



COLLEGE OF LAW

FSU LAW FOCUS

June 2, 2017

From the Dean

In an effort to more quickly share the wonderful news of our graduates, we recently began publishing [alumni class notes on our website!](#) Notes are published within a few weeks of submission and organized by graduation class year so that you can easily see the accomplishments of your classmates. We encourage you to send photos that we can publish with your submissions. You can send us news and photos [online](#) or via [email](#). As always, we want to hear about your professional accomplishments, including your new jobs, published articles, presentations and awards. We also want to share your more personal news, such as a new baby, wedding or community service accomplishment. We hope you enjoy reading the online class notes and look forward to spreading the word about your achievements!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Pictured above: Screenshot of a new class notes webpage

The screenshot shows the Florida State University College of Law website. At the top is the university logo and the text 'COLLEGE OF LAW FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY'. Below this is a navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT US', 'ACADEMICS', 'ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID', 'OUR FACULTY', 'ALUMNI', 'CAREERS', and 'STUDENTS'. A secondary navigation bar includes 'Research Center | News & Events | Administration | Make a Gift | Co-Curriculars | Technology Services'. The main content area is titled 'Class of 2007' and features a congratulatory message: 'Congratulations to the following alumni on their accomplishments! You can submit a class note online. View notes from other class years.' Below this are three news items, each with a small photo of the graduate and a brief description of their achievement, including dates when the notes were posted.

50-Year Anniversary: Featuring 1998



In February of 1998, FSU presented U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens with an honorary doctor of laws degree for his lengthy public service and contributions to the law. Following the ceremony, Justice Stevens spoke with law students and faculty members. Stevens was nominated to the Supreme Court by President Gerald Ford in 1975 and served until his retirement in 2010. Also in 1998, Paul LeBel resigned as FSU Law dean and returned to the classroom. Don Weidner returned to serve as interim dean while the College of Law conducted a new dean search. Weidner had previously served as dean from 1991 until 1997. The November 1998 issue of *National Jurist* magazine ranked FSU College of Law as the country's 19th "Most Wired Law School." The law school also named Jim Rossi Associate Dean of Technology that year. Although the dean of technology position no longer exists, FSU Law's computer technology staff of 10 ensures that the College of Law is a technologically innovative law school.

Pictured above: The College of Law has evolved from a top "wired" school to a wireless institution. Today, all incoming students are required to have a laptop computer for legal research, computer-based exams and in-class participation. Also, classrooms are equipped with technology podiums that allow professors to present multimedia lectures. A strong wireless infrastructure allows students to utilize the internet during class, throughout the building and outdoors.

Alum Profile: Melanie S. Griffin ('06)



Melanie S. Griffin is an AV-rated equity shareholder in Dean Mead's Tampa and Orlando offices and founder of Spread Your Sunshine. Known for her commercial litigation, trust and probate litigation, and employment law skills, Griffin shined as the 2011-12 president of the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers and 2013-14 president of The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division. In 2014, Griffin founded Dean Mead's Tampa office. She currently serves as the office's managing shareholder. Through her firm leadership, she was named Florida's 2009 Most Productive Young Lawyer, recognized for eight consecutive years (2010-17) in *Super Lawyers* and *Florida Trend* Legal Elite, and honored in 2016 as a *Tampa Bay Metro* Inspiring Woman in Business, *Tampa Bay Business Journal (TBBJ)* BusinessWoman of the Year Legal Services Finalist, and FSU Notable Nole. In 2017, Griffin was recognized as a *Best Lawyer in America*, *Best of Tampa Bay* honoree and one of Orlando's Best Lawyers in *Orlando Magazine*.

Above all, Griffin's passion is mentoring. Her mentorship of hundreds of students and young professionals, including those she mentored through frequent involvement at the FSU College of Law, was recognized through her receipt of the 2016 *TBBJ* Angie's Award, 2017 Girl Scouts of West Central Florida Woman of Promise Award and 2017 FSU Inspire Award.

"Living a life of mentorship, I founded Spread Your Sunshine to empower women with the confidence to break the glass ceiling and achieve their dreams. My definition of success is positively impacting the lives of others to inspire their journeys and motivate them to 'pay it forward' to and raise-up the next generation."

Student Profile: 2017 Grad Justin Peters

Originally from Chipley, Florida, Justin Peters graduated from FSU Law in May 2017. He earned his bachelor's degree from FSU with a double major in history and international

affairs. Peters was a member of the Student Bar Association, Environmental Law Society and the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, where he served as a subciter for one semester and an articles and notes editor during his 3L year. Peters was also invited to present his paper, “Deep Pockets on the Horizon: Will Non-Home Rule States’ Greed Harm Counties Affected by Deepwater Horizon?” at the 2017 FSU Environmental Law Student Colloquium. Peters’ experience includes two years working at Baker Donelson’s Tallahassee office. There, he was a jack of all trades—performing legal research, drafting pleadings and proofreading the attorneys’ work, as well as performing the



duties of a typical runner. During the spring 2017 semester, Peters externed at the Division of Administrative Hearings in the Northern District under Judge E. Gary Early and Judge Suzanne Van Wyk. In this position, he observed various types of administrative hearings, performed extensive legal research in a variety of administrative areas and drafted a Summary Final Order for a third-party Medicaid recovery case and a Recommended Order for a professional license revocation case. Peters also completed pro bono hours with Apalachicola Riverkeeper, where he drafted a memo on the special master’s recommendation in the U.S. Supreme Court “water wars” case. Peters is interested in practicing administrative or civil law and is open to positions anywhere in Florida, especially Tallahassee, Orlando or Tampa/St. Pete. If you are interested in hiring Peters, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

“I’m a hard worker who will help out any way possible to achieve a common goal. I believe this is evidenced by numerous awards I won at Baker Donelson, including a firm-wide award for being a team player.”

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