

## From the Dean



(L-R, top row) FSU Law Moot Court Team members Duarte and Curry, and their two competitors during the semi-finals of the Judge John R. Brown Admiralty Moot Court Competition. (Judges for the round pictured in the middle and bottom rows.)

Congratulations to our Moot Court Team on finishing second to Duke University in the Judge John R. Brown Admiralty Moot Court Competition and receiving the Gus A. Schill, Jr. Finalist Award this past weekend. The competition was “held” in Portland, Maine, but due to COVID-19 teams competed remotely via Zoom over four days. This gave them opportunities to work on making persuasive arguments remotely, which is becoming an increasingly more important skill for attorneys. Team members Holly Parker Curry and Alexander Duarte, who are both second-year students, also won the Maritime Law Association of the United States Award for the Best Brief in the competition and the Best Respondent’s Brief Award. Although the format of the oral advocacy component of the competition was altered, event organizers did not make any changes to the brief-judging process. The team was coached by alumnus Bailey Howard (’17), who is a judicial clerk for Chief Judge Mark Walker, of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida, and FSU Law’s Dunbar Family Professor Steve Johnson. Additionally, Curry and Duarte both are enrolled in Admiralty Law taught by Captain Alan Richard (’94), who helped the students when they had competition-related questions. The team was also assisted by third-year student Taylor Fleming.

In addition to the team honors, Curry earned the Rebecca Jackson Award as the best oral advocate in the championship round and the James Walker Award as the second-best oral advocate in the preliminary rounds. When presenting awards, one outstanding admiralty lawyer remarked that Curry was the best oralist he had seen in the five moot court competitions he judged this year.

Twenty-six teams participated in the competition, including teams from Boston University, University of Texas, Washington University in St. Louis and many other law schools with strong programs in admiralty law. We are incredibly proud of our talented student advocates and grateful for their dedicated coaches! Please join us in congratulating them on performing so well under very unique circumstances.

- Dean Erin O’Connor

## FSU Law-Themed Zoom Backgrounds Available

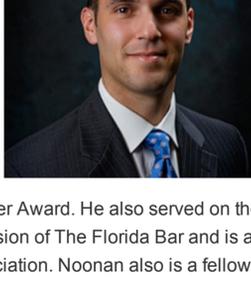


One of five FSU Law-themed Zoom backgrounds available online

As many members of the FSU Law family have transitioned to remote working, we have been looking for ways to stay connected. In addition to using Zoom for classes, FSU Law community members are utilizing it to engage virtually for many different purposes, from meetings with clients to study groups to team collaboration sessions. For the many students, alumni and friends who are using this platform, we have created FSU Law-themed Zoom backgrounds to allow people to show their law school pride. The backgrounds and instructions for using them are [available on the FSU Law website](#). As COVID-19 continues to impact the ways we live and work, please reach out to us at the law school if there is anything we can do to help you navigate these challenging times.

## Alum Profile: Gregory M. Noonan (’08)

[Gregory M. Noonan](#) is a partner at The Corry Law Firm, P.A., in Tallahassee, where he represents plaintiffs in personal injury and wrongful death matters. In addition to his practice, Noonan is extremely engaged in the legal community. In March, he began serving as president of the Tallahassee Bar Association (TBA), an organization for which he has served in many other leadership roles. Additionally, in 2013, he received the TBA’s Tom Ervin, Jr. Most Distinguished Young Lawyer Award. He also served on the board of governors for the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar and is a past-president of the Capital City Justice Association. Noonan also is a fellow of The Florida Bar Foundation, an eagle member of the Florida Justice Association and a member of the American Inns of Court.



*“I began my involvement in bar activities while attending FSU Law, thanks in large part to encouragement from my employer and mentor at the time, Sean Desmond. I’ve been fortunate to have a career in personal injury law that has allowed me the time and flexibility to continue serving the legal community. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The Tallahassee Bar has recently focused on encouraging more participation from FSU Law students and collaboration with the Student Bar Association. We hope to continue that trend.”*

## Student Profile: 3L Daumantas Venckus-Cucchiara

**Desired Practice Location:** No preference  
**Expected Graduation:** May 2020  
**Specialization:** Business law  
**Field of Law Sought:** Tax law



Daumantas Venckus-Cucchiara was born and raised in Klaipeda, Lithuania—he speaks and writes fluently in Lithuanian. He moved to the U.S. when he was eight years old and his family holds permanent domicile in Weston, Florida, which Venckus-Cucchiara considers home. Venckus-Cucchiara earned a Bachelor of Science in human physiology at the University of Iowa, where he also earned a minor in psychology and completed the pre-med track. Additionally, he holds an M.B.A. with a management concentration from the University of Akron. Venckus-Cucchiara played Division I football on a full-ride athletic scholarship at both the University of Iowa and the University of Akron. Since fall 2019, Venckus-Cucchiara has been a law clerk at Sundberg, P.A., where he has drafted pleadings and responded to discovery requests. This spring, Venckus-Cucchiara was a volunteer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistant program, where, after being properly certified by the IRS, he prepared taxes for low-to-median income taxpayers. Last summer, he clerked at Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. in Fort Myers, Florida. Venckus-Cucchiara composed real estate contracts and service agreements; drafted various motions, settlement agreements and jury instructions; and researched taxation, business litigation and real estate law issues. During the spring of his 2L year, Venckus-Cucchiara clerked for NextEra Energy, Inc. in Juno Beach, Florida. He edited and annotated NextEra’s 2019 Proxy and Notice Statement, drafted corporate governance updates and researched the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s record retention regulations. During the summer after his 1L year, Venckus-Cucchiara clerked at First American Title Insurance Co. in Atlanta. He identified title defects by reviewing legal descriptions and researched how mechanics’ liens affect property title in all 50 states.

While earning his juris doctor and the Business Law Certificate at FSU Law, Venckus-Cucchiara completed his first Ironman Triathlon and was named a Northwestern Pritzker Dean’s Scholar, which comes with a full-tuition scholarship and an editor position for *The Tax Lawyer*, the ABA Tax Section’s professional journal. He will begin the LL.M. in Taxation program at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law in the fall. If you are interested in hiring Venckus-Cucchiara upon completion of his LL.M. program, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

*“J.C. Watts famously stated, ‘Death and taxes may be inevitable, but they shouldn’t be related.’ I wholeheartedly agree and will dedicate my legal career to help clients minimize their tax implications to ensure their businesses thrive.”*



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