



## COLLEGE OF LAW

# FSU LAW FOCUS

September 29, 2017

### From the Dean

Last week, we received some good news about the most recent administration of the Florida Bar Examination – 83.9% of our recent grads passed! By contrast, the overall passing rate for first-time test takers was 71.3%. Our July 2017 results are a significant improvement over last July's 78.8% pass rate, and represent our highest pass rate for any Florida Bar Examination since July 2013. We are in the process of creating a new bar exam support position which I believe will position us to become the top law school in Florida in terms of bar passage. We also plan to continue to host the innovative bar support sessions that our student affairs office held prior to the July 2017 exam. These sessions strengthen the bar preparation base that Professor Phil Sandon provides through bar courses offered during the third year of law school. Congratulations to all of our graduates who recently passed bar exams! Your very hard work clearly paid off!



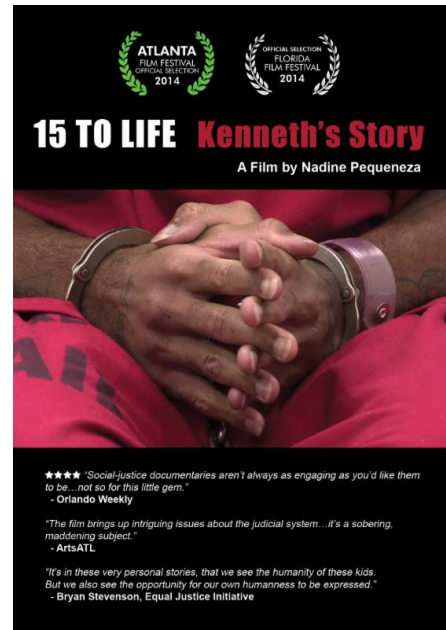
- Dean Erin O'Connor

**50-Year Anniversary: Featuring 2014**



In 2014, FSU Law adopted 3+3 accelerated law programs with Florida State University, Eckerd College, the University of Central Florida and the University of West Florida. Under these programs, students who meet certain admission requirements can complete a bachelor's degree and a law degree in six years rather than the traditional seven, saving a year of time and costs. In the years since 2014, FSU Law has expanded the 3+3 programs to include the University of North Florida and Saint Leo University. Also in 2014, a documentary telling the story of Kenneth Young, who was represented by Professor Paolo Annino and his students at the Public Interest Law Center, was screened in film festivals across the country. The film, *15 to Life*, was broadcast on PBS that August. In

September 2014, the FSU Law community gathered to honor Professor Dan Markel's life as a lawyer, scholar, teacher and person during a memorial service. Former colleagues and students shared their memories about Markel at the service. For the fall 2014 term, the law school introduced a new Juris Master program. The J.M. program was designed to be flexible for professionals who do not wish to practice law, but want to advance their careers with legal studies and training, including compliance officers and professionals in financial services, health care, agriculture, real estate and other businesses. This fall semester, the law school began a new online J.M. program. The fall 2014 semester also launched the College of Law's Business Law Clinic. Headed by FSU Law alum Richard Benham ('05), Entrepreneur in Residence, students earn academic credit for advising business and social entrepreneurs at FSU. Also in 2014, FSU Law reached a high once again as #45 in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of best law schools.



*Pictured above: Movie poster for 15 to Life: Kenneth's Story, a 2014 documentary about a PILC client.*

## Alum Profile: Benjamin J. Gibson ('08)

Ben Gibson recently opened Benjamin J. Gibson, P.A. in Tallahassee, focusing on federal and state election law, government law and government consulting. This comes after serving as deputy general counsel and assistant general counsel to Governor Rick Scott since 2012 and being directly involved in the appointment of more than 120 judges to Florida's courts. Gibson is very involved in the statewide legal community and serves on The

Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors and was recently appointed to The Florida Bar's Special Committee on Mental Health and Wellness for Florida Lawyers. He previously was appointed by Chief Justice Labarga to Florida's first-ever Commission on Access to Civil Justice. Gibson was named to the FSU Alumni Association's "FSU Thirty Under 30" list in 2013 and honored as a *Florida Trend* Legal Elite Top Government Attorney in 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2017. This July, he was appointed by Governor Scott to the State Board of Education, which oversees Florida's K-12 education system and state colleges. He graduated from Florida State Law in 2008 and served as president of the Student Bar Association named "Best in the Nation" by the American Bar Association.



*“Attending Florida State Law was one of the best decisions of my life. The quality of legal education and the community of students, faculty and administrators are exceptional along with being located in the capital of the third largest state in the nation. It gave me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills and create lasting friendships that I still hold today.”*

## **Student Profile: 2017 Grad Courtney Humeston**

Courtney Humeston is a May 2017 graduate of FSU Law. She sat for July's Florida Bar Exam and passed. Originally from Boca Raton, Humeston earned a bachelor's degree in political science and marketing from FSU and graduated cum laude. While an undergrad, Humeston was a legislative intern for Sachs Sax Caplan in Tallahassee and a summer intern at Lavallo, Brown & Ronan, P.A. in Boca Raton. She also worked as a legal assistant for the Law Offices of David H. Burnes, P.A. During law school, Humeston was a member of the Student Bar Association and volunteered with the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The summer after her 1L year, she externed with the Office of the State Attorney, 19th Judicial Circuit in Fort Pierce. While there Humeston conducted legal research, drafted motions and assisted with discovery for felony cases. The summer after her 2L year, Humeston externed with the West Palm Beach City Attorney's Office, where she worked on a variety of issues including labor and employment law, land use and police liability. She also drafted motions, contracts and resolutions.



Humeston is currently seeking a job in the Fort Lauderdale or Boca Raton areas. She would like to practice estate planning and probate law, but is open to other areas such as employment law. If you are interested in hiring Humeston, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#) .

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