monday, November 17**, at **12:30 p.m.** He will be joined in conversation by **Todd McClelland**, partner at Sterling and leading practitioner in **cybersecurity, data privacy, AI, and litigation**.

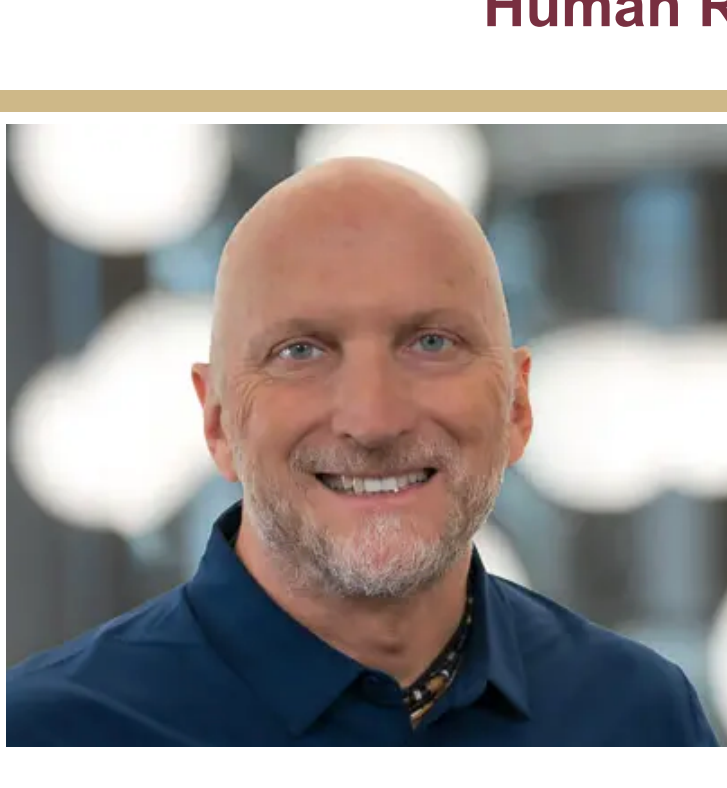
This discussion will offer a rare, firsthand look at the **future of technology and innovation law in Florida**, including how the state is navigating emerging challenges in privacy, artificial intelligence governance, digital security, and the rapidly evolving legal landscape surrounding tech regulation.

This is an important opportunity for students, alumni, and the broader legal community to hear directly from one of the most influential leaders shaping law and policy in Florida today.

This event is free and has been approved for 1.0 CLE credit, including 1.0 Technology credit, by the Florida Bar's Continuing Legal Education program.

[Register](#)

Human Rights Lecture



Join us next week as FSU Law and the Center for the Advancement of Human Rights present a lecture featuring **Professor James R. May** of **Washington University School of Law** on **Wednesday, November 13**, from **4–6:30 p.m.** in the **D'Alemberte Rotunda**.

His presentation, "**Is There a Human Right to a Clean Environment? The International Case Against the U.S. for the Climate Emergency**," will examine how international law frameworks address government responsibility in responding to climate change.

Professor May's talk draws from a recent petition submitted to the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights** on behalf of youth plaintiffs in *Juliana v. United States*. The discussion will explore the role of international courts and human rights principles in shaping both global and national approaches to climate policy.

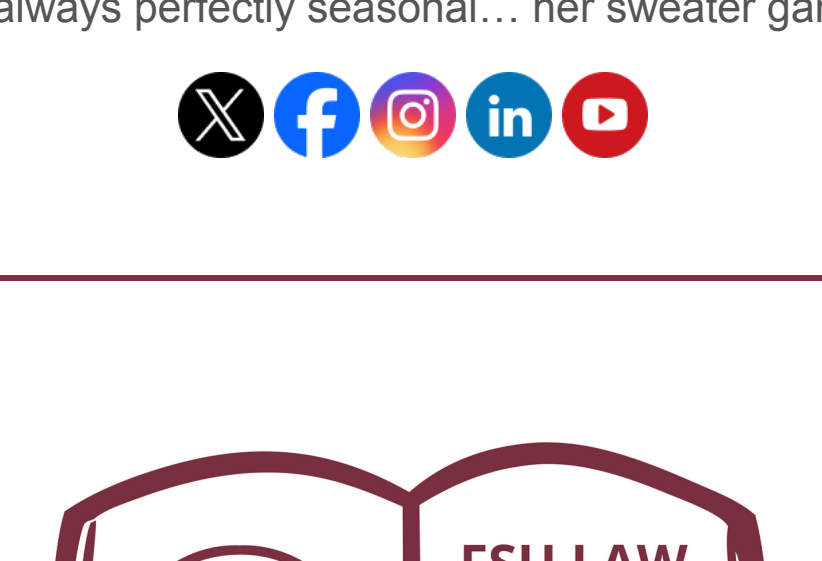
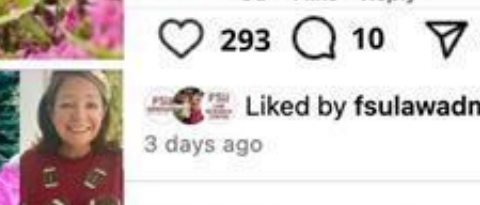
[Register](#)

FSU Law Social Spotlight



This week, we're celebrating one of FSU Law's most beloved traditions — **Dean B's iconic sweater collection**.

Classic, colorful, and always perfectly seasonal... her sweater game is unmatched.



Support the next generation of lawyers through the **FSU Law Book Award Program**. Sponsors select a course of their choice, and each award recognizes student achievement while helping the College of Law recruit and retain top talent. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Become a Book Award sponsor today and make a lasting impact.

