



# FSU LAW FOCUS

Friday, November 15, 2024

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## From the Dean



(L-R) Jake Barron, Mason Bennett, Sarah Kilpatrick, and Nyah German

**FSU College of Law hosted its annual Moot Court Final Four Competition at the Florida Supreme Court last week.** This is an exclusive opportunity for four second-year FSU Law students to present oral arguments based on a fictitious case before all seven justices of the Florida Supreme Court.

This year, the students showcased their trial skills on a case exploring the complex legal question of a correctional facility's responsibility to protect pretrial inmates, which has significant implications for constitutional law and the rights of individuals in custody. The finalists—Jake Barron and Mason Bennett, who represented the petitioner, and Sarah Kilpatrick and Nyah German, who represented the respondent—delivered compelling arguments. Following the competition, a reception was held at the law school, where Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz presented Barron with the Best Advocate award for his outstanding performance. Shutts & Bowen LLP sponsored the event this year.

Founded in 1968, the FSU Law Moot Court Team is ranked 18th in the nation by preLaw magazine and has a long tradition of excellence, with numerous national titles. The law school is deeply indebted to long-time team director Professor Nat Stern, who has mentored our Moot Court Team for decades.

*Erin O'Connor*

Dean Erin O'Connor

## FSU Law Clinic Hosts Elder Law Competition

Last week, FSU's Claude Pepper Elder Law Clinic hosted its **second annual Elder Law Moot Court Competition**. The event drew 20 teams from across the country to compete at the FSU College of Law.

The topic this year addressed age discrimination in employment. Judges included alumni, FSU Law professors, and members of the legal community. Congratulations to the winners:



A Chicago-Kent student presents during the final round of the Elder Law Moot Court Competition

- **First Place – George Washington University Law School**
- **Second Place – Chicago-Kent College of Law**
- **Third Place – LMU-Duncan School of Law**
- **Best Brief – Cooley Law School**

- **Best Oralist – Julia Garlich (Chicago-Kent)**

Thanks to the AARP Foundation, \$20,000 in monetary prizes were awarded to the top teams and participants in the competition.

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## **Student News: Trial Team Makes it to Final Round at Georgetown**

Congratulations to the FSU Law Trial team, which made it to the final round in the **2024 White Collar Crime National Trial Team Competition** this past weekend in Washington, D.C., hosted by Georgetown Law. Joshua Gallagher, Taylor Saunders, Akram Laroussi, and Caroline Banks represented FSU College of Law this year.

The White Collar Crime Invitational is a three-day trial advocacy competition hosted by the Georgetown University Law Center Barristers' Council. It features a federal criminal trial focused on white collar issues. Past problems have addressed issues such as: insurance fraud, honest services fraud, lying to federal investigators, and violations of the securities laws.

Sixteen of the nation's top trial advocacy programs traveled to Washington for the competition, which was judged by legal professionals from the greater D.C. Area. The competition was held at the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.



(L-R) Joshua Gallagher, Taylor Saunders, Akram Laroussi, and Caroline Banks



## Alumni in the News: Matthew Gordon



**Congratulations to alumnus Matthew Gordon, who was recently assigned to the Santa Rosa County Court judicial seat.** Gordon has also been a prosecutor in the State Attorney's Office for the First Judicial Circuit since 2006.

He is featured in the Florida Politics article "**Ron DeSantis names three Panhandle attorneys to fill three open judgeships, one Treasure Coast seat.**"

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

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## Alumni Feature: Constance “CeCe” Phelan

**Congratulations to recent alumna CeCe Phelan ('24), who has joined [ShuffieldLowman's](#) Orlando office,** where she will focus on corporate and business law.

Phelan's practice covers a wide array of corporate matters, including business formation, mergers and acquisitions,

contract negotiations, corporate governance, and compliance. She works closely with business owners, entrepreneurs, startups, and senior management to address their ongoing corporate needs and provide strategic legal guidance.



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### **Student Profile: 3L Zachary Roper**

**Desired Practice Location:**

Tallahassee or Tampa

**Expected Graduation:** May 2025

**Field of Law Sought:**

Environmental Law, focusing on litigation

Zachary Roper, a third-year student in the J.D. program, hails from Apopka, Florida. He earned his

Bachelor of Arts degree from New College of Florida before going on to complete a Master of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago.



Currently, Roper is working as an Environmental Consultant for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), a role he began in October 2023. In this position, he conducts legal research and prepares memoranda for the Onsite Sewage Program, which is developing a statewide regulatory framework.

Zachary has also gained practical experience through his involvement in the Elder Law Clinic at the Public Interest Law Center in the Fall of 2023.

Additionally, he served as a judicial intern for Judge John Jordean at the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida during the summer of 2023, focusing on complex civil litigation.

A dedicated leader and advocate, he is currently serving as President of the Environmental Law Society, Treasurer of the Public Interest Law Student Association, and is an active member of the FSU Law Trial Team. He also contributes as a staff editor for the FSU Law Business Law Review.

***"Working with the FDEP's new program has been a great opportunity to take initiative and tackle legal challenges. It's helped me develop customer service skills and enhanced my litigation abilities, both of which will be valuable in my future career. In the end, you get out what you put in."***



We invite all alumni and students to [join FSU Law Connect](#), a new platform exclusively for the FSU Law community. Alumni can keep in touch with the College of Law and other alumni, post jobs, and access career development tools. If you haven't already joined FSU Law Connect, please join today to help us increase engagement and connection.

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