



St. Thomas Law News

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STULS/VITA Breaks 35 Year Record on Saturday February 9, 2019

The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program at St. Thomas University School of Law is the oldest *pro bono* program at St. Thomas Law. This past Saturday, February 9, 2019, thirty-one STULS/VITA tax student volunteers set a record preparing tax returns for 71 clients in just one day.

STULS/VITA was up 168 percent on income tax returns filed for clients this year, compared to the same time last year. At this rate, STULS/VITA is on course to make the 35-year anniversary tax season a record breaking one for the program.

The STULS/VITA program assisted by the Tax Law Society provides an essential service to the most economically vulnerable in our community by preparing their tax returns. This facilitates needy families getting timely tax refunds that can be used for food, clothing, medical expenses, and other necessities. Professor **Mark Wolff** met with a client who has been coming to STULS/VITA for decades. He recalled she had been diagnosed with cancer last year and she told him she really needed her tax refund because of her circumstances. She also told him that she was finishing a treatment regimen but is now in remission. She thanked Professor Wolff for the STULS/VITA Program over years. Professor Wolff told her "do not thank me, thank these wonderful, talented and dedicated students who volunteer their Saturdays (and many days during the week) to make this program possible." She was in tears with gratitude to the students for their collective efforts and sacrifice. ❖

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St. Thomas Law: Gateway to Great Legal Careers

Manon Ferdani (3L) has accepted a post-graduate Assistant State Attorney position with the Office of the State Attorney, 17th Judicial Circuit, in Fort Lauderdale.

Jonathan Kernizan (2L) accepted a Paid Spring Internship with GlobeNet, a telecommunications corporation in Fort Lauderdale, working with In-House Counsel.

Eduardo Rodriguez, a 2018 graduate, accepted an Associate Attorney position with Cuevas, Garcia & Torres, P.A., in Miami, specializing in Real Estate and Business Law.

Yisel Villar, a 2018 graduate, accepted a post-graduate Associate Attorney position with Jeffrey S. Weiner, P.A. in Miami, specializing in Criminal Defense. ❖

Campus Events

- February 14: Financial Planning L & L, Room 219 @ 12:00 p.m.
- February 15: Emotional Intelligence, Moot Courtroom @ 12:30 p.m.
- February 16: VITA Tax Preparation, Law Library @ 10:00 a.m.
- February 18: Presidents Day Holiday
- February 19: **Monday Classes Meet**
- February 19 & 20: Graduation Expo, Convocation Hall
- February 20: Space Law "Out to Launch", Room CPD-113 @ 12:00 p.m.
- February 21: Black History Distinguished Speaker, Moot Courtroom @ 4:30 p.m.
- February 26: Civility Matters, American Board of Trial Advocates L & L, Room CPD-113 @ 12:00 p.m.



Black History Distinguished Speaker

In honor of Black History Month, we are honored to have the former Florida Bar President Eugene Pettis, speak at St. Thomas Law on Thursday, February 21, 2019, at 4:30 p.m., in the Moot Courtroom. The entire community is encouraged to come out for an enlightening and engaging event.

Mr. Pettis was the first African-American to serve in the position as President of The Florida Bar. In his role at the helm of The Florida Bar, he provided visionary leadership and brought a passion for giving back to his profession and his community.

Mr. Pettis, a co-founder of Haliczzer Pettis & Schwamm, leads a trial practice representing an impressive list of corporate, public sector and individual clients in civil trial matters. He has over 30 years of experience handling a range of complex cases for defendants and plaintiffs in areas of medical malpractice, personal injury, commercial litigation, employment and professional liability. ❖

President's Day and Class Scheduled Adjustment

On Monday, February 18, 2019, the University and the School of Law will be closed in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday, which means there will be no classes held at the School of Law and Administrative Offices are closed as well. The Law Library south reading room will be open on Monday for students. **On Tuesday, February 19, we will follow a Monday class schedule.** Therefore, classes that normally meet on Monday will meet at the same time and place on Tuesday, February 19 (Tuesday classes do not meet). On Wednesday, February 20, the normal class schedule

will resume. That means classes that normally meet on a Monday/Wednesday cycle meet on Tuesday/Wednesday next week. ❖

Understanding Emotional Intelligence

The St. Thomas Law community is invited to come out and hear Adriannette Williams, the Assistant Director of Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism at the Florida Bar, on Friday, February 15, 2019, at 12:30 p.m. in the Moot Courtroom where she will be speaking about Emotional Intelligence. In her discussion, she will cover what is Emotional Intelligence, what emotions are, understanding triggers, and how we respond to them, empathy, and loneliness. ❖

Judge Jason E. Dimitris Spoke at the Peter T. Fay American Inn of Court

On February 5, 2019, Judge Jason E. Dimitris, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, presented at the Peter T. Fay American Inn of Court. It was an interactive program where Judge Dimitris gave examples of previous dependency cases before him and asked the audience: "How will you rule as a Judge?" It was a phenomenal presentation where everyone participated. Additionally, the students and attorneys/judges in attendance were asked to sign up for a mentor or to be a mentor. ❖

Federal Bar Association Judicial Reception

On January 31, 2019, the South Florida Chapter of the Federal Bar Association hosted its 38th Annual Federal Judicial Reception to honor the federal judges in our district. The event took place in the Historic Alfred I. Dupont Building in downtown Miami. The event was widely attended and offered students the opportunity to interact with the judiciary and attorneys in a lively setting without the formality of a sit down dinner or speeches. Once again, St. Thomas Law was a Silver Sponsor; and our school was well represented with students, alumni, faculty, and staff in attendance. ❖

US Navy Jag Corp Lunch & Learn

On January 29, 2019, St. Thomas Law, Office for Career Development hosted a Lunch and Learn with Lt. John O. Wilson from the US Navy JAG Corps. Lt. John Wilson discussed the benefits of being a Navy JAG, the application process, internship opportunities, as well as civilian attorney opportunities. Immediately following the lunch and learn, Lt. John Wilson, conducted a 45 minute breezeway chat to answer additional questions from students. ❖

Alumni(ae) News

Ramon Alvarez, a 2014 graduate, recently accepted an In-House Counsel/Project Manager position with ARK.io, an international firm that specializes in Blockchain Solutions.

Cali Arroyave, a 2018 graduate, accepted a post-graduate Associate Attorney position with Patino & Associates in Coral Gables, specializing in Personal Injury.

Carlos Jordi, a 2015 graduate, recently opened his own firm Jordi Law LLC in Coral Gables, specializing in Personal Injury, Homeowner's Insurance Disputes, and Criminal Defense.

Alexander Karantzalis, a 2016 graduate, recently accepted a Real Estate Agent position with LUXE Properties LLC, in Fort Lauderdale; in addition to focusing his own legal practice on Business and Civil Litigation, including Landlord-Tenant matters, and Real Estate Law.

Angel Martinez, a 2017 graduate, recently opened his own firm Angel Martinez Law Firm, P.A., in Weston, specializing in Estate Planning, Business and Entrepreneur Law.

Nicia C. Mejia, a 2015 graduate, recently moved to a new Associate Attorney position with Hamilton Miller & Birthisel in Tampa, specializing in Maritime, Insurance Defense, and Coverage Litigation.

Alexandra Rider, a 2018 graduate, accepted a post-graduate Assistant State Attorney position with the Miami-Dade SAO, Human Trafficking Division.

Dania Saavedra, a 1997 graduate, was recently made a Partner with Fox Rothschild, LLP in Miami, specializing in Construction Law. ❖



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