

From the Dean



(L-R) Nathan Kenney, Doug Mann and Erin Kenney, accepting on behalf of Kris Knab; Traci Griffith and Joyce Griffith, accepting on behalf of Elwin Griffith; Carol Gregg; Erin O'Connor; Bob Kerrigan

It was wonderful to see so many of you and your families in October when we celebrated Homecoming 2018. Thank you to all of our alumni, students and friends who joined us for the Friday night reception, the alumni board meeting, the tailgate before the FSU v. Wake Forest football game and class reunion events. We were delighted to be able to honor several alumni award recipients during the festivities. Bob Kerrigan ('71) received the Distinguished Alum Award, which recognizes a graduate who is distinguished professionally and who has rendered outstanding service to the community and to our College of Law. Carol Gregg ('74) received our Alumni Association Service Award, which is presented to a graduate who has rendered distinguished service to FSU Law over an extended period of time. Professor Elwin Griffith was honored posthumously with the Class of '66 Award, which is presented to a non-alumnus who has rendered distinguished service to our law school and to the community. We also posthumously honored Kristine Knab ('78) with our first annual Exemplary Public Service Career Award for demonstrating exceptional character, integrity, humility, professionalism and the highest regard for ethics during her career. In addition, Gene Steams ('72) was honored by the FSU Alumni Association during Homecoming as a Grad Made Good. The award recognizes alumni who have made a significant difference through outstanding success in their chosen fields. Thank you to everyone who helped us honor our extraordinary award recipients! You can [view a selection of photos from our Homecoming events on Facebook](#).

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Faculty Profile: Donald J. Weidner

Donald J. Weidner, FSU Law Dean Emeritus and Alumni Centennial Professor, is a recognized authority on partnerships, limited liability companies and real estate finance. He teaches Closely Held Business Associations, Liability Among Associated Business Entities, Real Estate Finance and Alternative Dispute Resolution. Weidner is co-author of *The Revised Uniform Partnership Act* (with Robert W. Hillman and Allan G. Donn) and has also written on limited liability companies, law firm breakups and real estate finance. Weidner served as dean of Florida State University College of Law from 1991-1997, as interim dean from 1998-2000, and as dean from 2000-2016. In 2011, he was named one of the Nine Transformative Law Deans of the Last Decade. In 2016, the Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program was named in his honor. Weidner established the summer program in 1992, during his first year as dean. Weidner represents Florida as a gubernatorial appointee to the Uniform Law Commission and is an elected member of the American Law Institute. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Fordham University and graduated with honors from the University of Texas Law School, where he was project editor of the *Texas Law Review*. On October 26, Weidner was inducted into the FSU Alumni Association's Circle of Gold. The award recognizes individuals who, through their service and achievements, personify the university's tradition of excellence. Since returning to the faculty to teach full time, Weidner has also been serving as a mediator and arbitrator with the dispute resolution firm of Upchurch Watson White & Max. Weidner and his wife Jiji have two children, a son who lives in London and a daughter who lives in Nashville. He has recently taken up serving as crew on sailboat races.



"I am extremely grateful for my life at the law school and in this fascinating profession. Jiji and I are also pleased to be grandparents for the first time, with a second on the way."

Alum Profile: The Honorable Steven Leifman ('87)

Judge Steven Leifman is an associate administrative judge for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida in Miami. In October, Leifman received the Pardes Humanitarian Prize in Mental Health from the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation in New York. The prize is awarded annually to recognize individuals or organizations that are making a profound and lasting impact in advancing the understanding of mental health and improving the lives of people with mental illness and addiction disorders. Leifman was honored "for pioneering a public policy movement to reduce the number of people with mental illness and substance use disorders in the criminal justice system." In 2000, Leifman launched the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project. The project diverts low-level offenders with mental illnesses into community-based treatment and away from the criminal justice system. He also established a program in Miami-Dade which teaches law enforcement officials how to recognize mental illness, how to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations and where to take individuals in crisis for treatment. As a result of the project, arrests in Miami-Dade decreased from 118,000 to 56,000 annually and recidivism dropped by almost 50 percent. In 2017, Judge Leifman obtained approval and funding for the development of the Miami Center for Mental Health and Recovery, a state-of-the-art facility that will provide a continuum of mental health care for the most critically ill and vulnerable individuals. The center will open in 2020.



"Several years ago I handled a case that involved a Harvard educated psychiatrist with a serious mental illness who had a full-blown psychotic episode in court. This incident opened my eyes to a shameful tragedy in our country – that there was an overwhelming number of people with serious mental illnesses in the criminal justice system that did not pose a threat to public safety. Using the moral authority of the Court, we were able to develop a comprehensive approach to tackling this complex social problem. We have been very fortunate to have had a remarkable response from our local law enforcement and a phenomenal staff that has helped individuals recover from their illnesses and lead productive lives. The program has saved critical tax dollars, improved our public safety and saved countless lives."

Student Profile: 3L Erica LaVoy

Desired Practice Location: Tampa, Tallahassee or Charlotte, N.C.
Expected Graduation: May 2019
Field of Law Sought: Real estate law, wills, trusts and estate planning; litigation



Originally from Tampa, Erica LaVoy earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Florida. When she graduates from FSU Law in May 2019, she will also earn the Business Law Certificate. LaVoy is currently clerking at Coppins Monroe, where she researches employment law issues and drafts memoranda analyzing case law. Last summer, LaVoy clerked at Spielberg Law Group in Tampa. While there, she learned about employment law by drafting demand letters, preparing discrimination charges to file with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and writing rebuttals during the investigative stage of the EEOC process. During her 2L year, LaVoy clerked for the antitrust division of the Florida Office of the Attorney General, where she conducted e-discovery for a multi-state investigation of potential antitrust violations. While conducting e-discovery, she helped create a document that tracked price changes to prove impermissible price changes in violation of antitrust laws as well as potential consumer harm and damages. The summer following her 1L year, LaVoy clerked for the Mooney Law Firm, LLC, a business firm in Tallahassee that specializes in international trade law and business litigation. She researched case law on potential liabilities of ocean transportation intermediaries and general business practices. LaVoy is a notes and comments editor for the *Florida State University Law Review* and participated in the 2018 Manfred Lachs International Space Law Moot Court Competition as a guest editor. LaVoy is currently the writing and research editor for the *Journal of Transnational Law & Policy (JTLP)* and previously served as an article and notes editor. Her work on *JTLP* volume 27 recently her the recognition of Article and Notes Editor of the Year. 2017, LaVoy has started volunteering with the FSU Veterans Legal Clinic. If you are interested in hiring LaVoy after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).

"I have learned so much from the amazing professors and other students while at the Florida State University College of Law. I have enjoyed taking a variety of classes and sought work experience in different areas to give my legal education a broad foundation. I am confident that the legal skills I have been learning over the past several years will allow me to make a positive contribution in any office I join after passing the bar."

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Sandy D'Alemberte
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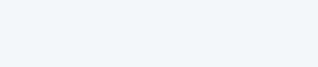
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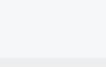
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