



St. Thomas Law News

ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW NEWSLETTER

Volume 8, Issue 16 | February 2, 2018



ST. THOMAS TRIAL TEAM CROWNED NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

The St. Thomas Law trial team continued its championship run by being crowned the 14th annual 2018 ABA Labor and Employment Law National Trial Competition champions. This year's national competition was held January 27 through 28 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and featured six regional champion law schools from around the country. The regional champion schools in the competition were Harvard Law School, Northwestern University School of Law, University of California Hastings College of Law, William and Mary Law School, Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, and St. Thomas University School of Law.

In the end, St. Thomas students **Luis Garcia**, **Karina Harduvel**, **Jillian Tate**, and **Chanae Wood** were crowned the national champions. "I am extremely proud of these students and enjoyed watching them transform from law students to attorneys," said coach Jeff James, Esq. The team was coached by faculty advisor and litigation managing attorney of the law firm PeytonBolin, PL, **Michael Mayer**, Esq.; Assistant School Board Attorney for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Jeff James Esq.; Assistant Public Defender from the Miami-Dade Public Defender's office, Dionne McDonald-Josephs; and St. Thomas law school professor Kenya Smith. "It was an honor and privilege to be able to represent St. Thomas on a national level. Every sacrifice our team made was worth it because together we were able to make history! It is an incredible feeling to be a national champion," said Wood.

Each round of the competition consisted of the teams representing either the Plaintiff or the Defendant. As the Plaintiff, the students argued to a jury that the Plaintiff, an employee of the Defendant, was discriminated against, and fired for, religious reasons. As the Defendant, the students argued to the jury that the Plaintiff was not fired for religious reasons, but rather because

CAMPUS EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| February 1: | Summer-in-Spain Meeting, Room 102 @ 12:00 p.m. |
| February 3: | VITA Tax Preparation, Legal Information Center @ 12:00 p.m. |
| February 3: | KMMF Minority Mentoring Picnic, Zoo Miami @ 10:00 a.m. |
| February 5-9: | Graduation Registration |
| February 8: | Pro Bono Public Service Job Fair, Cordero Breezeway @ 11:00 a.m. |
| February 8: | International Day of Prayer & Discussion on Human Rights, St. Anthony Chapel @ 12:15 p.m. |
| February 10: | Entertainment & Sports Law Symposium @ 9:00 a.m. |

the Plaintiff was harassing other employees.

In the preliminary rounds, St. Thomas competed against Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law and Northwestern University School of Law. After winning both preliminary rounds, St. Thomas faced off against Harvard Law School in the semi-finals. Karina Harduvel and Chanae Wood argued on behalf of the Defendant, GEM corporation. Harvard could not stop St. Thomas, who the jurors believed were the best advocates of the competition. "None of this would be possible without the support of each other and the training from our coaches. This was truly a team effort," said Harduvel.

In the final round, St. Thomas went head to head against the defending national champion, the University of California Hastings College of Law. Luis Garcia and Jillian Tate argued on behalf of the Plaintiff, Jamie Price, and when it was all said and done, St. Thomas was crowned national champion. "I am honored and blessed to bring this home," said Garcia. The presiding judge, United States Circuit Court Judge of the Sixth Circuit, Bernice B. Donald, announced St. Thomas as the winner, and the entire court room erupted in applause. "All the late nights and countless hours of practice were beyond worth the feeling of hearing our team being called national champions. I am honored to be a part of making that happen," said Tate.

With numerous past awards received, state and national championships, this newest national championship is yet another reminder of the commitment to excellence in the St. Thomas trial team program. "These students deserve this. They exemplified the meaning of hard work, dedication and sacrifice. From the beginning, they had one goal in mind and did not let anything get in the way of making that happen. I am so very proud of them," said Faculty Advisor Michael Mayer, Esq.

Congratulations to St. Thomas and the trial team program! We look forward to seeing you in future competitions and to you bringing more championships to Florida.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Haitian Lawyers Association is accepting scholarship applications for the year 2018. The selected recipient(s) will be awarded at least \$1,200, and will be invited to attend HLA's annual gala, to be held on March 24, 2018, at the Rusty Pelican in Key Biscayne.

The criteria for the scholarship are as follows. Applicants must be of Haitian decent; be in good academic standing; submit an official transcript; submit a personal statement (maximum two pages) that describes the student's involvement in the community, the student's financial need for the scholarship as well as the reason(s) the student believes he or she is qualified for the scholarship; and submit a professional headshot photo to be included in the gala program book in the event that the applicant is chosen as the scholarship recipient.

All documents except for photo *must* be submitted as one (1) pdf file. The documents mentioned above must be submitted via e-mail to info@haitianlawyersassociation.org and Guerda Prosper at gprosper.esq@gmail.com no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 2, 2018. Scholarship recipients will be announced by March 12, 2018.



JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS LUNCH & LEARN

On January 30, 2018, the Office for Career Development hosted a Judicial Clerkship Informational Lunch & Learn. Almost thirty students attended and heard from **Pam Rogers** (pictured) regarding why they should consider a Judicial Clerkship, what are Judicial Clerkships, the different types of Judicial Clerkships, things to do to prepare to apply for Judicial Clerkships, and resources available at St. Thomas Law to learn about Judicial Clerkships.



GWEN S. CHERRY BLACK WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION'S PANEL DISCUSSION

St. Thomas Law's chapter of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) hosted the Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association's Panel Discussion "The Real Deal: The Ropes to Skip & the Ropes to know for a Successful Law School & Career Experience." Law students from St. Thomas University, Florida International University, Nova Southeastern University, University of Miami, and Florida A& M University were able to listen to the panelists and ask questions about the practice of law. The panelists included the Honorable Phyllis Kotey, the Honorable Orlando Prescott, the Honorable Darrin Gayle, Miami Gardens Assistant City Attorney Loreal Arcsott, Terry Ann Howell, Olanike "Nike" Adebayo, Renee Gordon, and Hans Ottinot.



SANCHEZ VADILLO SPEAKS WITH ELDER LAW SOCIETY

On January 23, 2018, the Elder Law Society at St. Thomas Law hosted alumnus **Gustavo A. Gutierrez '03**, Managing Partner, Sanchez Vadillo LLP in Doral. Mr. Gutierrez shared about his own practice and career path, and gave practical advice about selecting classes, preparing for the Bar exam, and choosing a career path. More than 60 students were in attendance at the presentation.



BROWARD WOMEN LAWYER'S ASSOCIATION LAW STUDENT MIXER

On January 16th, the Broward County Women Lawyer's Association hosted a joint mixer for St. Thomas Law and Nova Law students at The Brass Tap in Fort Lauderdale.

Pictured (L to R): BCWLA President, Beth Feder; BCWLA Law School Liaison Committee Chair, Amanda Roesch; St. Thomas Law Career Counselor, **Laura Varela**; NSU Law FAWL Chapter President, Heather Saltz; St. Thomas Law FAWL Chapter President, **Shannon McGee**; and attorneys Arielle Capuano and Cary Levinson of BCWLA sponsor Levinson & Capuano, P.A.

ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS LAW SYMPOSIUM

The St. Thomas University Entertainment & Sports Law Society would like to invite you to its 2018 Entertainment & Sports Law Symposium, which will be held on Saturday, February 10, 2018. The Symposium brings together some of the most powerful agents, lawyers, and other sports and entertainment industry professionals from around the country to discuss and debate pertinent legal

and business issues in sports, entertainment, the arts, and the media. The Symposium allows law students and lawyers from all over South Florida to join the forum discussion as well as network and connect with some of the best the sports and entertainment industry has to offer.

The event is free for students, but you must register to attend. To register for the symposium please go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-st-thomas-school-of-law-entertainment-sports-law-symposium-tickets-42634343469>

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Sha'Tarria Davis (3L) accepted a post-graduate position as an Assistant Public Defender with the Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office.

Joseph Galinskie, (2L) accepted a *highly prestigious and competitive* internship with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Miami.

Brandon Greene (3L) accepted a post-graduate position as an Assistant Public Defender with the Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office.

Idelys Martinez, (3L) accepted a paid Law Clerk position with Marin, Eljaiek & Lopez, P.L. in Coconut Grove, specializing in First-party litigation.

Stephen Rampaul's (3L) essay *Why Marriage is Important to our Society* was recognized by the Brandon Legal Group, who hosted an essay writing competition. The essay can be found at <https://brandonlegallgroup.com/marriage-importance-scholarship-honorable-mention/> Stephen has accepted a paid Internship with White & Twombly in Miami, specializing in Commercial Litigation, Person Injury, and Business Law.

ALUMNI(AE) NEWS

Milagros Canales, a 2016 graduate, accepted an Associate position with Bryan Law in Fort Lauderdale, specializing in Civil/Business Litigation, and Condominium/Homeowners Association Law.

Soibi Cotterell Isang, 2016 graduate, accepted an Attorney position with The Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Fourth District in Fort Lauderdale.

Frank Garrison, a 2015 graduate, accepted a Staff Attorney position with the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Monique Lindner, a 2015 graduate, accepted an assistant State Attorney position with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office in the Child Support Division.

Michelle Soto, a 2013 graduate, was elevated to Trusts & Estates Project Attorney with Greenberg Traurig, LLP, in Miami.

Sylvia Weir, a 2017 graduate, opened her own firm this year (The Weir Law Firm, P.A.) in Miami, specializing in Property Insurance, Contract Analysis, and other areas of Civil Litigation.

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Professor **Marc-Tizoc González** published his latest article, *Criminalizing Charity: Can First Amendment Free Exercise of Religion, RFRA, and RLUIPA Protect People Who Share Food in Public?* in the *U.C. Irvine Law Review's* symposium issue on equity in the food system, <http://www.law.uci.edu/lawreview/issuearchive/vol7no2.html>. Professor González continues to research and write about the food-sharing cases, which involve constitutional challenges to city ordinances in at least twenty-five states that threaten a misdemeanor against religious and political activists who provide food to or share a meal with hungry people on city-owned parks, sidewalks, and streets without first obtaining the proper permit. The Eleventh Circuit of the United States Courts of Appeal is presently considering arguments made last year in *Fort Lauderdale Food Not Bombs v. City of Fort Lauderdale*, to which Professor González submitted an *amicus curiae* brief with the help of his lead research assistant, **Jessica Biedron**, Class of 2017, and *pro bono publico* attorney, **Victoria Mesa-Estrada**, Class of 2008.

Recently retired Third District Court of Appeal Judge (and Adjunct Professor) **Frank A. Shepherd** testified before the Judicial Committee of the Florida Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) on November 2, in Tallahassee, in support of a proposal to amend the Florida Constitution to prohibit state court judges and administrative law judges from deferring to an administrative agency's interpretation of laws and rules the agency is charged to enforce. The amendment was known as Proposal 6. The Judicial Committee unanimously approved the proposed amendment at its November 2 meeting. Judge Shepherd testified before the Executive Committee of the CRC in support of the proposed amendment on Friday, January 2.



[Submit Information](#) | [Contact Newsletter](#) | [Past Issues](#)

