



COLLEGE OF LAW

FSU LAW FOCUS

April 14, 2017

From the Dean



Meeting as many alumni as possible has been one of my top priorities for this year. It has been such a pleasure to get to know so many of you and to hear your thoughts on what makes FSU Law great and what we can do to become even better! One way I'm meeting grads is through alumni receptions, which we have held in Tampa and Atlanta to date. I'm looking forward to attending upcoming receptions in Miami on Wednesday, April 26, Ft. Lauderdale on

Tuesday, May 9, and Pensacola on Tuesday, May 23. We'll also be hosting our annual alumni reception at The Florida Bar's convention in Boca Raton on Thursday, June 22. Please look for more details about these events in the near future. If you are on our mailing lists, you will be receiving more information about the receptions in your area soon.

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Pictured above: Alumni mingle during a reception in Atlanta in November 2016.

50-Year Anniversary: Featuring 1991



The [FSU Public Interest Law Center \(PILC\)](#) has been helping the community and training students since 1991. Through PILC, students earn academic credit while providing legal services to under-represented individuals. The Center, which today is comprised of two live-client clinics—the Children's Advocacy Clinic and the Family Law Clinic, has been featured in many national and international media stories and its groundbreaking work has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court. PILC allows students to gain hands-on and valuable real-world work experience, and it provided a way for students to fulfill the pro bono graduation requirements instituted in 1990, as mentioned in last week's newsletter. PILC co-directors are FSU Law long-time professors Paolo Annino ('83), the Glass Professor of Public Interest Law, who directs the Children's Advocacy Clinic, and Ruth E. Stone ('77), the Wayne and Pat Hogan Professor of Trial Practice, who directs the Family Law Clinic. Also in 1991, Dean Sheldon F. Kurtz left the Florida State College of Law after two years as dean at the school. Don Weidner, who had been a professor at Florida State Law since 1976, was appointed dean. Except for a one-year break when Paul A.

LeBel served as dean in 1997-1998, Dean Emeritus Weidner led the law school as dean until retiring from the position in 2016.

Pictured above: In January, FSU Law Professor Paolo Annino (shown with his family) was presented the 2017 Father Drinan Award by the Association of American Law Schools Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities Section at the AALS Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Annino was honored for his longstanding commitment to addressing the legal needs of low-income clients.

Alum Profile: The Honorable Julie Sneed ('94)



United States Magistrate Judge Julie Sneed, of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, was sworn in on June 15, 2015. Prior to her appointment, Judge Sneed worked in private practice, specializing in complex civil litigation as a partner at Akerman LLP and Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. She also previously served as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable James D. Whittemore, of the Middle District of Florida, and the Honorable Chris W. Altenbernd, of the Florida Second District Court of Appeal. As part of the law school's Jurist in Residence program, Judge Sneed visited the College of Law on Thursday, February 23. While on campus, she engaged with law students during a Q&A session, visited Professor Melissa Hanson's Federal Courts class, met with faculty members on the Judicial Clerkship Committee and met individually with students. While on campus, Judge Sneed candidly answered questions about her path to the federal bench, work-life balance and life after law school.

“Visiting FSU Law was an honor and a pleasure. The campus has grown beautifully and the school is in excellent, capable hands with Dean O’Connor at the helm. FSU Law has given me so much over my

22 years in the legal profession, I was glad to return to my law school to connect with the bright, enthusiastic law school students. I will continue to stay involved with FSU Law, especially since I now have several new mentees from my visit who I look forward to continuing to mentor.”

Pictured above: Judge Sneed talks to FSU Law students in February.

Student Profile: 3L Melody Brooks

Melody Brooks earned a bachelor’s degree in history and political science from Valdosta State University. Originally from Snellville, Georgia, Brooks would prefer to work in Atlanta, New York or Washington D.C. after graduation. She is interested in practicing in the areas of education law or civil rights. She is open to JD-preferred positions as well. During her law school career, Brooks was a member of the Jessup International Law Moot Court Team and served as secretary of the Black Law Students Association. In 2015, she studied international law abroad at the University of Oxford. Brooks participated in the FSU Public Interest Law Center’s Children’s Advocacy Clinic during the summer after her 1L year and the fall semester of her 3L year. She worked on immigration and education law cases, successfully advocating for clients to be declared dependent on the court. She also negotiated with school administrators for Individualized Education Program (IEP) accommodations. The summer after her 2L year, Brooks was a policy intern at the National Consumers League, Child Labor Coalition Division in Washington D.C. In this position, she researched child labor and trafficking issues in the United States and abroad, compiled fact sheets for the Coalition and Capitol Hill meetings, and was responsible for the Child Labor Coalition’s social media campaigns. If you are interested in hiring Brooks for a job after graduation, please [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).



“I am passionate about civil rights and equal access to education. I hope to work towards a more inclusive society, one that respects the civil liberties of all people and gives our children the opportunities needed to succeed.”

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