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COLAW news Winter 2008

FAMU College of Law

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COLAW news

The Newsletter for FAMU College of Law Alumni and Friends



Welcome to the first issue of the Florida A&M University (FAMU) College of Law alumni newsletter, COLAW news.

This is the official communications vehicle of the newly formed FAMU College of Law Alumni Council and Alumni Alliance. With nearly 400 recent graduates of the reestablished College of Law, it is imperative that we develop a structure to effectively coordinate the activities and programs that will help you become the best attorney, business leader, or community organizer that you can be. Our goal is to provide our alumni and friends with information that will prove helpful to their legal and professional aspirations, and to provide linkage to the law school.

The COLAW news will be a quarterly publication distributed directly to alumni via email and posted on the law school's website, www.famu.edu/law. Through the newsletter, we'll share highlights of law school activities, promote upcoming events, and detail the latest news on the career and personal achievements of our graduates.

To effectively communicate alumni news, we need to hear from you. We want to hear about what our alumni are doing in the legal arena and in the broader community. We want to learn how the FAMU College of Law can help our alumni. We want to know how alumni might want to help the law school.

So, whether you are a graduate of the original College of Law, the reestablished College of Law, or you are an attorney who received an undergraduate degree from FAMU, we welcome you to the FAMU College of Law Alumni Alliance. We invite you to browse the newsletter and let us know what you think. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
LeRoy Pernell, Dean

Off to a Grand Start...

College of Law Alumni Alliance and Council hit the ground running with events and activities for graduates

It's official. A core group of recent graduates met recently to form the Florida A&M University College of Law Alumni Council and to plan the larger umbrella organization, the Alumni Alliance.

The Alumni Council is the official alumni advisory board for the law school, serving as the liaison between the College of Law and the Alumni Alliance. The Council is the primary vehicle through which alumni will communicate their ideas, questions and concerns to the school. The Alumni Council will direct and conduct the business and affairs of the Alumni Alliance; advance the goals and objectives of the Alumni Alliance; assist the College of Law in recruiting, career networking, and fundraising; and provide members with an opportunity for professional development and networking.

The mission of the broader Alumni Alliance is to assist, advance and promote the educational mission of the Florida A&M University College of Law. Its purpose is to enhance communication between and among the College of Law community, alumni and friends; participate in and support recruitment



Holiday Party at Ember

FAMU College of Law Alumni Shannon Ligon ('08) (center) and Alvin Benton ('07) (right) participated in the 2008 Holiday Party at Ember, which was sponsored by the Alumni Alliance and Council and the Ligon Law Group.

and other student activities; foster lifetime involvement and commitment to the College of Law; and contribute to the financial stability of the College of Law.

While the Alumni Council is still in the developmental stages, organizers are already busy planning programs and activities for fellow graduates. A holiday networking party was held in December in downtown Orlando and a survey is being conducted to plan continuing legal education programs for 2009.

Current volunteer members of the Alumni Council are **Kalestine Butler**, class of 2008; **Cynthia Conlin**, class of 2006; **Kamilah Jolly**, class of 2007; **Shannon Ligon**, class of 2008; **Alicia Peyton**, class of 2007; and **Wyntress Patterson**, class of 2009. The group is seeking additional members, especially alumni located outside of Central Florida.

If you are interested in serving on the Alumni Council, please contact **Claudine Beale**, Assistant Director of Development and Alumni Affairs via e-mail at claudine.beale@famu.edu or phone (407) 254-3266.

The Honorable Perker Meeks, Jr.

Judge Perker L. Meeks, Jr. was born the sixth child of a farming family in Tallahassee, Florida in August of 1943. His commitment to equal rights for all persons was forged in his youth. At the age of 16, Meeks and other African Americans sat on the pavement in the front of the local five and ten cents store in protest of its segregated lunch counter. Local law enforcement officers responded with physical force which resulted in a permanent scar on the back of his head. His later efforts on school campuses to dismantle racism resulted in civil rights litigation that went to the United States Supreme Court.

Meeks received his Juris Doctor from Florida A&M University (FAMU) College of Law in 1968 after an undergraduate tenure that included playing varsity basketball as captain and forward for the Rattlers, and earning his undergraduate degree in political science and history in 1965. He was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1969 and the California Bar in 1971, distinguishing himself in the San Francisco Public Defender Office for seven years, trying hundreds of cases and serving as Head Trial Attorney. He was appointed to the San Francisco Municipal Court by Governor Edward G. Brown, Jr. on January 18, 1980 and was elevated to the rank of superior judge in 1998, serving with distinction as Assistant and Presiding Judge of the Municipal Court, receiving honors and recognition by the California Trial Lawyers Association, the Charles Houston Bar Association, the Asian American Bar Association, and the California Judges Association.



Meeks, who is the father of Perker L. Meeks, III and Alicia Meeks, has carried a passion for music and sports, particularly basketball, as evidenced in his Rattler days, and has served with the Jewish Community

Center's "San Francisco Fog", Huster and Schneider LLP, and the Charles Houston Bar Association's "Chocolate Bar", to name a few community teams. He has also served his community, volunteering many hours helping young people, serving on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Pretrial Project, and the San Francisco General Hospital Volunteers, as Vice-President of the Archbishop Riordan Athletic Program and the Paradise Baptist Church County Jail Project, and teaching social studies and history at St. Michaels Catholic summer school program. Meeks retired from the bench in 2006.

Dr. Shawn Robinson

For some reason, things have always seemed to "add" up for **Dr. Shawn H. Robinson**. He has received numerous awards and honors throughout a career that included a constant pursuit of degrees. Among those awards are the Phi Theta Kappa Florida Region Distinguished Advisor Award (2002); the Robert Giles Phi Theta Kappa International Distinguished Advisor Award (2001); Phi Theta Kappa Professor of the Year (1997-98); Paragon Phi Theta Kappa International New Advisor Award (1998); three time selection to Who's Who Among America's College Teachers (1996, 2003, 2004) and twice selected among the top 100 Outstanding Black Americans in Central Florida by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., (2000, 2002).



Robinson joined Hillsborough Community College (HCC) as President of the Ybor City Campus in September 2007. Prior to that he served 15 years at Valencia Community College (VCC) on its East Campus in various capacities (adjunct Mathematics Professor, tenured Mathematics Professor, LRC Director, Academic Assistant to the Provost, and Dean of Social Sciences and Physical Education. In addition to teaching Mathematics, Mathematics Education,

and Student Success classes, he served as Phi Theta Kappa advisor and Florida Phi Theta Kappa Webmaster.

Dr. Robinson holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics Education (1991), a Master of Education degree in Mathematics Education (1994), and a Doctor of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction (1998) from the University of Central Florida. He completed a Juris Doctorate degree at Florida A&M University in December 2005. As a FAMU Law student, he was the recipient of the Percy R. Luney Spirit of Service Evening Student Award in 2003.

As president of HCC, Robinson leads nearly 12,000 students who attend classes on the 15-acre campus located in the heart of Ybor City's entertainment and historical district.

Robinson lives in Lakeland, midway between his family in Orlando and the HCC campus in the Tampa area.

Alumni Class Notes

Class of 2005

Rosalyn Dunlap is hosting “Legal Talk with Attorney Rosalyn Dunlap,” a radio show that airs on 1680 AM in Orlando. Concentrating in Bankruptcy, she runs Rosalyn Dunlap Attorney at Law in Orlando.

Trinetta Fisher Lyons, assistant general counsel with the Florida Board of Bar Examiners in Tallahassee, was featured in a photograph in the Sept. 1, 2008 edition of *Jet* magazine along with her husband Jarian Lyons as they celebrated their nuptials. Jarian Lyons, a member of the Class of 2006, is an attorney with Parks & Crump, LLC in Tallahassee.

Carlos Woody, formerly Assistant General Counsel for the Orlando Utilities Commission, has been named Associate General Counsel for OUC.

Class of 2006

D. Scott Baker is an attorney with the Zimmerman Kiser Sutcliffe Attorneys of Orlando.

Christopher Monts has opened Christopher Monts, P.A., in Lake Mary. His firm focuses on Bankruptcy.

Class of 2007

Warren Channell has opened the Channell Law Firm, P.A. in Winter Garden. His firm focuses on Business and Family Law.

Kamilah Jolly has opened Jolly Esquire PLLC in Winter Park. Her firm specializes in Bankruptcy Law.

Eurilynne “Nieci” Williams has opened the Law Office of Eurilynne A. Williams in Fern Park. Her firm focuses on general practice law.

Class of 2008

Patrice Featherstone has accepted a position as Associate General Counsel for Modern Business Associates in St. Petersburg.

Shannon Ligon has opened the Ligon Law Group in Orlando specializing in Personal Injury, Entertainment and Business Law.

Juan Carlos Montes de Oca opened the Montes de Oca Law Group LLC in Tampa. His firm focuses on Immigration Law, Insurance Law, Estate Planning, Wills and Trust, Business Law and Family Law.

What’s Happening at the College of Law

Stopped by 201 Beggs Avenue lately? If not, then you’ve missed some of the physical changes taking place at the FAMU College of Law.

At the start of the Fall 2008 semester, the Center for International Law and Justice (CILJ) opened on the third floor of the Law Library. Developed and directed by **Dr. Jeremy Levitt**, Associate Dean for International Programs and Distinguished Professor of International Law, the CILJ seeks to develop scholarly, educational, and practice-oriented activities, and



Dean LeRoy Pernell and Facility Director Lolyd Glenn inspect the new FAMU Café in the Student Lounge.

evolve into the nation’s leading center of excellence in research, training and advocacy in the international and comparative law of developing nations.

Later in the Fall semester, the law school opened FAMU Café. Located in the student lounge area of the first floor, the kiosk-styled eatery features Panera Bread items, including wraps and salads; as well as home-cooked hot items, such as soups; and Starbucks coffee. Operated by Sodexo, the Café also offers soft drinks, health bars, and

snacks for students on the run. The Café is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. when class is in session.

Next on the agenda is the College of Law Bookstore, which will open in January 2009. For the first time, law students will have an opportunity to purchase their books on site as well as to buy other materials and FAMU paraphernalia. The bookstore will be operated by Barnes & Noble and will be located on the first floor of the law school in the Legal Clinic.



Supporting Graduates

College of Law Alumni welcomed graduates at the 2008 Spring Hooding Ceremony in Kissimmee. Pictured are Alvin Benton ('07), Chaundi Randolph ('06), Natalie Randolph ('06), Trinetta Lyons ('05), Jarian Lyons ('06), Timothy Dave ('06), and Anthony Thomas ('07).



First CLE Alumni Event

College of Law Alumni attended the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Alumni event in February, which featured J.R. Phelps (center), Director of the FL Bar's Law Office Management Assistance Service. Professor Joan Bullock (fourth from left) helped organize the event.



2008 Swearing-In Ceremony

College of Law Alumni took the Oath of Admission for the first time in the Ceremonial Moot Courtroom at the law school in September 2008. The Honorable Belvin Perry, Chief Judge Ninth Judicial Circuit, officiated the event for the 21 participating graduates and their families.



Law School Classic Tailgate

College of Law alums Jarian Lyons ('06) and Anthony Thomas ('07) pose with Claudine Beale, Assistant Director of Development and Alumni Affairs, and coordinator of the FAMU Alumni Alliance, while attending the 2nd Annual College of Law's Classic Open House and Tailgate event in November 2008.

FAMU College of Law Spring 2009 Events

FEBRUARY 24 - 25
Florida Bar Exam (Tampa)

FEBRUARY 27
Minority Law Day

APRIL 8
Fifth District Court of Appeal
Oral Arguments

MAY 3
University Commencement
(Tallahassee)

MAY 16

Law School Hooding Ceremony
Walt Disney Hollywood Studios



COLAWnews

If you would like to be featured in the Alumni Spotlight section, have announcements or story ideas for the COLAWnews, please contact the College of Law's Office of Development at (407) 254-3266 or email claudine.beale@famuedu with information and suggestions, or inaccuracies in reporting.