

PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE→



UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
LEVIN COLLEGE *of* LAW

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

AGENDA

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WELCOME

Interim Dean Merritt E. McAlister

PAST

Heritage of Leadership Inductees

- Russell W. Divine (JD 80)
- Karen C. Dyer (JD 87)
- Patrick G. Emmanuel (JD 46)
- Richard W. Ervin III (JD 60)
- Steve J. Uhlfelder (JD 71)
- John G. White III (JD 83)

PRESENT

Alumni Award Recipients

- Outstanding Public Service Award
- UF Law Distinguished Service Award
- Outstanding Recent Alumni Award
- Outstanding Alumni Award

FUTURE

Class of 2025 Awards & Recognitions

CLOSING

Interim Dean Merritt E. McAlister

RECEPTION

*Please join us for
post-ceremony
refreshments.*

WELCOME

Dear Graduates and Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the Levin College of Law, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2025 Past, Present, and Future Awards Ceremony. Tonight, we celebrate the legacy of those who came before us, honor the leaders of today, and recognize the promise of our newest alumni, the Class of 2025.

We begin by honoring our **Heritage of Leadership inductees**—six remarkable individuals whose contributions have left a lasting mark on UF Law. Their commitment to excellence and service laid the foundation we continue to build upon. Their legacies inspire us all, especially our graduates, as they embark on their own professional journeys.

We are also proud to present the **UF Law Alumni Awards**, which honor distinguished Gator lawyers who exemplify the highest standards of leadership, service, and professional excellence. These individuals have made meaningful contributions to the legal field and to their communities, and we are proud to recognize their achievements. You'll find more about each of this year's exceptional honorees inside the program.

And finally, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the **Class of 2025**. Tomorrow, we will celebrate each of you as you cross the stage and officially join the ranks of our alumni family. We are deeply proud of all you've achieved and look forward with excitement to the mark you will make on the world.

Thank you for joining us in honoring the enduring spirit of UF Law—shaped by our history, strengthened by our people, and carried forward by the next generation of leaders.



Merritt E. McAlister
Interim Dean
Levin, Mabie & Levin Professor of Law

HERITAGE OF LEADERSHIP



RUSSELL W. DIVINE

(JD 80)

A lifelong Gator fan and Double Gator, Divine graduated from UF Law in 1980. During his undergraduate years, he was President of Florida Blue Key and Treasurer of the Student Body. He was a founding partner of Divine and Estes, where he served as a Partner until he

retired. Throughout his legal career, Divine was active in many leadership roles including President of the Orange County Bar Association and Florida Bar Association's Board of Governors. He was most gratified in his role as a Board Member of the Heart of the City Foundation and organizing youth programs.



KAREN C. DYER

(JD 87)

Dyer was a highly regarded trial lawyer whose passion and skill was known nationally. A Double Gator, Dyer graduated from UF Law in 1987 and went on to clerk for U.S. District Court Judge G. Kendall Sharp. After working with Carlton Fields, Dyer became a founding and the first female

partner of Boies, Schiller and Flexner, and more recently became a shareholder of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP. Her relentless preparation, wit, and courtroom determination established her as one of the top female trial lawyers in the country.



PATRICK G. EMMANUEL

(JD 46)

Emmanuel grew up during the Great Depression. In 1940, he received his bachelor's degree in business administration from UF. After two years at UF Law, he served in the U.S. Army and fought in Europe during WWII. He was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious achievement

in the Battle of the Bulge. He completed his law degree and joined a law firm that became Emmanuel, Sheppard and Condon. He was President of The Florida Bar and was awarded The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award. He was also President of the Florida Bar Foundation and received the Medal of Honor. Emmanuel, age 104 at his death, was a well-respected attorney with a strong faith and sense of duty.



JUDGE RICHARD W. ERVIN III

(JD 60)

Judge Ervin was the son of Richard W. Ervin, Jr. who was Florida's attorney general and a Florida Supreme Court justice. Following in his father's footsteps, Judge Ervin graduated from UF Law in 1960. He began his distinguished public service career as an assistant U.S.

attorney, then was appointed by Governor Farris Bryant to serve as Big Bend's first public defender. He was elected as a judge on the First District Court of Appeal in 1977 and retired as its longest-serving judge. After his retirement from the court, he went into private practice working on workers' compensation appeals. Judge Ervin was known for his scholarly and well-reasoned decisions, and was well-respected throughout the legal community as an outstanding jurist.



STEVE J. UHLFELDER

(JD 71)

A Double Gator, Uhlfelder graduated from UF Law in 1971. He gained experience at prestigious Florida law firms before opening his own firm in Tallahassee in 2003 as an attorney and lobbyist. Throughout his career, Uhlfelder was sought after by

Florida governors, U.S. presidents, and political leaders for his leadership and advocacy. Among his many leadership roles, Uhlfelder was most proud of his work that impacted underprivileged children and families. His exemplary example of public service will continue to inspire those knew him.



JOHN G. WHITE III

(JD 83)

White, a Pensacola native with a passion for water sports, was Gray Robinson's West Palm Beach managing shareholder. He graduated from UF Law in 1983 and clerked in West Palm Beach before taking the bar. He began his legal career with Levy, Shapiro, Keen and Kinkade, and

later expanded his practice by joining other prestigious law firms before coming to Gray Robinson in 2017. He was a leader in both the county and state bars serving in every elected position of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, as the 60th President of The Florida Bar, and on Florida Bar's Board of Governors. He was also active in the ABA House of Delegates and National Conference of Bar Presidents. He was known as a lawyer with the highest integrity, both personally and professionally.

ALUMNI AWARDS

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

JUDGE PATRICIA BARKSDALE (JD 96)



Nominated to serve by President Barack Obama, Judge Barksdale was appointed federal magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida and has served on that court since 2013. She also served as law clerk to U.S. District Judge Timothy Corrigan and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Emmett Cox. Prior to the courts, she was Counsel to CSX Transportation. Judge Barksdale earned her B.A. and J.D. from UF, and serves as a member of the Law Center Association.

TIMOTHY “TIM” CERIO (JD 95)



Cerio is the President, CEO, and Executive Director of Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. He previously served as General Counsel to Florida Governor Rick Scott. In addition, Cerio was appointed to the State University System Board of Governors in 2017, and was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission. He was also a member of the Florida Constitution Revision Commission. Cerio earned his B.A. and J.D. from UF, where he serves as a member of the Law Center Association.

OUTSTANDING RECENT ALUMNI AWARD

JENNIFER DWECK (JD 17)



Dweck is a finance associate in the New York office of Latham & Watkins, and is a member of the Banking Practice with a particular focus on acquisition financings. She holds a B.A. from the University of Michigan, and earned her J.D. from UF Law, where she also serves on the Law Alumni Council, volunteers her time to mentor students, and has taught as a compressed course instructor.

IESHA NUNES (JD 16)



Nunes is an associate at White & Case LLP. She represents multinational technology companies in international disputes and advises on global regulatory developments that impact their businesses and products. Her practice focuses on issues such as data protection, privacy, and security. She previously served as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Paul C. Huck. A triple Gator, Nunes earned two bachelor's degrees and her J.D. from UF.

UF LAW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

ELLEN BELLET GELBERG (JD 76, LLMT 77)



After earning her J.D. and LL.M. in Tax from UF Law, Gelberg went on to become a partner of the Miami law firm Lamont Neiman Interian & Bellet, P.A. In 2008, she established the annual Ellen Bellet Gelberg Tax Policy Lecture Series at UF Law, bringing prestigious lecturers in tax policy to visit with students and faculty on campus to foster dialogue and debate about current tax policy issues.

GERALD “GERRY” ROSENTHAL (JD 73)



Rosenthal served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and with the Florida National Guard before returning to UF to earn his J.D. in 1973. He is the Founder of Rosenthal, Levy, Simon & Sosa Attorneys at Law, and is one of the most respected workers' compensation lawyers in the U.S. He has supported UF Law with major gifts, establishing the Gerald A. Rosenthal Chair in Labor and Employment Law in 2017, and in 2024, the Gerald A. Rosenthal Director's Endowment for the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Clinic.

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD

GREGORIO “GREG” FRANCIS (JD 94)



Francis earned his B.A. and J.D., where he was a Virgil Hawkins Fellow, at UF. After forming his own firm, Osborne & Francis, in 2018, he went on to lead the In Re Black Farmers Discrimination case, one of the nation's most notable class action cases, which resulted in a \$1.25 billion dollar settlement for black farmers and their descendants. In 2020, Francis helped launch the HBCU Pathway to Law Endowed Scholarship program at UF Law.

PEDRO MARTIN (JD 78)



Martin co-founded Terra in 2001 and has since grown it into a leading South Florida real estate firm with a \$5 billion portfolio, earning recognition such as the AIA's Developer of the Year Award. His career has focused on transforming key neighborhoods through community-focused development, drawing on his background in engineering, law, and business. In addition to his professional achievements, Martin is a dedicated civic leader and philanthropist, supporting major cultural and educational institutions in the region. Martin received his BSIE and JD from the UF.

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Class of
2025



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