



Advocacy in Action: 12 years later, juvenile sentenced to life without parole returns home, and other exciting updates

Yes, what a year! Where did it go? I know where. We taught students and helped our communities! Our doors were open. Necessity forced us to be creative in our litigation, in our community outreach, and in our community development. See below for flashes of accomplishments and our attempts at nudging history so it rhymes with hope.

- Paolo Annino, director of the FSU College of Law Public Interest Law Center

FSU Children in Prison Project: Kenneth Young Returns Home

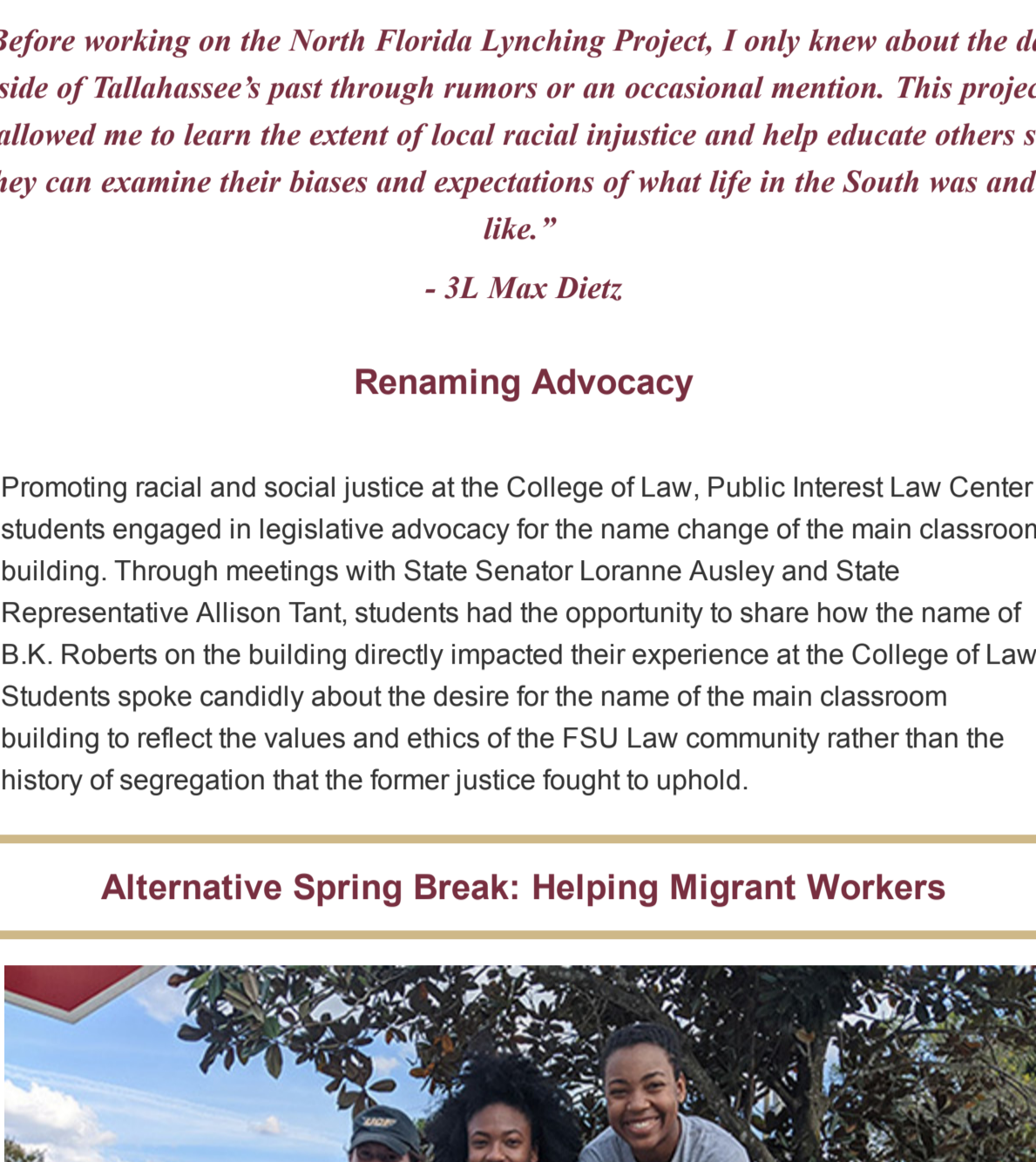
The FSU Children in Prison Project, directed by Prof. Paolo Annino, had a major victory! Kenneth Young was 15 years old when he received four consecutive life without parole sentences. The Children in Prison Project has been advocating for Kenneth for 12 years: in 2009, filed Clemency packet; in 2010 filed Expert Report in *Graham v. Florida*; in 2011, first Resentencing Hearing; and in 2019, second Resentencing Hearing. A documentary entitled "15-to-Life" memorializes Kenneth's story. Kenneth Young returned home from prison on July 1, 2021. We thank Mr. Young for teaching us the power of hope.

"Kenneth Young is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit. The opportunity to work with him and the joy of seeing him released from prison were the highlights of my time in law school. I hope that Mr. Young's story is a catalyst for change in how we treat Florida's children." - Emmalyn Dalton ('21)

Racial Justice Advocacy

The Public Interest Law Center publicly declared its **commitment to the values of diversity, inclusion, justice and equity** by adopting a statement of belonging directed to students of various backgrounds, including those who identify with marginalized communities and identities. The statement embodies the hope that as a society we can become truly dedicated to the principle of equality. Read the full statement [here](#).

Lynching in North Florida Project: Memorial Dedication



Public Interest Law Center students are educating the community about the history of lynching in North Florida. Through partnership with the **Tallahassee Community Remembrance Project**, the Center developed curriculum for the Leon County School District on lynching and supported the placement of a memorial plaque honoring victims of lynching: Pierce Taylor, Mick Morris, Richard Hawkins, and Ernest Ponder. The memorial dedication occurred on July 17, 2021. The plaque is placed next to the gnarled century-old Oak Tree adjacent to the Old Tallahassee Jail in Cascade Park.

"Before working on the North Florida Lynching Project, I only knew about the dark side of Tallahassee's past through rumors or an occasional mention. This project allowed me to learn the extent of local racial injustice and help educate others so they can examine their biases and expectations of what life in the South was and is like."

- 3L Max Dietz

Renaming Advocacy

Promoting racial and social justice at the College of Law, Public Interest Law Center students engaged in legislative advocacy for the name change of the main classroom building. Through meetings with State Senator Lorraine Ausley and State Representative Allison Tant, students had the opportunity to share how the name of B.K. Roberts on the building directly impacted their experience at the College of Law. Students spoke candidly about the desire for the name of the main classroom building to reflect the values and ethics of the FSU Law community rather than the history of segregation that the former justice fought to uphold.

Alternative Spring Break: Helping Migrant Workers



(L-R): Margeling Santiago, Peyton Smith, Lauren Rolfe, Daynica Harley, Barclay Mitchell, and Yazel Sepulveda

Students work shoulder to shoulder in the fields and in the greenhouses, learning the challenges of migrant farmworkers. Each Spring Break, a group of FSU law students travel to a farmworker community in Apopka, Florida. The Farmworkers Association of Florida hosts our students and provides training on farmworker rights, immigration, work visas, and labor trafficking detection and prevention.

"Alternative Spring Break 2020 was an eye-opening experience for me. My heart broke for a community of people that is treated unjustly every day and yet we look the other way. This is unacceptable. The narrative around farmworkers must change. Their stories must be heard in order to begin change. ASB helped further me in my decision to pursue a career in immigration and human rights law after I graduate in May." - 3L Peyton Smith

New Clinic: International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic

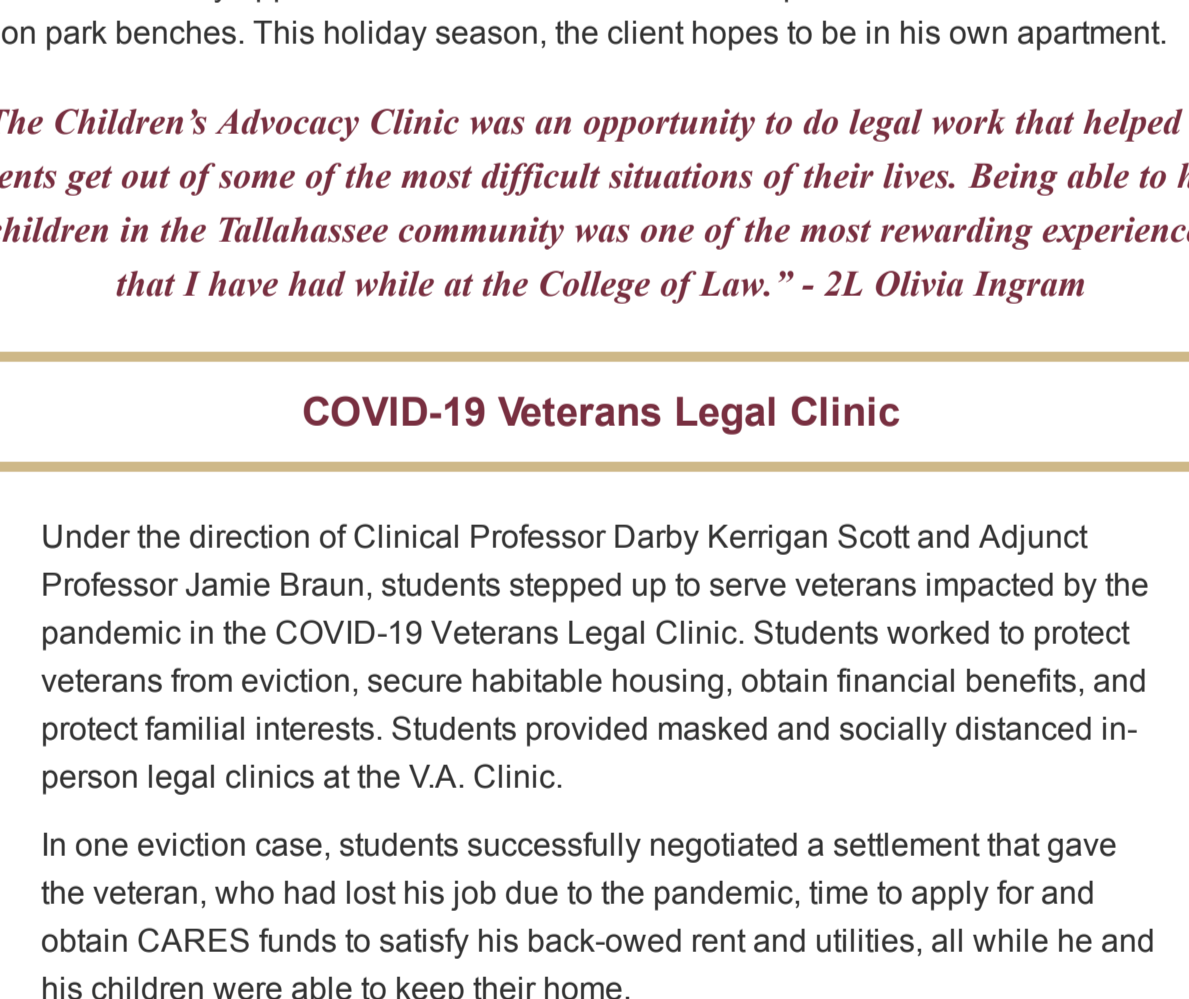


Professor Scott utilizes video-conferencing technology in the classroom

We are excited to announce that we will offer a new clinic in spring 2022: the International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic, directed by Clinical Professor Darby Kerrigan Scott. The clinic will provide students with hands-on experience representing individual human rights survivors and international non-governmental organizations engaged in human rights advocacy. Participating students will gain experience in areas including fact-finding, evidence collection, research, reports, advisory memos, viability assessments, litigation, amicus briefs, UN standard setting, and norm development.

"Graduating this spring 2022, I am ecstatic to have the opportunity to finish my legal education taking part in the new International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic because I believe that all people have fundamental rights guaranteed universally and I want to be a part of fighting for justice for those deprived of these rights. It is because of FSU Law and professors like Darby Scott making this clinic possible that my hometown of Tallahassee will become a center for human rights advocacy internationally. I cannot wait to get started!" - 3L Abigail Chapman

Growing: FSU's Farmworker & Immigration Rights Clinic



(L-R) Nida Imtiaz, Yardley Collett, Anne Marie Macia, Professor Ashley Hamill, Abril Smith, Elena Gallego, Duri Kim, and Kyndall Teague

FSU's Farmworker & Immigration Rights Clinic (FIRC) is growing under the direction of Professor Ashley Hamill. The Clinic provides migrant workers in their struggle to come out of the economic shadows and assert their rights to immigration status, employment authorization, and protection from violence.

Clinic students prevailed during a two-hour hearing seeking guardianship and special immigrant juvenile status findings for minor siblings from Central America who fled domestic and gang violence after they were abandoned by their father. With special immigrant juvenile status, the children can apply for permanent residency.

Clinic students represent a father and his very young son who came to our southwest border to escape discrimination and persecution in Guatemala. Immigration separated the father from the child for months. As indigenous Mayan Guatemalans and rare-language speakers, they were not able to communicate with others. Now, the father and son have been reunited and they depend on the Clinic to advocate against their deportation and help them apply for immigration relief and, for the father, employment authorization.

"My experience in the Immigration Clinic was incredible. I had the opportunity to help real people with real problems, while still a law student. There's an opportunity to make positive changes in peoples' lives in the Immigration Clinic, while sharpening one's legal and language skills. The Clinic was definitely one of my highlights at FSU Law." - 3L Cameron Polomski

Children's Advocacy Clinic (CAC)



(L-R) Law students Olivia Ingram, Khamisi Thorpe, Emily Scott, and Elliana Mortellaro

This year, CAC celebrated many client victories. CAC students advocated for adoption for two children who were stuck in the foster care system, one child for seven years, the other for two years. Both children were adopted in loving families. In another case, CAC students obtained a guardianship for a child with disabilities who wanted to live permanently with his long-term foster parents. CAC students litigated against evictions and secured housing for former foster children. CAC students won a social security appeal for a former foster child who slept in homeless shelters and on park benches. This holiday season, the client hopes to be in his own apartment.

"The Children's Advocacy Clinic was an opportunity to do legal work that helped my clients get out of some of the most difficult situations of their lives. Being able to help children in the Tallahassee community was one of the most rewarding experiences that I have had while at the College of Law." - 2L Olivia Ingram

COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic

Under the direction of Clinical Professor Darby Kerrigan Scott and Adjunct Professor Jamie Braun, students stepped up to serve veterans impacted by the pandemic in the COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic. Students worked to protect veterans from eviction, secure habitable housing, obtain financial benefits, and protect familial interests. Students provided masked and socially distanced in-person legal clinics at the V.A. Clinic.

In one eviction case, students successfully negotiated a settlement that gave the veteran, who had lost his job due to the pandemic, time to apply for and obtain CARES funds to satisfy his back-owed rent and utilities, all while he and his children were able to keep their home.

"The COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic was a unique and meaningful start in my legal career. It gave me hands-on experience through working personally with supervising attorneys and our veteran clients. Most importantly, this experience taught me that my legal career should be directed towards making a difference in people's lives." - 2L Devin Diaz

Human Trafficking and Exploitation Law Project

Students holding slave-free chocolate (L-R): Melody Andrews, Peyton Smith, Elliana Mortellaro, and Daynica Harley

The Human-Trafficking and Exploitation Law Project (HELP) students:

- Represented children survivors of trafficking,
- Presented anti-trafficking at a runaway shelter,
- Taught at anti-trafficking trainings and produced an **opinion piece** for the Tallahassee Democrat,
- Filed a petition to enforce The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act banning forced child labor goods; drafted a petition to enforce U.S.-Mexico-Canada-Trade Agreement,
- Created **Hidden Faces: Slavery at Sea** video,
- Produced videos on child labor for **Valentine's Day** and **Halloween**,
- Interviewed with **WFSU** radio [at 23:35] on "Blood Cocoa,"
- Utilized **Instagram** to raise awareness of forced child labor, and
- Developed **Halloween Tik-Toks** to warn against child labor in Halloween treats.

"The HELP project has meant so much to me and I have been able to learn and participate in so many different things. I have been able to assist and build relationships with clients, work on a podcast about human trafficking, help create videos on trafficking issues in the cocoa and fishing industries, speak at CLE events to hundreds of people, give presentations to at-risk youth, provide research on international trafficking issues, and help with social media awareness campaigns. It has been a wonderful experience that I truly recommend to other law students."

- 3L Melody Andrews

Juvenile Solitary Confinement Project: New Testimonial Video

Through legislative advocacy and public education, law students in the Solitary Confinement Project advocate for the abolishment of solitary confinement. Last legislative session, law students worked with House and Senate lawmakers on bills to restrict the practice of juvenile solitary confinement. We are returning this upcoming legislative session and plan to educate lawmakers with a **video students produced** on Catherine Jones, who was a child in solitary confinement for several years in Florida.

Congratulations to PILC Alumni: New Judges

Judge Paetra T. Brownlee ('09)

Judge Joshua M. Hawkes ('14)

Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, Orange County

Second Judicial Circuit Court, Leon County

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