



## COLLEGE OF LAW

# FSU LAW FOCUS

**May 5, 2017**

### **From the Dean**



Three FSU law students recently placed in the final four at the national 2017 Startup LawMeet competition. FSU was one of 12 law schools invited to the national finals after performing well in qualifying rounds for which they produced four videos, answering questions for hypothetical clients about venture capital transactions for start-up companies. The finals were held in Palo Alto, California on March 24, 2017. Other law schools competing included Duke University, Northwestern University, University of California-Berkeley and University of California-Davis. During the finals, teams met with three experts playing the role of client during a 30-minute role-play. FSU team members

were third-year students Clayton Culler, from West Palm Beach; Bennett Secret, from Lexington, Kentucky; and Marianna Seiler from Ft. Lauderdale. Professor Richard Benham, Entrepreneur in Residence, coached the team. Congratulations to our talented students and their coach and thank you to our Business Law Society, which sponsored the trip to California!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

*Pictured above: (L-R) Secret, Seiler and Culler*

## 50-Year Anniversary: Featuring 1994



Established in 1994, the Board of Visitors is an important support organization of the College of Law. Its members are typically major financial contributors who have funded student scholarships, professorships and law school programs. They meet periodically on campus to interact with students and professors. Members also provide valuable insight into trends within the legal profession and how the law school can best prepare students to launch successful careers. Also in 1994, the law school received its first “major gift” when alumnus John W. Frost, II ('69), gave \$100,000 to establish the John W. and Ashley E. Frost Endowed Professorship. Frost has since given three additional major gifts to the FSU Law, most recently \$1 million in 2013. Additionally, Talbot “Sandy” D’Alemberte was appointed president of Florida State University in 1994, where he served until January 2003. He had served as dean of FSU Law from 1984-1989.

*Pictured above: Board of Visitors members network with students during a February 2017 meeting at the law school.*

## Alumni Profile: Kenneth D. Pratt ('99)



Kenneth D. Pratt is the senior vice president of governmental affairs for the Florida Bankers Association (FBA), lobbying on behalf of Florida's banking industry in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. Before joining FBA in 2011, Pratt was a senior lobbyist for the Florida League of Cities, served as the northeast deputy political director in the successful presidential campaign of Senator Barack Obama, and was a legislative aide for Florida Representative Geraldine Thompson. His legal experience includes practicing in the area of criminal law at Halim & Pratt, serving as an assistant public defender, and serving as an assistant attorney general in the criminal appeals division. Pratt is very engaged with the FSU College of Law. For several years, he has spoken to students in the Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program and in 2015, he met with J.D. students interested in governmental affairs during a Networking Nosh.

*"I always enjoy returning to the law school and talking with students about the many opportunities to utilize their law degrees in the political arena. FSU Law continues to set the bar in educating policy and political leaders who are using their legal acumen to influence both our state and national landscape."*

*Pictured above: Pratt meets with FSU law students during a Networking Nosh at the College of Law.*

## **Student Profile: 3L Mana Alizadeh**

Originally from Dallas, Texas, Mana Alizadeh graduated cum laude from FSU with a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology. After she graduates from the College of Law this weekend and takes the bar exam in July, she will be relocating to

Tampa. Working in-house for a large corporation is Alizadeh's goal, but she is open to other opportunities that will allow her to gain experience as a practicing attorney, including labor and employment law, business law, and sports and entertainment law. Alizadeh was on the executive board of the Student Bar Association as the 3L representative. In that role, she put together the FSU Law team for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer 5K and organized large events such as the annual FSU Law semi-formal and the Barristers' Ball. Alizadeh was also the coordinator for the Griffin Middle School Mentor Program, where she helped pair middle school students with law student mentors. Alizadeh also volunteered with the Florida Justice Technology Center and was a



member of the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division – Law Student Division and the Entertainment, Arts and Sports Law Society. During the summer after her 1L year, Alizadeh clerked at Allen Norton & Blue, P.A., an employment and labor law firm in Tallahassee. She conducted research, assisted in drafting articles for the Florida Sheriffs Association's *All Points Bulletin* and reviewed employment contracts for businesses and organizations throughout Florida. Last summer, she interned at Buckner, a sports and education law firm in Sunrise, where she researched and assisted in preparation for many NCAA investigations and drafted pleadings regarding commercial litigation cases. Alizadeh considers herself a die-hard FSU Seminole and loves spending time with family and friends. If you are interested in hiring Alizadeh after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).

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