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### From the Dean



We were honored to welcome former U.S. Ambassador to Poland and Sweden Mark Brzezinski to Florida State University College of Law for the 2026 D'Alemberte & Palmer Lecture in International Human Rights. Drawing on his distinguished career in diplomacy, public service, and international law, Ambassador Brzezinski offered a compelling and timely perspective on the United States' role in advancing human rights and democratic institutions worldwide.

Reflecting on his service during a period of geopolitical instability, he emphasized that diplomacy is not only practiced through formal negotiations, but also through presence. As he noted, the simple act of "showing up" remains one of the most powerful tools available to those committed to defending human dignity. He further underscored that protecting democracy is not merely an idealistic endeavor, but a central pillar of the United States' national interest.

Following the lecture, Ambassador Brzezinski was joined by **Darby Kerrigan Scott**, Middle Road Foundation Professor and Co-Director of the Public Interest Law Center, for an engaging Q&A session.

He also took time to honor the legacy of Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, former Florida State University President (1994-2003) and Law School Dean (1984-1989), whose leadership continues to shape the spirit of this lecture series. Reflecting on D'Alemberte's work with the **Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI)**, he noted its role in supporting the development of fair and open election laws in 21 countries through American Bar Association programs.

In conjunction with this year's lecture, we also announced the upcoming unveiling of the new D'Alemberte Memorial Wall, located on the third floor of the Main Classroom Building, which will further honor his lasting legacy.

As is customary each year, we also recognized our 2026 Ellis Medal Recipient and D'Alemberte Ellis Fellow. Additional details on both announcements are included below.

[Watch the full recording.](#)

[Read the article in FSU News.](#)

[Read the article in Florida Politics.](#)

*Erin O'Connor*  
Dean Erin O'Connor

### Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte Memorial Wall Unveiling



In tribute to the legacy of **Sandy D'Alemberte**, we are proud to unveil the **Memorial Wall on the third floor of the Main Classroom Building**. This dedicated display honors D'Alemberte's remarkable life and the profound impact he had on the College of Law, Florida State University, the State of Florida, the nation, and the broader legal and civic communities he served.

The memorial wall reflects the breadth of his career and the values that defined his leadership. Through photographs, milestones, and reflections, the installation invites students, faculty, and visitors to consider the example he set through a lifetime dedicated to justice, public service, and institutional integrity.



### 2026 Ellis Medal Recipient and D'Alemberte Ellis Fellow



(L-R) 3L Jonathan Carden and 1L Zoe Orr

During the **D'Alemberte & Palmer Lecture**, 3L Jonathan Carden was named the recipient of the Ellis Medal, and 1L Zoe Orr was announced as the 2026 D'Alemberte Ellis Fellow.

The Ellis Medal is awarded to a graduating student who demonstrates outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and meaningful service to the College of Law. The D'Alemberte Ellis Fellowship supports students pursuing work in international human rights law, giving recipients the opportunity to gain practical experience through international legal work and further develop as future lawyers and globally engaged advocates.

### Honoring Dean O'Connor

You are invited to join us in honoring Dean Erin O'Hara O'Connor on Friday, April 10, at 3 p.m. in the D'Alemberte Law Rotunda.

For the past decade, **Dean O'Connor** has been a cornerstone of the Florida State University College of Law community, guiding the College through a period of remarkable growth and national recognition. Under her leadership, FSU Law has strengthened its academic programs, expanded experiential learning opportunities, and elevated its national reputation.



Guests are also invited to share memories, photographs, messages, and well-wishes through our [online message board](#) in recognition of her leadership and lasting legacy.

We are grateful to our generous sponsors, Phil and Rita Blank.

RSVP

### FSU Law Faculty News



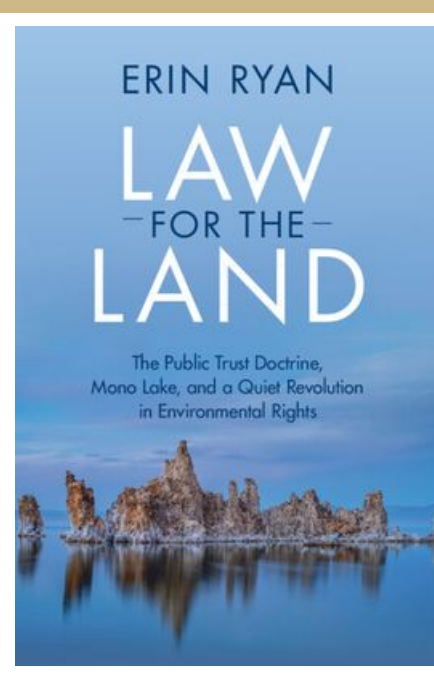
We are pleased to highlight recent scholarship by **Frederick M. Abbott**, Edward Ball Eminent Scholar Professor of International Law, whose latest article was published in *Trade, Law and Development*. His work, titled "**The WTO TRIPS Agreement in the Post-WTO World: The Emerging Common Law of International IP**," appears in Volume 17, No. 1 (2025).

In this article, Professor Abbott examines the evolving role of the World Trade Organization's TRIPS Agreement within an increasingly complex global trade environment. He considers how international intellectual property norms are no longer shaped solely by traditional multilateral institutions but are also influenced by a growing network of bilateral and regional agreements, dispute-resolution mechanisms, and state practice. Through this lens, he explores the emergence of what he describes as a developing "common law" of international intellectual property.

[Read the paper.](#)

### FSU Law Events

**Erin Ryan**, Associate Dean for Environmental Programs and the Elizabeth C. & Clyde W. Atkinson Professor, recently held a book launch in celebration of her new publication, "**Law for the Land: The Public Trust Doctrine, Mono Lake, and a Quiet Revolution in Environmental Law**." The event convened respected voices in environmental law, including **Professor Alexandra B. Klass** of Michigan Law and **Geoffrey McQuilken** of the Mono Lake Committee, with **Professor James Parker-Flynn** serving as moderator.



The discussion explored the doctrine's continuing importance in contemporary environmental law. Speakers explored how the principles underlying the public trust doctrine remain deeply relevant as policymakers and communities confront complex questions about balancing economic development with environmental stewardship.

[Watch the event recording.](#)



The College of Law recently welcomed **Professor James E. Pfander**, the Owen L. Coon Professor of Law at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, as part of our **Fauly Enrichment Speaker Series**.

A leading scholar in federal courts, constitutional law, and civil procedure, Professor Pfander's work focuses on the role of the judiciary under Article III and the historical development of federal jurisdiction.

### FSU Law Alumni News

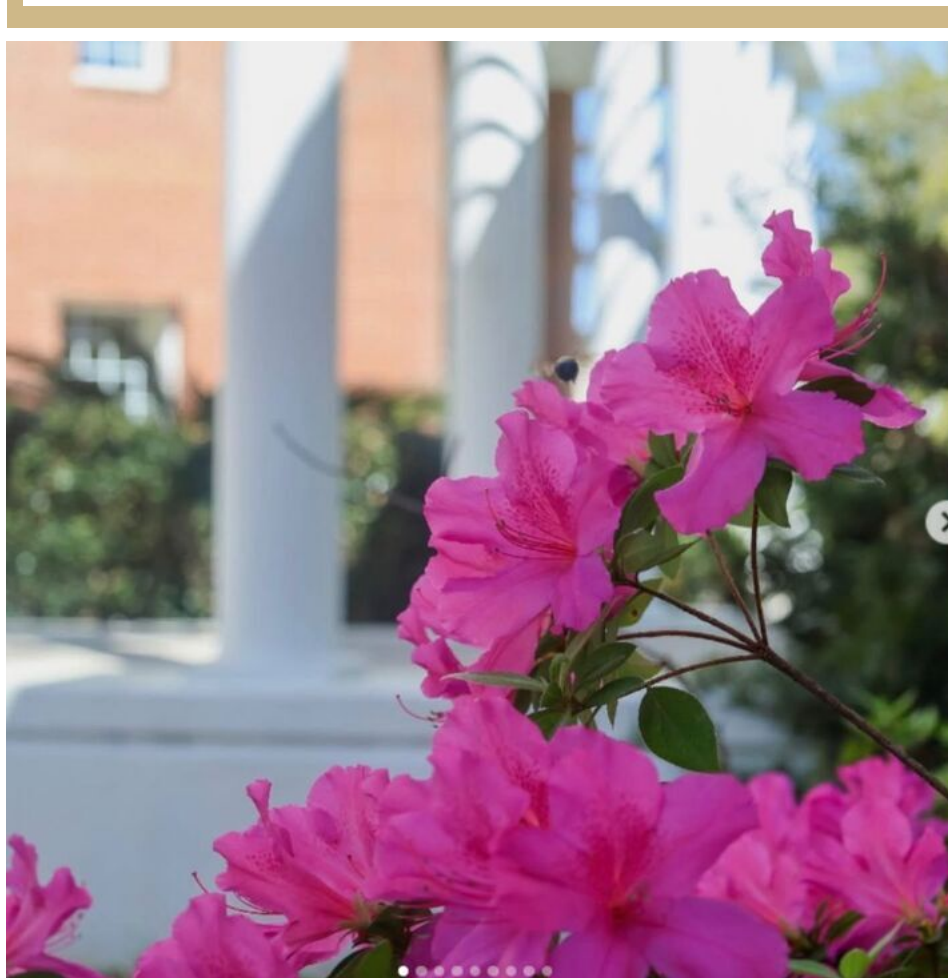
Congratulations to alumnus **Jeffrey R. Beckham ('89)** on his nomination to the Connecticut Superior Court by **Governor Ned Lamont**.



Standing at the podium: Jeffrey R. Beckham ('89)

Throughout his career, Beckham has held several prominent leadership roles within the Connecticut state government. He served as **secretary of the Office of Policy and Management from 2022 to 2025** and previously as **undersecretary for legislative affairs**. Earlier in his career, he worked as **staff counsel at the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services** and held additional positions across state agencies focused on policy development and public works.

### Social Spotlight



Spring break is this week, and campus is in full bloom 🌸

Whether you're traveling, working, participating in spring break programs, or simply enjoying a change of pace, we hope this week offers a chance to recharge—you've earned it.



### Earn a 60-Year Commemorative Coin

To mark the 60th anniversary, we have created a special **60-Year Commemorative Coin** to recognize and thank alumni who support the College during this milestone year.

Alumni can earn a coin by making a gift of \$250+ AND joining and engaging with the FSU Law community on FSU Law Connect or attending an in-person alumni event.

These activities must take place between **January 1 and December 31, 2026**, to qualify.

[Learn more.](#)

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