



St. Thomas Law News

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Annual Summer Academy Trains Over 100 Participants

The 8th Annual Summer Human Trafficking Academy was held at St. Thomas University School of Law, on July 15 thru 19, 2019, in the Moot Courtroom. The Human Trafficking Academy offered a unique vision to confronting commercial sexual exploitation. It aimed at empowering various stakeholders, including survivors of sex trafficking, with a well-rounded understanding of the circumstances that factor into human vulnerability – an elemental dimension of human trafficking.

Over one hundred social service providers, state and federal law enforcement officers, prosecutors, health care providers, child

protection investigators, faith-based organizations, and members of community came together at the Academy in an *“opportunity to interact and collaborate with an audience of professional practitioners and a dedicated core of extremely qualified speakers,”* as observed by Benjamin Botero, a professor of criminal justice at Broward College and annual participant of the Summer Academy since 2017.

The Academy opened with remarks from its Founder and Director, Dr. **Roza Pati**, Professor of Law, who introduced this year’s theme and the concept of integral human development. Law School Dean **Tamara Lawson** and Rev. Monsignor **Franklyn M. Casale**, President Emeritus of St. Thomas University, welcomed the participants to the St. Thomas family. United

St. Thomas Law: Gateway to Great Legal Careers

Ashley Toledo, (2L) completed a civil practice externship with Miami-Dade Legal Aid Family Division.

Zachary Strokes, (3L) completed a summer internship with the City of Miami Gardens in the City Attorney’s Office.

Yesenia Alfonso, a 2019 graduate, accepted a post-graduate position with the Broward County State Attorney’s Office.

Carolina Andrade, a 2019 graduate, accepted a post-graduate position with the Miami-Dade Public Defender’s Office. ❖





States Senator Marco Rubio wrote to the Academy participants, stating, *inter alia*, “Through your hard work and passion for combating this horror, each of you is helping to make a safer and more humane place for us all. Know that these victims have a champion in each of you fighting for their justice. On behalf of the people of Florida, I offer my thanks and appreciation for all the good work the John J. Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy has done for the victims of human trafficking.” Senator Rubio’s office was represented by Ms. Lea Padron, Regional Director.

The weeklong training was taught by a distinguished team of international expert instructors.

A highlight of the Academy was hearing from Callahan Walsh of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. During his course, Mr. Walsh expressed his appreciation to a cohort of twenty St. Thomas University nursing students attending the Academy saying, “You’re often times the ones who can spot [human trafficking] first, and you’re often times the ones that can get the child separated from their exploiter . . .” said Walsh.



Anila Kutulla, a nursing student at St. Thomas University remarked, “I had an incredible learning experience from the rich variety of courses taught by expert instructors. As a future healthcare provider, the Summer Academy was invaluable to train and educate myself and fellow nursing colleagues on human trafficking, including how to identify victims through proper assessment and interviewing skills as we begin our careers. The Summer Academy has empowered us to combat human trafficking within our profession for many years to come.”



Other highlights included the delivery of the Keynote Address by The Honorable Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Miami-Dade County State Attorney, entitled *From Discovering the Myths to Exposing the Realities of Human Trafficking*. ❖

Campus Events

- September 7: STU Inaugural Football Game, Pace High School @ 12:00 p.m.
- September 9: SBA Organization Fair, Cordero Breezeway @ 11:00 a.m.
- September 10: Career Development Open House, CPD Office @ 10:00 p.m.
- September 11: Tax Symposium, Moot Courtroom @ 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- September 11: Clinical Program Information Session, A-112 @ 12:00 p.m.
- September 11: Dean & Student Wellness Activity



- September 12: Clinical Program Information Session, Room 215 @ 12:00 p.m.
- September 13: 1L Legal Skills Course
- September 17: JAG Panel L & L, CPD-113 @ 12:00 p.m.

CABA Judicial Luncheon

On August 9, 2019, the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) held the 2019 Judicial Luncheon "A View from the Bench" with special guests U.S. Circuit Judge Adalberto Jordan, United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit; Judge Monica Gordo, Florida Third District Court of Appeal; and Chief Judge Bertila Soto, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. The event was held at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Coconut Grove, and it was very well attended by the judiciary and local practitioners. The moderators were Miriam S. Ramos, City Attorney for the City of Coral Gables, and **Javier Ley-Soto '05**, Legal Counsel for Miami Dade College. ❖

Clinical Program Informational Sessions

On September 11, at 12:00 p.m. in room A-111 and on September 12, 2019, at 12:00 p.m. in room 215, the Clinical Program Director will conduct in-depth information sessions; which are designed to increase understanding of the clinic placement opportunities, class requirements, and expectations from the student. Guest speakers may include former student interns. Students interested in patriating in the clinical program are encourage to attend one of the informational sessions. Dead line to submit the applications for the 2020 spring term is September 26, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. ❖

St. Thomas Law Students attend 2019 SEMJF

On July 19 and 20 St. Thomas Law students **Valeria Zerbo (2L)**, **Jonathan Kernizan (3L)** and Career Counselor **Laura Varela** attended the 2019 Southeastern Minority Job Fair. Held at the Atlanta Airport Marriott, SEMJF brings together public and private sector employers from all over the country and students from many different states to interview for law student summer associate and post-graduate attorney positions. A great learning experience and chance to interact with a variety of employers. Details on how to register for next year's job fair will be available in the Spring 2020 semester. Do not miss out! ❖

CABA Membership Reception

On July 17, 2019, the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) held a Membership Reception at Bachour in Coral Gables with special guest Rodolfo "Rudy" Ruiz, U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida. The event was hosted and led by CABA's current president alumna **Frances Guasch de la Guardia '88**. Frances is a Partner at Holland & Knight in Miami. Other St. Thomas Law attendees were: **Oliver Ruiz '01** Partner, Malloy & Malloy, P.L. in Miami; **Javier Ley-Soto '05** Legal Counsel, Miami Dade College and Director for CABA; **Jose Rohaidy '17** Associate Attorney, Zumpano Patricios, P.A. in Coral Gables; and our very own **Lourdes Fernandez '02**, Assistant Dean for Career Development. ❖

2019 Robert Orseck Moot Court Competition

St. Thomas Law proudly competed in the 2019 Robert Orseck Moot Court Competition that took place on June 26-27, 2019, in conjunction with the 2019 Florida Bar Annual Convention at the Boca Raton Resort & Club in Boca Raton, Florida. The student competitors were **Marielys Concepcion** (3L) and **Antoinette Mederos** (3L) who advanced to the quarterfinal round of the competition where they lost to the team from Florida A & M Law School which went on to win the competition. **Arlene Williams** (3L) was the student coach of the team, and **Martha Diaz** (3L) and **Neil Harichand** (3L) were the team's research assistants. Adjunct Professor **Howard Blumberg** was the team's faculty coach. ❖

St. Thomas Law was the "First Runner Up" for the *Pro Bono* Champion Award



Public Sector Career Counselor **Sherea L. Randle**, Esq., attended the Florida Bar Convention (FBC) with the Florida *Pro Bono* Coordinators Association (FPBCA). The FPBCA promotes the delivery of legal services through *pro bono* programs, strengthens leadership in *pro bono* administration, professional development and technical support, and enhances communication between *pro bono* coordinators and the public. Sherea Randle, along with *Pro Bono* coordinators from around Florida, sat at the FPBCA booth to provide attorneys with information on how to participate with their local legal aid organizations to provide *pro bono* service to their communities. In addition, the winner of the Spring 2019 Florida *Pro Bono* Law School Challenge was announced at the FBC, and St. Thomas University School of Law received the *Pro Bono* Champion Award for being "First Runner Up." St. Thomas Law came in second place for matching the most students with alumni on *pro bono* cases. Great work St. Thomas Law. ❖

Florida Bar Association Student Division Boardroom Lunch

On June 19, 2019, the St. Thomas Law FBA Student Division held its first ever boardroom luncheon. The event was held at Holland & Knight in Miami; guest speakers were St. Thomas Law alumni **Brett A. Barfield** '99, Partner with Holland & Knight, and **Jorge R. Escobar** '07, Senior Counsel with Holland & Knight. Messrs. Barfield and Escobar spoke about their legal paths, remaining active in organizations, and the importance of networking. ❖

Alumni(ae) News

Gabriela Hidalgo, a 2018 graduate, recently accepted a new position as an Associate Attorney with Reifkind, Thompson & Rudzinski, LLP in Fort Lauderdale, specializing in P.I. Pre-Litigation & Comm. Lit.

Elizabeth Irazabal, a 2018 graduate, recently accepted a new position as an Assistant Public Defender with the Broward Public Defender's Office.

David Jimenez, a 2018 graduate, recently accepted a new In-House Counsel position with Columbus Capital Lending in Kendall.

Idelys Martinez, a 2018 graduate, recently accepted a new position as an Associate Attorney with Marin, Eljaiek & Lopez, P.L. in Miami, specializing in First-Party Litigation.

Ana Ruffin, a 2018 graduate, recently started her own law firm, Ruffin Alvarez Law, P.A. in Miami.

Julialeida Sainz, a 2018 graduate, recently accepted a new position as an Associate Attorney with The Law Office of Alex A. Hanna, P.A. in Miami, specializing in Immigration Law. ❖

Faculty Announcements

Adjunct Professor **Maggie Abdo-Gomez** will be appearing on the "Ante Usted" show to be broadcast on September 8 on WLRN, a PBS station. She will be discussing tax and bankruptcy issues. ❖



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