

From the Dean



Energy panelists included (top row L-R) Hoysradt, Fenton and Glickman.

At the end of January, the Environmental, Energy & Land Use Law Certificate Program hosted the 2021 Energy Law Panel “Rooftop Solar Energy in Florida: Opportunities and Obstacles” via Zoom. They discussed Florida’s solar industry, various economic opportunities for adopting rooftop solar energy, current policies and possible legal reforms to facilitate the expansion of solar energy.

Speakers included Dr. James Fenton, director of Florida Solar Energy Center at the University of Central Florida; Susan Glickman, Florida director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy; Justin Hoysradt, CEO and director of public policy of Vinyasun and president of the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association; and Bentina C. Terry, senior vice president of Georgia Power.

Special thanks to FSU Law alumnus Robert Scheffel “Schef” Wright (’92), a shareholder at Gardner Bist, who moderated and helped organize the panel. I am continually impressed with the robust environmental law programming at the law school. Even during the pandemic, our faculty members have maintained a wide range of expert guest speakers and timely academic discussions.

-Dean Erin O’Connor

FSU BLSA Hosts Panel on Death Penalty



(Clockwise from top left) 3L Daynica Harley, Sister Helen Prejean, Ngozi Ndulue, 2L Lauren Rolfe and Seth Miller during BLSA’s “Racism and the Death Penalty: Arguments Surrounding Abolition” panel

Last week, our Black Law Students Association (BLSA) hosted an online panel, “Racism and the Death Penalty: Arguments Surrounding Abolition,” to discuss the disproportionate impact of the death penalty. It was the third event in BLSA’s year-long racial justice panel series. The panel featured alumnus Seth Miller (’04), executive director of the Innocence Project of Florida; Ngozi Ndulue, senior director of research and special projects at the Death Penalty Information Center; and Sister Helen Prejean, internationally recognized anti-death penalty activist and author of “Dead Man Walking,” “The Death of Innocents” and “River of Fire.” BLSA President Daynica Harley moderated the event, which was organized by BLSA Social Justice Chair Lauren Rolfe.

Among other issues, panelists discussed their work, the history of the death penalty, conditions on death row, race of the victim in determining if the death penalty is imposed, jury nullification, the disproportionate imposition of the death penalty on Black people and related arguments that support abolition of the death penalty.

“Look at the track record of who has gotten death sentences and who has gotten executed,” said Sister Prejean when discussing one way race impacts the death penalty. “In eight out of ten cases it is because you killed a white person. There is outrage over the death of a person when their life is highly valued. Is anybody surprised that it is when white people are killed that the death penalty is sought and seldom for the lives of people of color, whose lives are not valued?”

Alum Profile: Danielle A. Cohen Higgins (’06)

Danielle A. Cohen Higgins was recently elected to the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, where she is working to strengthen the community by improving affordability, investing in real transit solutions, and focusing on sustainable practices to protect and beautify neighborhoods. She also is a partner and founding attorney at Cohen Law, a boutique practice where she represents businesses and seriously injured individuals in civil arenas including commercial litigation, shareholder disputes, contract disputes, construction litigation, personal injury, wrongful death and premises liability. Prior to opening her firm in 2009, Higgins practiced at Greenberg Traurig in the area of complex commercial civil litigation. Higgins also is engaged in her community and the legal profession by serving on the board of directors for the Florida Justice Association, on the board of directors for the South Florida American Heart Association, as a young ambassador to Nicklaus Children’s Health Systems, and as a mentor and executive committee member for Take Stock in Children.



“I look back at my time at FSU Law very fondly. Aside from preparing me for a successful legal career, FSU Law taught me the value of investing time and providing leadership in my community. Serving on the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners as the voice and representative of District 8, where I was born and raised, is a privilege, honor and incredible responsibility. It provides me the opportunity to chart a new course for the hardworking residents of South Dade and our entire county. I am grateful for the excellent education I received, which has truly prepared me for this endeavor.”

Student Profile: 3L Macgregor Hudson

Desired Practice Location: Tampa, Jacksonville, Atlanta or Miami, but open to any location

Expected Graduation: Spring 2021

Field of Law Sought: Would like to establish a career in transactional work, particularly interested in mergers and acquisitions



Macgregor Hudson is from Jacksonville, Florida. He earned a bachelor’s degree in finance from FSU and will complete the four-year joint J.D./M.B.A. program this spring. Hudson spent the fall semester of his 2L year studying abroad at Erasmus University in the Netherlands. He studied international and European law and feels fortunate that he was able to have the experience pre-pandemic. Since August 2020, Hudson has been working as an in-house counsel intern for Flowers Foods in Thomasville, Georgia. He researches legal issues facing Flowers, drafts memos, reviews and negotiates contracts, and assists with the development of employee COVID-19 incident response forms. After he completed his M.B.A. coursework in May 2019, Hudson spent the summer interning at Flowers Foods as a strategy analyst. During that internship he researched and co-developed key performance indicators for each business department and helped the company carry out its digital transformation initiative. During the summer of 2020, Hudson interned for Citigroup, where he reviewed counterparty International Swaps and Derivatives Association (ISDA) schedules, credit support annexes and master agreements, summarizing changes to key terms, drafting ISDA documentation to be sent to counterparties and performing due diligence.

During law school, Hudson was the J.D./M.B.A. liaison for the Business Law Society. Hudson and a partner competed in the LawMeets Merger & Acquisitions skills competition, beating more than 100 teams from law schools across the country and finishing in the top 10 percent. Hudson is also a member of the FSU Law softball team. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Hudson after graduation, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

“I knew choosing FSU was a great decision, but I never could have imagined the positive impact that FSU would have on my life. I am grateful for the people I’ve met, the opportunities I’ve had and the encouragement I’ve received to step out of my comfort zone. I’m looking forward to starting the next chapter of my life, wherever that may be.”

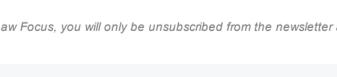
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