



[Get Involved](#) [Submit a Class Note](#) [Share My Torch Moment](#) [Make a Gift](#)

From the Dean



Judge Wetherell speaks to a room full of students during lunch.

Last week, we were honored to host Judge T. Kent Wetherell II ('95), of the United States Court for the Northern District of Florida, through our Jurist in Residence Program. Judge Wetherell met with students and faculty members and attended Professor Rob Atkinson's Property class. His sessions with students included lunch remarks with the student body, where Judge Wetherell provided career advice and insight into what he looks for when hiring law clerks. The interactive lunch also included opportunities for students to ask questions.

Judge Wetherell was confirmed and received his commission to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida in July 2019. Prior to that, he served on the Florida First District of Appeal from 2009-2019 and as an administrative law judge from 2002-2009. Before becoming a judge, he also served as deputy solicitor general at the Office of the Attorney General of Florida and practiced at Hopping Green Sams & Smith. He graduated from FSU Law in 1995.

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

Students Participate in 2022 Moot Court Final Four Competition



Florida Supreme Court justices and competitors following the Moot Court Final Four Competition.

Four second-year students competed in the 2022 Moot Court Final Four Competition at the Florida Supreme Court on Wednesday, November 2. Paul DeCoste, Savannah Sherman, Vivekka Suppiah, and Eric Wagner presented oral arguments before all seven justices of the Florida Supreme Court—an incredible opportunity that many lawyers never have. The competition was sponsored by Shutts & Bowen LLP and involved a fictitious Fourth Amendment case that was used during a national cybersecurity moot court competition. Following the Final Four Competition, the Moot Court Team held a reception at the law school, where Suppiah was named Best Advocate by Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz. Congratulations to our talented students! A [recording of the competition](#) is available on the FSU Law Facebook page.

Alum Profile: Benjamin C. DeStefano ('19)

Benjamin C. DeStefano is now an associate in ShuffieldLowman's Orlando office, where he is a member of the real estate, land use, and construction sections. His practice is focused on production homebuilding and development, land use, and construction law. Prior to joining ShuffieldLowman, DeStefano practiced at Holland & Knight LLP, where he concentrated in the areas of real estate development, landlord/tenant leasing, and representing both buyers and sellers in complex commercial real estate transactions. While he was a law student, DeStefano served as a staff editor of the *Florida State University Law Review* and clerked for Florida Supreme Court Justice Jorge Labarga. DeStefano earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida.



“I genuinely enjoyed my time in Tallahassee, as the FSU College of Law provided the groundwork for myself and others to launch exciting careers. The college offers experiences, connections, and opportunities that are truly second to none. I encourage all students to embrace all that the school has to offer.”

Student Profile: 3L Ella Biggins

Desired Practice Location: Charleston, South Carolina

Expected Graduation: May 2023

Field of Law Sought: Criminal prosecution or civil defense litigation, with a focus on personal injury defense

Ella Biggins is from Palmetto, Florida, and she earned her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in mass communications from the University of South Florida. She will graduate from FSU Law in May. In the spring, Biggins will work as a certified legal intern for the State Attorney's Office of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit of Florida. Previously, she was a summer associate at Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell, where she drafted motions, attended hearings, and participated in arbitration for clients involved in personal injury defense litigation. Prior to that, Biggins was a law clerk for the Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis. In this role, she participated in judicial candidate interviews and drafted memoranda pertaining to legal issues which arose in the operation of the state's executive branch. Biggins was also a law clerk for the Florida Division of Emergency Management, where she worked directly with general counsel and acting chief of staff on numerous emergencies, which included drafting contracts, executing and emergency orders, and legal opinions. Additionally, Biggins previously served as a judicial extern for U.S. District Judge T. Kent Wetherell II ('95). In this role, she reviewed pleadings, analyzed legal issues, and drafted an order on a dispositive motion. Prior to law school, Biggins interned at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida, where she directly supported assistant United States attorneys in the criminal division with trial preparation and case management. She also won the Governor's Washington, D.C. Fellowship Award for Outstanding Leadership in 2019, which allowed her to work in the Federal Relations Office for the Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis, where she authored reports and led meetings with advocacy organizations and constituents.



At FSU Law, Biggins was a Moot Court Team Final Four awardee in 2021, and she has served as an academic support fellow, a Peer Elevation Program mentor, a Student Advisory Board member for the Raising the Bar Professionalism+ Program, and a teaching assistant in the Juris Master Program. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Biggins after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#) or email her at ebiggins@fsu.edu.

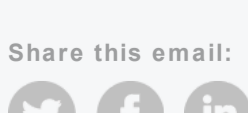
“I can't wait to be an attorney. What excites me most is the opportunity to advocate for others, while applying my creativity and legal skillset, which FSU Law has helped shape and expand these past three years.”

[ABOUT US](#) | [ACADEMICS](#) | [ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID](#) | [OUR FACULTY](#) | [ALUMNI](#) | [CAREERS](#) | [STUDENTS](#)



If you unsubscribe from the FSU Law Focus, you will only be unsubscribed from the newsletter and not other emails from FSU Law.

Share this email:



Manage your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

425 West Jefferson Street
Tallahassee, FL | 32306 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.