

From the Dean



On Sunday, May 5, we gathered to celebrate our 2019 graduates. The commencement ceremony featured a welcome by FSU President John Thrasher, a December 1972 graduate of the law school, and a commencement speech by Florida Supreme Court Justice Ricky Polston, a 1987 graduate of FSU Law. Polston provided advice to the new graduates by way of a humorous personal story, urging them to be careful what they agree to as it may not turn out as hoped, to think things through before taking action, and to “get a life” – have human interaction with family and friends and make time for personal development. Graduates were then hooded and conferred their degrees in front of cheering guests. Those graduating included 147 J.D. recipients, four LL.M. recipients and 16 J.M. recipients. The J.M. recipients were the first graduates of our online Juris Master degree program and many traveled from around the country to attend Sunday’s events. Immediately following the ceremony, graduates and their guests attended a reception at the College of Law. If you were unable to join us for this joyous occasion, [a video of the ceremony is available on our website.](#)

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Laurel Tallent Honored for Pro Bono Service



Blaise N. Gamba Outstanding Pro Bono Service Law Student Award recipient Laurel Tallent ('19) and Dean Erin O'Connor

Last week during our Law Day Celebration with Legal Services of North Florida, Inc. and Legal Aid Foundation of Tallahassee, we presented the 2019 Blaise N. Gamba Outstanding Pro Bono Service Law Student Award to Laurel Tallent ('19). Tallent was honored for her outstanding pro bono service after completing more than 1,500 hours of pro bono work! Tallent completed her service at organizations including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Save the Manatee Club. During her time at FSU Law, she was a leader in public interest law, with particular passion for environmental law, sustainability and animal law. She served as president of FSU’s nationally recognized Animal Legal Defense Fund chapter and founded the law school’s new Sustainable Law Society. During the Law Day event, we also recognized many of the graduating students who completed 40 or more pro bono service hours, going above and beyond FSU Law’s graduation requirement of 20 hours of pro bono service. Tallent and the other students were also recognized at our commencement ceremony. The pro bono service award honors 2006 College of Law graduate Blaise N. Gamba, who passed away in 2016. Gamba was a leader and champion for her firm’s pro bono efforts.

Faculty & Alum Profile: Robert A. Pierce ('73)

Bob Pierce is an adjunct professor teaching Estate Planning this semester. He is a shareholder with Ausley McMullen and practices a broad range of business, tax, and estate and probate law. Pierce regularly advises clients on business organization formation, structuring and operation. He has experience in merger and acquisitions and reorganization of business organizations of all types. Pierce has substantial experience in the health care area related to the formation, operation and negotiation of various health care relationships. He represents individuals in estate and tax planning, including preparation of wills, trusts and other estate tax planning techniques. Pierce is involved in handling probates and administration of trusts. Prior to joining Ausley McMullen in 1982, Pierce was general counsel for the Florida Department of Revenue. He has been a member of the Tax Advisory Committee for the Florida House of Representatives and a Florida Bar Tax Section legislative liaison for the Florida Legislature. Pierce has also taught several tax-related courses at FSU Law and has extensive experience in Florida state tax matters. Pierce earned his J.D. from FSU Law in 1973 and an LL.M. in taxation from the University of Florida in 1976.



“It is a privilege to share the experiences of my career in estate planning, business and tax with FSU’s exceptional law students. Having earned my law degree at FSU and having benefitted from a rewarding relationship with the college, its administration and its students over the years, I’m happy that I can contribute, even a small amount, to FSU’s ongoing tradition of excellence.”

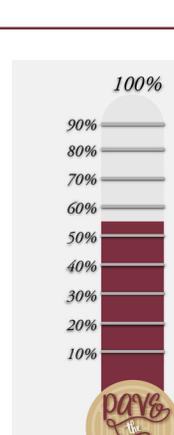
Student Profile: 2019 Grad Shannon Brophy

Desired Practice Location: Orlando
Field of Law Sought: Health law or a position relating to the medical field, whether that be in insurance, medical malpractice, compliance or another area

Originally from Boca Raton, Shannon Brophy earned a bachelor’s degree in statistics with minors in actuarial science and business administration from the University of Florida. She graduated from FSU Law last weekend. Since November, Brophy has been a research assistant for Professor Jake Linford. During the spring 2019 semester, she was also a teaching assistant for the Health Care Fraud & Abuse course. Last fall, Brophy was a teaching assistant for the Health Care Privacy & Cybersecurity course. During the summer after her 2L year, Brophy interned at Zerbe Garner Blondell & Weldon, LLP, where she met with clients in jail, helped prepare cases for trial, and prepared memos, briefs and guardianship papers. During the spring semester of her 2L year, Brophy externed with the Florida Department of Health, Prosecution Services Unit. She reviewed cases and investigative reports, and prepared closing orders, letters of guidance and administrative complaints. She also presented cases at a Nursing Probable Cause Panel. During the summer after her 1L year, Brophy interned with in-house general counsel at the Boca Raton Regional Hospital, where she reviewed contracts, researched potential legal conflicts and compliance issues, filed opinion name changes for the county property appraiser and updated hospital policies for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, and Stark Law. Brophy was also the treasurer for the FSU Law Health Law Society. In the years between her undergraduate studies and law school, Brophy worked for several different health systems in Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and was exposed to many aspects of the health care field. If you are interested in hiring Brophy after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile.](#)



“One of my favorite things about my time at FSU was the sense of community that existed within my class.”



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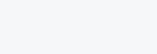
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