

### From the Dean



*Farmworker & Immigration Rights Clinic students and Clinical Professor Ashley Hamill during an Afghan legal screening event at the law school in January 2022.*

Thanks to funding in the amount of \$300,000 from the Claude Pepper Foundation, we are embarking on an innovative collaboration with the FSU College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, and we are launching the Claude Pepper Elder Law Clinic. The interdisciplinary clinic within our Public Interest Law Center will focus on boosting the well-being and resilience of low-income adults who are at least 60 years old through legal advocacy and community education. Students in the clinic will work on a range of legal issues that impact older adults, such as elder abuse, financial and food insecurity, public benefits, and advance care plans. We are excited about being able to help older adults in our community and state through this new clinic!

In addition, our Public Interest Law Center recently was awarded Florida Bar Foundation grants to benefit two existing clinics. Our Children's Advocacy Clinic is receiving a \$141,000 Children's Legal Services grant, and our Farmworker & Immigration Rights Clinic is receiving a \$125,000 Law School Civil Legal Clinics grant. The grants will help the clinics in their efforts to provide legal services to underrepresented individuals and provide FSU Law students with real-world work experience as they represent clients. The Foundation grants are awarded annually to increase access to Florida's justice system. The Law School Civil Legal Grant Program also aims to encourage law students to pursue public interest and pro bono work by involving them in the provision of community-based civil legal assistance. Both clinics have given our students extremely meaningful educational opportunities, while also providing critical services to the community. We are grateful to the Foundation for recognizing the value the clinics provide!

*Erin O'Connor*

Dean Erin O'Connor

### Alumni Sought for Career Mentors Program



*Alumni and students connect during a spring 2022 event at the law school.*

The Career Services and Professional Development Office's Career Mentors Program is a valuable asset to FSU Law students as they begin their professional journeys. Alumni who volunteer as career mentors are available to students and recent graduates to answer questions about job search strategies, networking, and breaking into markets, whether that be practice area or location. Hundreds of students and alumni have connected through the Career Mentors Program, with students reporting that they gained valuable advice and support from alumni. More than 1,000 FSU Law graduates currently serve as career mentors, and the law school encourages more alumni to get involved. Alumni who have questions about becoming career mentors should contact the Career Services Office at [careerservices@law.fsu.edu](mailto:careerservices@law.fsu.edu), and alumni who wish to volunteer for the program should email [alumni@law.fsu.edu](mailto:alumni@law.fsu.edu).

### Alum Profile: Hon. Suzanne Van Wyk ('94)

Administrative Law Judge Suzanne Van Wyk, of the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings, took office as president of The Florida Bar Foundation on July 1. In this role, Van Wyk leads the statewide charitable organization in its mission to provide greater access to justice by funding programs that expand and improve representation and advocacy on behalf of low-income persons in civil legal matters, that improve the fair and effective administration of justice, and that promote public service among lawyers. Van Wyk has been a champion of The Florida Bar Foundation for many years, and she is a fellow and Bronze Society donor of the organization. She is also actively engaged in Florida Bar activities, including currently serving as chair-elect of the Administrative Law Section, and formerly serving on the Committee on Professionalism and chairing the Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee. Van Wyk also previously served as president of the FSU College of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors.



***“I am passionate about closing the justice gap for Floridians in need, and I encourage all FSU Law students and graduates to pursue pro bono service. The work is rewarding and so many Floridians are in dire need of help, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic! Please visit [thefloridabarfoundation.org](http://thefloridabarfoundation.org) to discover more about the Foundation and how you can help support our mission.”***

### Celebrating 2022 Grad Blake Mathesie

Recent FSU Law graduate Blake Mathesie has accepted a post-graduate position with GrayRobinson in Jacksonville! During law school, Mathesie was a member of the Trial Team, treasurer for the Federalist Society, 1L representative of the LitiGators student organization, and a pupil of the Chester Bedell Inn of Court. He was a member of the Student Bar Association, the Business Law Society, the Tax Law Society, and the Tallahassee Bar Association – Young Lawyers Division. He was also a Barbri ambassador, a delegate of the Young Republicans, and involved with FSU's Student Government Association, serving as associate justice of the FSU Supreme Court, deputy speaker of judicial affairs, law school representative in the Congress of Graduate Students, and vice chair of the Elections Commission. Additionally, Mathesie received a book award in his Executive Clemency in Florida class, received a Distinguished Pro Bono Service Award, and was a Garnet & Gold Key member. Congratulations to Blake Mathesie on his graduation and many achievements! We wish him all the best in his new role and look forward to celebrating his future accomplishments.

