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From the Dean



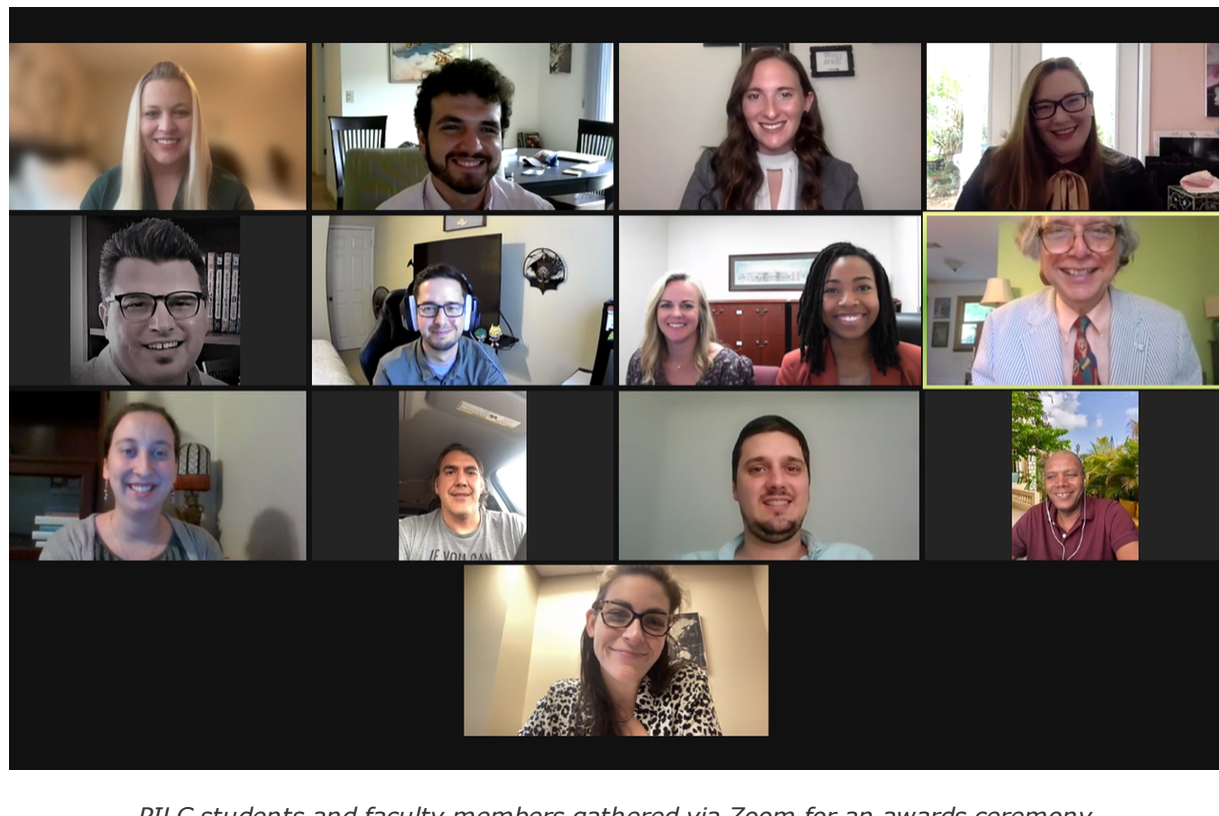
Alumni at the May 11 Jacksonville reception

This spring, we were delighted to host several alumni receptions, including a return to in-person receptions. On January 27, we held the Governmental Affairs Virtual Alumni Reception, hosted by Fred Karlinsky ('92). This was our only practice area-focused event, and it continued the success we found during COVID with connecting alumni over Zoom based on work focus. On March 8, we traveled to Tampa for an in-person reception at the home of Kareem Spratling ('06) and his wife Tammy Briant Spratling. The event was sponsored by the Spratlings and Bryant Miller Olive. We visited Miami on April 27 for a reception sponsored by City National Private, where we also celebrated the launch of the FSU Law Hispanic Alumni Association. And last week, on May 11, we held our Jacksonville alumni reception at the TIAA Bank Field Owner's Suite. It was truly a joy to be able to shake hands and share conversation with so many alumni during the past few months. We invite all alums to join us at our next alumni reception, which will be at the Annual Florida Bar Convention in Orlando on June 23. Connecting with our talented, engaged graduates is something we will never take for granted!

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

PILC Recognizes Outstanding Students



PILC students and faculty members gathered via Zoom for an awards ceremony.

At the end of the spring 2022 semester, the FSU Law Public Interest Law Center (PILC) held its third annual awards ceremony to recognize two exemplary students. Recent graduate Peyton Smith ('22) received the Clinical Legal Education Association's Outstanding Clinical Student Advocate Award, which is given to a clinical student who has demonstrated excellence in class participation and client advocacy. Smith was selected unanimously for the award by FSU Law clinical professors for her many efforts within PILC. She participated in several of the center's clinics and projects, displaying enthusiasm, leadership, problem-solving abilities, and innovation in her clinical work, according to professors.

Recent graduate Melody Andrews ('22) received PILC's Advocate on the Rise award for demonstrating professional growth in public interest advocacy. Andrews also participated in numerous PILC clinics and projects. According to Professor Paolo Annino, one "game-changing" highlight of Andrews' work was helping create a podcast on human trafficking. When presenting the award to Andrews, clinical professors also mentioned her heart-felt advocacy for clients and holistic approach to analyzing issues.

The ceremony also celebrated PILC's efforts and accomplishments during the past year. Highlights included seeing a 10-year client released from prison; starting the new International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic in the spring, which will allow students to work on cases all over the world; welcoming two new outstanding clinical professors—Ashley Hamill and Daynica Harley; and winning an asylum case for a human rights defender.

Alum Profile: Jared M. Ross ('06)

Jared M. Ross recently was named president of the Florida Beer Wholesalers Association (FBWA), where he previously served as executive vice president. As president, he leads the not-for-profit trade association in its mission to educate policy makers, licensees, and the public about the societal value in regulating the manufacturing, independent distribution, and retail sale of alcoholic beverages. Before joining FBWA in January 2022, Ross spent 11 years with the League of Southeastern Credit Unions, most recently serving as president and previously serving as senior vice president of association services, vice president of governmental affairs, and director of legislative affairs. He has more than 17 years of direct lobbying experience at the state and federal levels and several years of experience overseeing trade association member services.



"I am incredibly honored to lead the Florida Beer Wholesalers Association. I am excited to work with the FBWA Board of Directors and members to continue the association's great work."

Student Profile: 2022 Grad Montana Bennett

Desired Practice Location: Tampa Bay or St. Petersburg area

Field of Law Sought: Primarily interested in plaintiff's work or insurance defense but also open to transactional and other trial work

Originally from Tampa, Florida, Montana Bennett attended the University of South Florida for undergraduate studies, where he earned a B.A. in political science and graduated cum laude. While in law school, Bennett was a legal extern with the Leon County Attorney's Office, where he conducted legal research and drafted memoranda and contracts. He also assisted the Leon County Board of Commissioners in researching and drafting county ordinances. Bennett also completed pro bono work with the Leon County Attorney's Office, where he drafted a variety of contracts and performed research on the proper method of ordinance enforcement under the Florida Constitution for counties compared to municipalities. Bennett performed extensive research for and helped draft the memorandum that would be published to all county governments in the state of Florida, and he also drafted memoranda on the proper authentication of commercial satellite imagery in lawsuits.

At FSU Law, Bennett earned a book award in his Florida Criminal Procedure class, and he graduated with a Distinguished Pro Bono Award. During the spring 2022 semester, he served as a mentor to a middle school student interested in a legal career through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Big Bend. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Bennett, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at mpb20bu@fsu.edu.



"I've developed legal experience in a variety of areas of law through my government externship and distinguished pro bono service. Additionally, I have a background in business management and intend to start Master's in Business Administration coursework in the fall on an online, part-time basis, after I pass the Florida Bar Exam."

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