



St. Thomas Law News

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Welcome Back

St. Thomas Law Faculty, Administration, and Staff would like to wish you a Happy New Year and welcome you back to campus.

Financial Aid

We are pleased to inform you that Spring disbursements refunds should be available via direct deposit by Monday, January 14, 2019, for those students who have completed the necessary paperwork and have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. If you have any questions regarding your financial aid status or refund, please contact Andres Marrero, Director of Law Student Financial Services at ammarrero@stu.edu. ❖

St. Thomas Law: Gateway to Great Legal Careers

Stefanie Morse (3L) accepted an Internship with The Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Third Region in Miami.

William Blanck (3L) accepted a *highly prestigious and competitive* internship with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Miami.

Shannon McGee, a 2018 graduate, accepted an Associate position with the Chartwell Law Office, in Miami.

Chanae Woods, a 2018 graduate, accepted an Associate position with Weiss, Serota, Helfman Cole & Bierman in Fort Lauderdale. ❖

Campus Events

- January 15 & 16: Clinical Program Informational Session, Moot Courtroom @ 12:00 p.m.
- January 16: Breezeway Chatter, Cordero Breezeway @ 12:00 p.m.
- January 17: Digital Currency L& L, Room 102 @ 12:00 p.m.
- January 21: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- January 24: Clerkship Informational L& L, Room CPD-113 @ 12:00 p.m.



St. Thomas Law Immigration Clinic

Law students in the Immigration Clinic under the guidance of Professor **Michael Vastine**, and support from **Yanick Laroche**, Immigration Coordinator, worked tirelessly, representing indigent individuals who are in removal proceedings before the Immigration Court and the Board of Immigration Appeals. In the clinic, the students conduct all aspects of client representation, from client intake and case development to representation in all hearings, compilation and submission of all evidence, examination of witnesses (including experts where required), and all oral and closing arguments. Some recent examples of how students provide valuable assistance are illustrated in the following cases.

Susan Papagikos (3L) and **Patrick McKenna** (2L) successfully represented a detained U.S. Permanent Resident who faced deportation. Susan and Patrick sought relief highlighting the client's good moral character throughout the years, his positive work history, and by contrasting the life he would face if he were deported back to Cuba. The Judge agreed with the student litigants and cancelled the removal application and the client was released from detention.

Valerie Zeppilli (3L) and **Paul Schoenberger** (3L) were challenged with a cancellation of removal case with the client detained in Moore Haven, Florida, and the court hearings at the immigration court within the Krome detention center. The student litigants were able to highlight positive aspects of their client's life, juxtaposing her relationship with her family and strong work history with her legal transgressions. Valerie and Paul submitted over thirty exhibits and were able to convince the Immigration Judge. Their client was reunited with her daughter and grandson, shortly thereafter.

Jessica Dessources-Augustin (2L) and **Ana Gracia** (3L) won a challenging appeal based on allegations that their client had committed a "crime of violence" that triggered automatic deportation without eligibility for any discretionary judicial relief. They argued that the law was applied incorrectly by the Immigration Judge and that the intervening decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Sessions v. Dimaya*, 138 S. Ct. 1204 (2018), confirmed their legal theory. A three-member panel of the Board of Immigration Appeals agreed and terminated removal proceedings for their long-detained client, preventing him from being deported to Haiti.

Nathalia Lozano (3L) and **Alexsandra Simoes** (3L) won a preliminary hearing for their client. Their argument turned on the application of the highly technical "categorical approach," that arises in the federal sentencing and immigration contexts. Nathalia and Alexsandra argued that the Florida statutes at issue were categorically broader, than the federal standard that caused deportability, and thus, a violation of either statute could not be a basis for removing a resident ("green card holder") from the United States. The judge agreed and ordered the government to attempt to overcome these arguments and meet its burden of proof in formal briefs.

Otto Ruiz Frantzen (3L) and **Vanessa Baez** (3L) prevailed on a challenging cancellation of removal case, in the detained setting, which involved a client's criminal history that was intertwined with his homelessness, mental illness and addiction. Ultimately, they convinced the judge that the client merited a second chance.

The Immigration Clinic demonstrates how our law students are having an impact in the real world to help clients with no other voice. ❖

LL.M./J.S.D. Students Participate in International Law Conference

On November 15-16, 2018, a delegation of LL.M. and J.S.D. students of the Intercultural Human Rights program attended the Conference on *European Union and the Americas: An Inclusive and Encompassing Relationship* organized by the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and held in premises of Greenberg Traurig in downtown Miami. In this two-day conference the European Union and leading stakeholders from throughout South Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean discussed cooperative approaches and shared challenges on a number of important issues including the promotion of democratic and transparent elections, disaster preparedness and responses in the face of climate change, human rights and the rule of law, as well as economic and trade partnerships. Each panel was followed by lively discussion between the panelists and those in attendance.



The participation in the international law conference was **by invitation only** and Professor **Roza Pati** made our students' participation possible through her cooperation with the European Union representatives. The STU delegation was delighted to have had the opportunity to attend in this exclusive conference and learn from the experience of experts on the many facets of the relations between the EU and the Americas. **Constanza Carlone**, LL.M. student hailing from Italy said *"I was very interested in learning about the progress in Latin America regarding economic growth, but also about human rights violations as a consequence of abuses of power in certain countries such as Venezuela, and Honduras."* **Digdem Ameseder**, LL.M. student from Austria, shared that *"It was a very interesting and broad conference with esteemed panelists bringing their distinctive perspectives. I enjoyed learning about the EU and the Americas' cooperation in different fields and following the engaging discussions."* **Liza Smoker**, LL.M. student from the U.S. remarked that *"The conference provided an excellent forum for discussion of cooperative approaches to shared challenges."* ❖

New Member's of the *St. Thomas Law Review*

The following students are new members of the *St. Thomas Law Review*: **Liaran Aleman, Jessica Alvarez, Crhistian Batallas, Andrew Bratslavsky, Shameequa Buxton, Lauren Cabrera, Marielys Concepcion, Marcus Davide, Carolina Del Campo, Jennifer Francisco, Heidi Gonzalez, Michelle Gonzalez, Tracey Joseph, Jonathan Manoy, Leah Maurer, Antoinette Mederos, Layla Nguyen, Gianni Piantini, Ernesto Rivero, Ivana Romero, Jikky Thankachan, and Steven Waldman**

Please join the *St. Thomas Law Review* Executive Board in welcoming them onboard. ❖

Jamaican American Bar Association Annual Gala

St. Thomas Law was a proud sponsor of The Jamaican American Bar Association's Annual Grand Gala Ball and Awards Ceremony. The Gala took place on Saturday November 17, 2018 at the Miramar Cultural Center in Miramar. The event was well attended and STU Law was very well represented. Special congratulations to STU Law student **Stephen Davis** (3L) who received a scholarship award. ❖

Family Law Lunch & Learn

The final Lunch & Learn of the fall semester was a spirited event. Co-hosted by The Children & Family Law Society, Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Student Section, and The Office for Career Development, it brought together 3 panelists with many years of family law expertise. Over 50 students listened to Judge **Maria Elena Verde** '98 alumna, practitioners Honit Simon, Esq., and Evan Marks, Esq., gave advice and shared stories of the wide array of legal and practical issues in family and related areas of law. ❖

Dade Legal Aid 9th Annual Patently Impossible Project

On November 1, more than 200 guests gathered to celebrate and cheer on a dozen teams competing at the 9th Annual Patently Impossible Project. Each team had to assemble a UFO Space Launcher. The first place winner was **Kevin Cudlipp** '14, of Cudlipp & Cudlipp; this is the second year in a row that he won this title. ❖

Alumni(ae) News

Christopher Herrera, a 2017 graduate, accepted a new position as an Associate Attorney with Rudd and Diamond, P.A. in Hollywood, specializing in Insurance Defense

Marlin Muller, a 2017 graduate, accepted a new position as Partner at the Hidalgo Law Firm in Miami.

Andres Santiago, a 2016 graduate, accepted new position as an Attorney with Noble & Vrapı, P.A. in Albuquerque, NM, specializing in Immigration Law.

Artem Zhgun, a 2018 graduate, is now a shareholder at Leone Zhgun, PA., in Miami, specializing in International Business. ❖

Faculty Announcements

The Archdiocese of Miami recognized and will be awarding Professor **Michael Vastine** and the St. Thomas Law Immigration Clinic with the Mother Cabrini Medal; this medal is awarded to people for their outstanding service to immigrant. The medals will be award at a Cocktail Reception on January 30, 2019, at the De La Cruz Collections in Miami. ❖



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