

Stetson Law School.

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>>DARREN KETTLES: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome admitted students for fall of 2021. We appreciate you joining us today. Congratulations on your admissions and what has been a cycle with a strong applicant pool and strong interest in Florida's first law school. We feel fortunate that our applicants recognize the value and quality of a Stetson Law legal education.

My name is Darren Kettles. I am the Director of Admissions. I am joined today by Carmen Johnson, Director of Diversity Initiatives and Recruitment and a graduate of the College of Law in 2012. We are joined by the Dean, Professor of Law, Michele Alexandre, and we'll hear from our dean in a moment.

Our topic for today focuses on Stetson Law Alumni and network, of which we have over 7,000 alums. They are proud of their legal education and are in many parts of the country. Oftentimes our alumni play a large part in building networking opportunities that will assist our students while in law school, upon graduation, in helping launch first jobs, as well as continuing to be resources and support as your professional careers evolve.

I have had the great pleasure in what will be my 15th class to help enroll in Stetson, to watch the graduates do their legal careers and achieve professional success and opportunities. We have selected four of the prominent alums today to share the live screen to share their insights, advice and experiences that could benefit you as you embark on your legal education. We hope you find today's webinar helpful and informative.

Dean Alexandre joined in 2019. Prior to arriving at the College of Law, Dean Alexandre was an Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Intellectual Life, Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law. She also previously taught at the Universities of Memphis Cecile Humphrey's School of Law, American College of Law, the University of Houston Law Center and Seton Hall Cairo Summer Program. Dean Alexandre devoted much of her career to issues of sustainability, economic independence, gender equity and social justice issues. Dean Alexandre earned her BA from Collins Gate University and JD from Harvard Law School. Please join Dean Alexandre, and she will have a few remarks for all of you. Thank you, Dean.

>>DEAN ALEXANDRE: Good afternoon, everyone. I will not stand in the way of the wonderful engagement advice you will receive from the alum. First, welcome you. And I would like to thank for alumni partners, particularly as you know you will get to know them each all four of them are valued members. And attorney Kevin Iurato, the President of the Stetson Law alumni;

and Alexandria Lewis, attorney Ciara Willis and attorney Marissa Dunn. I named them because what I think one of the engagements that you will have today is that you will first get a taste of what it is to be part of this family. Stetson Law community and the Stetson lawyer is what we like to affectionately call a brand. We have a particular joy and what you young people call a swagger of what it means to have been trained here at Stetson. That means when we walk in a room we command attention by our professionalism, your skill, and depth of your practical training. It is because of our alumni that you see represented here -- 11,000 alumni rich -- reach across the nation and the world. I have traveled throughout the nation and I am in contact with alumni all over the world. We have an international program that also spreads the gospel of what Stetson can do. You will find yourself in great company in being able to tap into those resources. And more than ever, in the changing world, keep abreast of what they are experiencing and connect with them about their own experiences in law school.

We have a great alumni mentorship program, where you get partnered with individual Stetson alum and they get to tell you about courses, etc. Because they are as committed to us in giving you the training that will help you compete for the world. I am sorry. I can't be a fly on the wall. But it is better that I am not a fly on the wall in the discussion, because they'll tell you all of the nooks and crannies. I welcome you to continue this engagement. Once you are part of our community you never leave.

>>DARREN KETTLES: Thank you, Dean Alexandre. I know this has been a really challenging year and we really have been so pleased with your leadership in getting us there this challenging time at the College of Law. Our current students last matriculating class has had a 1L class mostly entirely in person thanks to your leadership and that. Thank you for your words. And we will now move on to introducing the panelists that we have today. I have had the great opportunity to get to know many of them over the years.

So there's four panelists today. Thank you again for joining us, Kevin Iurato. Mr. Iurato received the magna cum laude -- graduating first in his class -- and a BA from James Madison University in 1996. While at Stetson, served as an assistant article editor of the Law Review and intern to Susan Bucklew, Federal District Court Judge. Focused areas in business transactions and contracts, business law, securities, recapitalization and restructurings, employment law, franchise law and marketing and advertising law.

Ciara Willis is a -- graduated cum laude, with the JD in 2016. While at Stetson Law, editor in chief on the Journal of International Aging Law and Policy. Received her BS in finance and applied economics cum laude in 2013 from Florida Law State University. Associate of Bush Ross and focuses on civil litigation in state and federal courts, primarily in businesses and contract disputes, condominium associations, homeowner associations, real estate and employment and other general commercial litigation matters.

Marissa Dunn. She is from Atlanta, Georgia. Attended Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Graduating cum laude in Stetson in 2017. While at Stetson, heavily involved in the Moot Court

Team, winning awards for Stetson in the New York City Bar Regional and competing against 180 other law schools. Involved in the Honors Program and served as a guardian ad litem child advocate in the St. Petersburg community. As a law student interned for a federal judge -- and interns with an Atlanta area prosecutor's office, trying five cases as lead prosecutor after her second year of law school. Upon graduation, moved back to Atlanta and clerked for DeCalb County Superior Court. Assisted handling everything from murders to election day lawsuits and violation of Georgia election law and everything in between.

Alexandria Lewis attended the University of Florida for undergraduate education. Graduated in 2012 cum laude and received a bachelor of arts in political science. Attended Stetson from 2012 to 2015. During her time at Stetson, she was a research and writing teaching assistant, a student ambassador involved in the Student Bar Association as a representative and parliamentarian and was the vice president of BALSAs. A member of both Stetson's Trial Team and the Dispute Resolution Board. Ms. Lewis was admitted to the Florida Bar in the spring of 2016. Currently works at the Miami Dade attorney as an assistant state attorney. Prosecuting mostly capital cases involving homicides and sexual batteries.

I would like to remind all of the attendees today to feel free to post questions in the Q&A of the platform here, and we will reserve time at the end of the presentation to take questions. But please feel free to post them now. All of our panelists are highly involved and have accomplished careers and happy to share that with you today.

Carmen, the floor is yours. So please engage your panelists. Thank you.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Of course. And thank you so much, Darren, for the wonderful intro. And yes, our esteemed alumni that we have here on the panel have fantastic bios. We encourage our admitted students to learn more about them and we look forward for this opportunity to engage directly with the alumni, many of whom can relate to entering law school at some point. This is going to be a wonderful opportunity for you to get insights.

Yes, if you go down to the bottom of the screen and click on the Q&A box, you can start typing your questions. And they look forward to chatting with you and to answering your questions and offering some sage advice.

So while we wait for your questions, we want to provide the opportunity for each of the alums to briefly introduce themselves more personally to each of you. And then also tell you about their pathway to law school, to their career. Also why they chose Stetson Law.

And so we are going to start with Kevin. And Kevin, feel free to take it away.

>>KEVIN IURATO: Thank you, Carmen. Thank you for having us -- it is a privilege to participate. It is an exciting time, but a difficult time. Lots of decisions that you have to make. Hopefully we can convince you how great Stetson is here today. So kind of going through my path to Stetson. I am from the Northeast. And I moved to Florida to get away from gray winters. This was before I knew I was going to go to law school. After my undergraduate studies, came down,

spent about a year down here, working in the Real World. Then decided I wasn't ready for that. I wanted to go back to school and go to law school. And just really what drove me to Stetson was the reputation in the community. At that time, anyone I would speak to about Stetson only had yet things to say. It carried a high reputation amongst practicing lawyers and just the business community in general. It seemed like a no-brainer. Since I already moved the year prior to come down here, and gave me an opportunity to stay in the area and practice here. And so I am a corporate transactional attorney. My career -- I kind of spanned all of the different things you can do as a corporate transactional attorney. Upon graduating law school, I went to work for a Florida law firm, basically throughout the State of Florida law. Fairly large. A couple of hundred attorneys. Moved on from there to a national and international law firm that had thousands of attorneys. Spent time working there as a transactional business lawyer. From there I went to work for two companies as in-house counsel -- a general counsel for one, assistant general counsel for the other. I have about seven or eight years of in-house counsel experience. Happy to answer any questions there maybe today about what it is like to be an in-house attorney. It is very different from being an outside practicing attorney. For the past eight years or so working with my wife in our own firm. Really I have gone big firm small firm and in-house. So pretty diverse range of experience.

I have to say that again, I think I explained why I chose Stetson previously. About reputation. That's played out in my 20 plus year career. It's noticeable. And I have worked with a lot of attorneys from a lot of different areas, a lot of schools. And Stetson lawyers never let you down. And they uphold that high reputation. With that, I think I'll pass it back to Carmen.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Of course. When you speak of reputation and everything, I remember being a student, Kevin, and seeing you quite often at networking events and panels and presentations. Might not remember me, but definitely good to see you and your wife. Quick question: Did you and your wife meet at Stetson or prior?

>>KEVIN IURATO: At orientation our first year. Yes.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Very nice. Fantastic. We all adore the both of you. Thank you again. Next I am going to go to Alexandria.

>>ALEXANDRIA LEWIS: Hi. Thank you, Carmen. I am very excited and grateful to be here today. As Kevin said, I am hoping that at the end of this we can convince you all how great Stetson is, because it truly is. Kind of unlike Kevin, I had some one of more conventional approach to law school. As soon as I was done with undergrad, I knew that I wanted to go to law school. So I headed straight to Stetson. I am from Florida. From South Florida, born and raised. I knew I wanted to stay within the state. And when I was researching law schools, I mean continuously Stetson came up as one of the most esteemed schools, especially in the state. It was almost a no-brainer for me as well. I knew this is where I wanted to go. And it's also a top advocacy school. After I got here and did the tour I was sold. When I started as a 1L I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do -- didn't know what kind of law to practice. But

Stetson gave me the tools and experiences to set me up for my path today. As I was able to do different things -- do Dispute Resolution Board, Trial Team. I learned that is kind of what I loved. And that is what drove me to my career today. And it was through my connections at Stetson that I got an internship down here in Miami and that led to all great summer experience. And ultimately turned into a job that I have today. It definitely set me up and gave me all of the tools that I needed for success. I couldn't be more grateful for my experience at Stetson.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you, Alexandria. When you came to campus to do your visit, do you remember anything in particular that stood out to you adds part of your visit?

>>ALEXANDRIA LEWIS: My ambassador. Still talk to her today. She gave me an -- I was sold on the sights. As soon as you see it you are sold on Stetson. When she was explaining to me how much of a small community it feels like when you are there, you shouldn't be intimidated to speak to another student or professor, work with faculty. That's the kind of feel that I wanted while I was in law school. Coming from such a big campus like University of Florida, I wanted something where I could feel that it was more tailored to me, as opposed to small fish in a big bowl I guess you could say.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Fantastic. Thank you for sharing. I know we all have our stories about that campus visit. I hope to be able to hear everyone else's input as well later. Our next person is going to be Ciara.

>>CIARA WILLIS: Thank you. It is so great to be here and to be able to talk with all of you. Congratulations on being admitted. It is very exciting. My path a little bit very but different. I always thought I wanted go to law school. But neither of my parents were lawyers and I had didn't know any lawyers. When I went to FSU for undergrad, I didn't know what I wanted to major in. I ended up picking ultimately finance and economics as a back-up plan in case I couldn't afford to go to law school. It didn't work out. I realized that wasn't for me. And thankfully it did work out. I ended up loving law school. I am also from Florida. And I got into UF, FSU and Stetson. Fortunate enough to get scholarships. I was very torn. So if any of you have having a hard time making a decision, you are at the right place to ask questions, I had a lot of questions. Darren Kettles does know that. Because I called him all of the time with all of my questions. And looking back it probably should have been a no-brainer. But when I started looking down to the differences between the schools and what would work for me, I kind of got wrapped up in the rankings. I didn't know much. But I started talking to people. Again came back to reputation is between lawyers and non-lawyers alike, they would also get very excited and be Oh, my gosh, Stetson they are amazing. Have a great reputation. But again kept coming back to rankings. I looked down to it and I went: Well what are the really ranked in and what makes sense for what I want? And when I started looking at what programs are ranked at all of the schools, I looked at Stetson and they were the top -- in the top of the research and legal writing. And advocacy. Those are the two things I really need. I don't know exactly what I am going to do as a lawyer. I know I want to be a lawyer. And what better way to set me up for

success? So that and the welcoming campus, I toured all of the schools and I really was impressed by the friendliness and -- obviously it is beautiful. I am a Florida baby, so probably didn't make as big of an impact, but it is gorgeous. I am very happy about it as well as the location in the Tampa Bay. I was able to through Stetson find so many internships and work experiences during law school, not just during the summer. Didn't have to move anywhere to get awesome work experience. That helped set me up for success for landing a job. I was able to build up my resume through different experiences. I interned for Judge Paul Huey, here in the 13th Circuit. And internship experience at Stetson at Banker's Financial, doing in-house counsel. Moved away to intern for the Florida Supreme Court with Justice P for a semester. What else did I do? Then interned for a year and worked at Raymond James as the in-house counsel. Those were amazing experiences that I really don't think I could have done without Stetson. And that set me up to get my first job with Dean Mead. A great law firm, over 50 attorneys. There was -- Melanie Griffin was my first boss. A speaker at Stetson. That's how I connected with her. Became a mentor for me. We stayed in touch. Helped with job search. One day she needed an associate and called many up. So it worked out really well. I did end up since moving she opened up a small office here in Tampa, and I wanted to be where were more socials. It was an easy transition over to Ross and I have enjoyed it. I think that answers the questions hopefully.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you so much for that insight. I learned something new. I didn't realized you did Supreme Court in Tallahassee. That is fantastic. Darren -- you talked about Darren so much. A lot of us love Darren. He's been an asset in integrate people into Stetson.

Throughout your experience you spent time in Tallahassee, Tampa Bay. Is there anything in particular about Tampa Bay that stood out to you?

>>CIARA WILLIS: I love Tampa. Going back a little bit, I grew up in Jenson Beach, Florida. Went to school in the panhandle. Family in Gainesville, near Jacksonville. I explored most of the state. I love Tampa. I think it is the best of everything in Florida. Easy to get anywhere in Florida. Not too far from Disney, which is awesome for those lovers. I love -- there's a great legal community here. It is a big city, but feels like a small community. I get to see my classmates. I get to go back to Stetson which is amazing. But there's really Tampa is a growing city. We have all of the champions right t now -- most of them. (LAUGHING). If you are into sports. And there's just so much to ditherer. And I really love it. I think out of everywhere probably no where else I'd rather be.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you so much so much for expanding on that. Good to hear you spent time in Tallahassee. I am from there. We love Tampa Bay of course. Certainly not least but of course we are going to have our last panelist introduce themselves. Marissa? Thank you for your patience go ahead.

>>MARISSA DUNN: Hello. My name is Marissa Dunn. As Darren said, I think I am the most recent graduate on the panel. Graduated in 2017. Mentor a few 1Ls. Things haven't changed too too much since I was there. I think I can speak to that. I had a past similar to Ciara's. No lawyers in my family. I didn't know any lawyers. But at some point in college I decided that I really wanted to go to law school. And I graduated a semester early from undergrad. To Darren's detriment, I made it my job and my extra semester to apply to tons of law schools and really like feel them out. Because I had felt that I picked a great undergrad and it was where I was supposed to do. I dependent put a lot of work into that. For this decision I was going to cross every T and dot over I. I applied to Stetson and heard about the program through the pre-law program and also it was near the beach. I am not going to lie. That was a huge factor in initially applying. But as I got into more and more schools I started having to narrow it down. I looked at overall rankings. I thought it was so important to get on these campuses. And let me tell you, after my tours, I was headed to the library, talking to students to get the real deal. And some of the things that you should think about are the culture of a school. If that makes sense. I visited some other schools that didn't have the kind of collegial environment that Stetson did. Everyone at Stetson wants you to succeed. I believe that. Your classmates do. Ciara was one of my mentors in law school. Shared her outlines with me.

After visiting certain other law schools and learning about -- one of them had a whole orientation day called "Don't be a Jerk." I thought: If you have to have an orientation day on that, that is probably not where I want to end up. So really I would encourage you guy to visit the law school and spend some time getting to notary, getting to know alumni and students that are willing to give you the tours and stuff like that. That that's where you are going to be for 3 years. Guess what, that is going to be your colleagues when you graduate. This is who you are going to be associated with.

I think Kevin talked about reputation. To me it started there. What kind of reputation am I going to have when I graduate? I will tell you Stetson has the reputation for producing excellent trial advocates, for producing very, very professional lawyers. Have a reputation for producing excellent legal researchers and writers. And if you look at them as a whole and also their stats, one of the things that surprised me was for a smaller school in comparison with the rankings their clerk ship placement rate was super-high. In the end I ended up deciding between emery with the scholarship and Stetson with a scholarship. It was really the way that felt at Stetson how supported I felt, I was able to meet professors ahead of time. I knew I was going to be the most successful lawyer I could be at Stetson with the training that I would be provided as well as the community that I would be provided. And that's what was most important to me. As you can see, me and Ciara and Alexandria and Kevin we are here today because we are part of that community. You are so fortunate to have been accepted into Stetson and get a taste of what it might be like to be a part of this community.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: All right. Thank you so much. And it is whenever we talk to our alums, we are always learning different things, new things, gaining new insights. It is always good to

Mary about your reasons for choosing Stetson and your pathway to law school. I know a lot of the admitted students can personally relate to some of the things that you shared and some of them have begun posting questions. We are going to dive right in. One of the questions is closely related to some of the things that you shared.

Our first question is from Andrea. Thank you for the first question. The question: How have the panelists personally used the alumni network to begin their careers and continue to advance into different positions?

I am going to start with Ciara. You touched on it briefly. But maybe expand. How have you used the alumni network to break into the legal career?

>>CIARA WILLIS: Sure. My first job came through a connection I made while I was at Stetson through one of the speakers. But what I have used and relied on is networking. I think is huge still today. And in finding your jobs and being able to have a solid network of other Stetson alumni is really invaluable. One of the things I would love to touch on is when I was thinking about transitions firms, I was able to still call back to Stetson Law and talk with their career services department. Have them review my resume, give me pointers, insight, advice. I ask a lot of questions. So for me that is really invaluable. I know that there's -- I've talked to other colleagues or friends Oh, my gosh we could barely talk to them when we were at law school much less call them now. I know that Stetson is a forever school. So they are there to help you get connected with the right people. If there's somebody at that firm -- undoubtedly they know somebody at that firm or office. And will be able to connect you, get advice and really help guide you to what might be the best fit for you. I think that Stetson is very helpful in continuing to advance my career in the different connections that I have been able to make.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you for mentioning career development and professional development now. A lot of the professionals in the office are quite a few Stetson alums. They have not only our network down pat, but then also the greater legal community network quite robust in terms of how to connect students. Thank you for asking. A great question.

I want to expand on that and toss it to Kevin briefly. I think this is a great opportunity to talk about SLAA. And share with the admitted students what is SLAA, that part of the alumni network concept; correct?

>>KEVIN IURATO: Correct. The Stetson Law Alumni Association -- SLAA -- a group of basically dedicated alumni who love Stetson and want to continue to support Stetson. And we are currently at about 18 or so members. What we do is we work fairly closely with the alumni development office. Also have contact with the career development office. And we meet regularly with the school. We are kept informed of the major events and significant happenings going on at the school. And then we help the school in terms of whether it is reaching out to alumni say attending alumni events, networking, social events, reaching out to alumni to encourage to remain involved and give back to the school, which is critical. And also work with career development to -- a lot of us are at firms we might be at big firms where we can help in

terms of placing students. We are out there and we know what is going on in the community. So we can help the career development office in that way and connect with students by doing things like social networking type events as well. And students can always reach us by looking to going to the office of alumni development, reaching out to them and trying to put them in touch with one of us if they wanted to speak with one of us personally or we've always participated in mentor programs. All sorts of ways in which we touch the school and help continue to support the school and do that on a regular basis.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you so much for that. Of course we get to engage with SLAA often as part of the alumni mentoring program. I believe someone mentioned they participated in the alumni mentoring program as an alum. Marissa. Thank you. You too, Ciara. Can you expand on how that process has been and how you work with the new student?

>>MARISSA DUNN: Sure. I think why I signed up for it has a lot to do with how I got my current job. I was looking to go to Atlanta and work out of state. So what I ended up doing was the Georgia Bar website has a filter to filter by law school. I filter by Stetson and e-mailed every alumni in the area, saying: I am Marissa, looking to move back. How did you make the transition? Let me tell you, I got so many responses. From a cold e-mail. And one of the responses was from Judge Berry, who is my current employer. Hiring and she said send me your resume. I still keep in touch with a lot of the alumni that reached back out to me. That is part of my network here, my community. It is a very strong network, even if it is people that you haven't met. These were cold e-mails and got my current job out of it. That's part of the reason why I wanted to sign up to mentor. Because to me it was so important to have someone to point you in the right direction. Particularly because I didn't have anyone in my family that was a lawyer. I didn't know how you were supposed to do it. When you were supposed to be doing stuff. So right now I am on my third -- I have had three mentis and we meet as often as they want me to. We talk about that in the beginning. They have been on Zoom lately throughout the pandemic. But they all have my phone number and text me if something comes up.

(FREEZE).

-- sign up for it to be accessible to you guys and to me that is a huge plus to have an alumni that has literally signed up to help you. I think that's a huge positive thing that Stetson started in the last couple of years. I know my mentees have gotten a lot out of it and kept in touch beyond that first year.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you so much for mentioning that. I know when the program started under Dean Alexandre we were expecting a nice robust response from alumni to volunteer to participate. But I don't think we were anticipating that robust of a response. So many volunteers to the point that we were trying to make sure that we had enough students to match with an alum. So it was a wonderful response. Thank you all for participating in that. We are going to go to the next question. Admits are asking wonderful questions.

From Isabela. Going to throw to Alexandria. Related to something that you mentioned during your intro. Isabela asks -- first comments I admire how successful you all have been in law school and beyond. Do you have any specific tips you can offer to incoming students for the first year of law school? And of course Alexandria you all have done so well, but can you expand on any tips about the first year.

>>ALEXANDRIA LEWIS: Sure I would be happy to and dovetail into something that Marissa was talking about. She mentioned alumni as mentors. You also want to try to find somebody within the law school that can maybe mentor you 2L or 3L. We have student ambassadors here for that specific purpose. In the hospital only the campus tours but also there to mentor you. I think that's important because you have somebody who is going through it at the same time and can give you kind of a fresh insight as to what you are going to be experiencing. That can be an invaluable experience. Especially when you are a 1L and you don't know what to expect. The first day when you walk into contracts you are what is going on here? It helps for somebody who is just been through it to kind of give you a guide post of what is going to be happening. As far as preparing for your 1L year, I would say right before you start law school, if you do have the opportunity to, take a break. Take the summer, take a little trip. Because when you start in law school it is going to be a completely different focus. You want to make sure that you are in the right head space to be tackling such a big task. Then as far as preparing for classes every day, you want to make sure that you do the prepared reading that the professors assign to you and read outlines and reach out to the people that have taken the class. Tips and tricks. Stetson is a collie y'all campus. You don't have to worry how not to be a jerk it is none of that kind of thing. I think you will find if you reach out to others that you will get very positive responses.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: For sure. I know getting ready for that first year of -- I love tip about connecting with your upper level students. That is all about the networking. Doesn't just stop with alumni and faculty, the upper level students. Marissa, you mentioned that Ciara shared outlines with you. That is fantastic. If you don't know what an outline is, contact the fantastic alums. They can share with you. Along the same concept, does anyone have any other tips -- raise your finger. Because they are currently admitted students and getting ready for the fall to start law school.

Any other tips to get ready for the 1L year? Kevin, please.

>>KEVIN IURATO: Just kind of follow a little bit on what Alexandria was saying. I would just say to students -- you are investing money, you are investing a lot of time into this. You should be prepared to buckle down and focus during that first year on just doing the best that you can do in your classes, sort of assimilating into law school. Developing those habits. Focusing on the details so by the time you get to your second year, you are going to know, you are going to have it down. You will understand how to take finals. You will know how to study for classes. You will be developing your writing. Start learning how to think and write like a lawyer. It really is important. From just a purely educational school perspective. Buckle down. At the

end of the day most of us are going to law school to further our careers or start a career. And the better you can do in school and the more involved you can be and sort of the better school resume you can produce, the better opportunities or more opportunities you are going to have when you leave school and that's the whole idea right? Give yourself opportunities. A law degree really opens up the world to you. And I think that's just what I would say to my first year going into school.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Uh-huh. Go ahead, Ciara. Thank you.

>>CIARA WILLIS: Other specific tips I have for your first year -- I know I would -- I was ambassador. I would have mentis every year. And say grades are very important. So focus on those your first year. Then make sure you are building your reputation. Because the people in your class are going to be your colleagues where your work or who you go to or going to see in court. So building your reputation from year 1 is really important. It will last you your entire lifetime. In addition to that, going back to the school work, at Stetson they have a department called "Academic Success." They are the ones that helped me figure out how to do my legal writing and get those skills down that I needed my first year. The professors are great as well. But the additional one-on-one, how do I write for this exam? I have the information, how do I translate that. It helped me improve my grades from fall to spring miraculously. It was just really sitting down and focusing on the basics your first year then build on and add to that and start getting involved in stuff after your get your basics down.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Yeah. Thank you for mentioning Academic Success. And thank you for your comments, Kevin, as well. I took full advantage of academic success while I was here at Stetson. They are a phenomenal team and really break it down for you. Of course this is somewhat related to the topic that we are discussing in terms of how to succeed in the 1L year. Talking about balance.

The next question from Kayleigh. Asking what is the best way to keep up with course work and maintain a healthy school life balance? Just because you made the face Marissa, I am going to toss it to you. See? (LAUGHING). I think that's such a great question. Thank you for the question, Kayleigh. You can start us out, Marissa, for sure.

>>MARISSA DUNN: Okay. My husband stayed in Georgia when I was in law school. And I am not going to lie. That helped a lot. I think compared to my other friends. I was thinking their spouses come home at 6:00 o'clock and done with their work. In law school you come home at 5:00 o'clock or whatever and from 5:00 to 11:00 you are still working and preparing for your next class. I will say that I did a lot of scheduling as a result. He would come every 6 weeks and I would work far enough ahead that I didn't have anything to do the weekend he was able to come to visit. But for me I was such a nerd and loved law school and moot court and all of those things so much that I didn't really want to do work-life balance. Work was my life because I loved it so much during law school. I loved my classmates professors, teammates. And I think that's important to make sure you pick the right place where somewhere you are

going to spend so much time doesn't feel like it is a burden to you. Because as Kevin touched on, to some extent it is what it is. You are going to have to buckle down and spending a lot of time doing it.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: And I think that of course that work life -- of course family too. Just balancing it all of course. And Alexandria do you have anything else you can add to that?

>>ALEXANDRIA LEWIS: Yeah. I would I to. I think it is very important to have a work-life balance. For me when I was in law school, I used to take breaks to go to the gym or see friends or just I needed some sort of disconnect from law school. And it helped me tremendously because when I took that break, my brain was able to re-focus on what I needed to be doing. So you definitely don't want to have your head in the books the entire time. Because you are going to burn yourself out so easily. So for some people I think it works better to treat law school like a job. Maybe from 9:00 to 5:00, those are your hours that you are working with. I don't know everybody has a different home life, family, kids, etc. You have to figure out what schedule works best for you. For me I am a night owl. So the 9:00 to 5:00 thing -- now I have a job. I have to 9:00 to 5:00 thing. While I was in law school, there would be nights where I was working 9, 10:00 o'clock, but that was because those were my peak study hours. You definitely have to learn what works for you. You definitely should set aside time to do a oh hobby or something else that is going to allow you some relief from law school. You might not be able to do that so much your 1L year. But once you eleven e learn what you need to be doing and master those skills you will be able to come up for air and do other things. You will also want to spend your time off working with your other colleagues maybe grabbing coffee with them etc. Like Ciara said, these are the networks and connections that going to working with -- you want to have a good reputation things like that. That is what I would suggest.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: That's perfect advice. Your networking is also your support system. I think this brings up a wonderful opportunity for Ciara of course. Can't forget she is active with the Florida Bar, along with the other alums as well. Can you talk about that and wellness not only in law school but even beyond law school with the Florida Bar.

>>CIARA WILLIS: Absolutely. I am on the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors. About 64 of us that represent the entire state of over 25,000 young lawyers that are here. But I also oversee the law school affiliates, which include all 12 Florida law schools. The Florida Bar is super-passionate about finding balance for young lawyers and students. Lawyers in general. We have a lot of tips. I will share a link in the chat for everyone just general health and wellness tips. They have CLEs, mental health help lines, which are available to students as well if you are a law school in Florida. You are able to call free of charge. There is a lot of great resources CLEs, tips and events right now we have the health and wellness olympics going on for the lawyers in Florida. There is a lot of good things to kind of focus on building in a meditation practice or running or doing whatever it is that really helps you release your energy and kind of be able to release that stress and be healthy and enjoy some fresh rare

-- whatever it is that you need to relax and help find balance in your day-to-day life. I will put that in the chat. And --

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Please do.

>>MARISSA DUNN: I forget to mention one thing. As often out of stater. I was so enamored that you would be at the beach from Stetson about 7 minutes. Although I did a lot of studying and reading I did almost all I of the reading at the beach. I had a beach chair that held highlighters and everything. I have to stay for you Florida people maybe that's not impressive to you. But for me I was able to go to the beach every day, every other day and get my work done there, that was very a big plus at Stetson to me. The relaxation and keeping your stress down.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Of course thank you for adding that. We have several admitted students who are not necessarily from Florida. We also as native Floridian who are in landlocked areas. I still marvel at the beach.

Of course we are moving on to the next question. We have a great question from Jill Ashley. I am going to paraphrase. This is specifically for you Kevin. Jill Ashley is asking: She is a CPA. And RIA. And she wants advice this is a common question from admitted students -- as to whether it is better to operate as an individual attorney -- I am thinking maybe she is thinking solo practice -- or is it better to be employed with the larger official or a larger organization maybe going you are now -- not solo, but in practice with your wife. But you were previously general counsel. The nuances of that.

>>KEVIN IURATO: Okay. Yes. I am not going to say either is better. Everyone has their open path. For me I am glad they worked at large law firms before working in my small firm now. The large law firm offers you some things -- when I say large, I even mean say a medium sized firm, with 20 or 10 attorneys. First of all you are a new attorney. You don't really know much. You know law school, you don't know much about practicing law. And to have other mentors and lawyers around you and people that you can walk down the hall and bounce ideas off of and ask questions is critical. One of the scariest things as a lawyer is not -- if you don't know what you don't know. So if you are presented with an issue and you don't even know what you should be thinking about. That's a problem right? It's great to have the mentor ship, the resources. I think when you are starting out, on your own is difficult in the beginning. You have to have -- you pay for research materials, West Laws of the world , practical law, which is what transactional lawyers use. This costs money. You have a firm you go there and you use it. You have firms, documents that you can start from. A lot of that is really beneficial when you are starting out. So I am very happy that I had my large firm experience. It made me a better lawyer. And allowed me to as a small firm to represent more sophisticated clients because I can do the same kind of work that you might find at a large firm. Because large firms tend to have big reputation, other a big for firm and going to get more sophisticated or larger clients or higher quality of work. If you have that experience you can take that to a smaller firm and

continue that on. I would say if you have the opportunity to work at the firm with other lawyers first, that owes probably good way to lay the foundation for your practice in the future.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: And thank you for answering that, Kevin. I think that's a great answer. Because we have talked about that concept of mentor ship and networking and what a fantastic opportunity for you to do that full time before we hang your own shingle. Thank you so much for that insight. We have Kevin you mentioned something about resources, access to resources. West Law. LexisNexis. Things like that. The next question is from James. Great question. He would like for us to talk about the library and other re-relates resources.

I think I would like to toss this to Ciara first. Yes, putting you on the spot. Where can you talk about -- I don't know if a lot of people realize, you have your experience with library in undergrad, what is that law school experience with the library? What role and how often did you use the library in the and the resources they provide.

>>CIARA WILLIS: I definitely love the library. I am a nerd. I loved them before but loved them at Stetson as well. I also loved that Stetson has two libraries. Because you could also go to the one over in Tampa, the Tampa campus that shares its space with the second DCA. So whenever I was in Tampa I also utilized that library as well to study or if I wanted to beat traffic come over early and study there or if I wanted to get away. I really enjoyed the library on campus. It is gorgeous. And there is a great places to study, great study rooms that you could reserve. Academic Success is right there too. Or it was when I was there.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Still is.

>>CIARA WILLIS: Lots of great resources all in one place. The librarians are very helpful too if you are trying to research and find something. Even really late. So I really did enjoy the very vast amount of resources. When I was on the Journal of International Aging Law and Policy, I was editor in chief of that journal. And when we would have to cite check all of the resources and all of the articles it was international authors a lot of the time. We were still able to get all of the resources and to be able to check those cites, which I think is pretty impressive in regards to how vast our library is in our online resources. Stetson in general -- I don't know if this is part of the question -- but in addition to academic success, I think I touched on the career services center is a fantastic resource that helped prep me for all of my interviews during law school and of course after with prep questions, resume review. All of those types of things. I am trying to think. There are some resources but it is hard to on the spot. Those are ones that stand out the most to me and I think make the biggest difference -- at least for me.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Of course. I know when people think of law school, there are some unknowns there. So sometimes it is those questions: How did you engage with the library can be as simple as that. Of course the library is 24/7. And they still offer the basic legal research tools LexisNexis, Westlaw that Kevin mentioned. Is for free to our students. Of course you get a little spoiled while here at Stetson. Once you leave that free account goes away. But at least that is a wonderful service that Stetson is able to provide to help you learn and grow in your research.

So we do have one remaining question. Ashley, I think this is a wonderful question that you have asked. Thank you so much for asking it. And I would love to have Alexandria start. Ashley is asking: Basically saying what attracted her most to Stetson is our mission to not just produce successful lawyers but moral and good lawyers. Right? In what ways has Stetson helped you provide justice to others and encouraged you to do the right thing? And of course Alexandria with your position as a state attorney is a great question to start out with. Then I will want to hear from Kevin as well.

>>ALEXANDRIA LEWIS: Absolutely. I am a prosecutor. So that's what I do every day. I seek justice for the victims and people of the state of Florida. My education at Stetson is what set me up for that. I did clinics here internships through Stetson. And the people that I was mentored by and the people that I surrounded myself were the ones who helped me develop that sense of what's right and what's moral. So that translated directly into my time at the state attorney's office and now when you are prosecuting such high level cases, it's the most important thing is that you need to be making sure that you are seeking justice and doing the right thing. And because I have such a good framework and moral compass makes it very easy to do. But I saw that question and I thought this is a great question.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Fantastic. Excuse me Ashley I held it towards the end. I think it is a fantastic question. Kevin, did you have anything you wanted to add. Ashley is talking about professionalism and how important it is at Stetson.

>>KEVIN IURATO: I can give you an example. In terms of the professionalism, when I was leaving law school, we would -- at that time you would clerk -- if you wanted to go to a big firm try to clerk for one of the firms over the summer. At that time these firms would hire 13, 14, 15 clerks for the summer program. It was a summer long job interview. P the firm I went to had about 13 or 14 of us. Four or five of us from Stetson. By the end of that summer, there were only 6 or so that got offers. Every Stetson student and one or two others. Students from Columbia Law School in New York, Ivy League, Emory, somewhere in Virginia -- people from all over. Again the professionalism was critical. We had people that lost the job opportunity that summer purely from a professionalism standpoint. To this day whenever I am in a matter, if I have a Stetson lawyer on the other side, it's immediately reassuring that I am going to be dealing with someone who understands professionalism, understands how to interact with other attorneys, understands how to be reasonable and reach practical solutions for the clients instead of just fighting for fightings sake because we are lawyers and we can. That is kind of -- I just -- it's never failed that Stetson's reputation on the professionalism every lawyer seems to exude that that I have run into. That would be all I would add on that I think.

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: Thank you so much for that. And I want to thank all of you for joining us for this panel. I want to thank all of the admitted students for your p fantastic questions.

And I am happy to toss it back to Darren. Wasn't this fantastic, Darren?

>>DARREN KETTLES: I always learn so much. I appreciated the responses. I do know that students are wondering these things. There are some students -- and Ciara and Marissa when they talked about not really having people in their family that were attorneys -- I remember when I first started at Stetson when we had Dean Dickerson there. When she talked about going to law school and came in William and Mary and never met an attorney never in a courtroom or any experience. We have a population at Stetson. Sometimes they are the first in their family to ever go to law school. But to see these attorneys who are all just upstanding and I have had the great pleasure of working with them all and helping them get into law school and helping them with their decisions.

I am a little bit biased. I think Stetson is the real deal and I hope all of you will as well. I do know that they have all just been great representatives and great alums. If you want to somehow connect with any of them, I know I have personal relationships with them all. I will be happy -- Carmen will be happy to connect you with any of them if you want to follow up. I always learn something. I am glad that you are part of our family here at Stetson. Because it makes me proud.

So thank you Carmen for all of the great questions. And from our students that were here in attendance as well. I just wanted to kind of wrap things up a little bit. If there's something that didn't get answered, by all means reach out to us. This is recorded, so we will be sending this out to all of our admitted students.

You do know that our seed deposit deadline of April 15th is coming up. I know a lot of you are trying to make these decisions. It is a big one. I am glad we are still in contention.

If you have heard from Ciara and Marissa, they identified their long list of schools they were looking at. And they chose Stetson, which I think is kind of a distinguishing part of your students -- the attrition rates remain low. People choose to be here. They have a lot of choices, like every one of our panelists today. I am happy to see that many of you are still looking at maybe selecting Stetson. April 15 the deadline.

April 14th is the last before the April 15th deadline, kind of the last virtual open houses before that. We will have other ones following that. On April 14th, Professor Lou Verelli is doing a presentation on how to get the most out of law school. It is a big hit. I am sure these panelists will talk about their experiences with Professor Verelli. He happens to be a favorite amongst the students. Always a great person to have present. April 14th. Be on the lookout for that invitation from our office.

In addition to that we will also have a virtual open house and Carmen worked diligently in creating and getting a multitude in a virtual format of all of the departments and centers on campus that you can visit with individuals and representatives from those individual areas.

In the interim you can reach out. We'll be happy to do that. We certainly hope you will join us there.

So Kevin, Ciara, Alexandria, Marissa, thank you again; carmen for the great moderation; and to our team in IT who does an exceptional job of keeping this without a hitch and all of that.

Reach out, we can answer anything. There's not much we haven't heard. Not much I haven't heard in almost 15 years at being at Stetson. I am happy to answer anything. Don't be afraid. I think our e-mail address -- if if you haven't gotten them already, I am sure you have been inundated from me and Carmen.

I think that was everything. Carmen anything else you want to say before we sign off? I think that is everything I had on my list. Great to have Dean Alexandre here as well. Wishing you well. I think that was everything. I tried to make sure I covered everything. Anything else, Carmen?

>>CARMEN JOHNSON: No. That was absolutely perfect. Thank you all.

>>DARREN KETTLES: Thank you for your time today and we value all of the good work that you are doing. Great to see that you are being a huge success with a Stetson legal education. Thank you all. Take care of yourselves. And reach out please. Thank you for your time today.

[END]