


**CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**C|J|LAW**  
 Cleveland-Marshall  
 College of Law



### A Special Message from Dean Lee Fisher


Special congratulations to our 2020 graduates. Just as you have learned from us, so too have we learned from you. You have worked very hard to earn the right to graduate from a law school of excellence and opportunity.

Whatever path you choose, value your integrity as your most cherished asset.

You have learned law. Now lead and live justice. We expect much of you because we believe in you.

We are your law school for life.

My best,



Lee

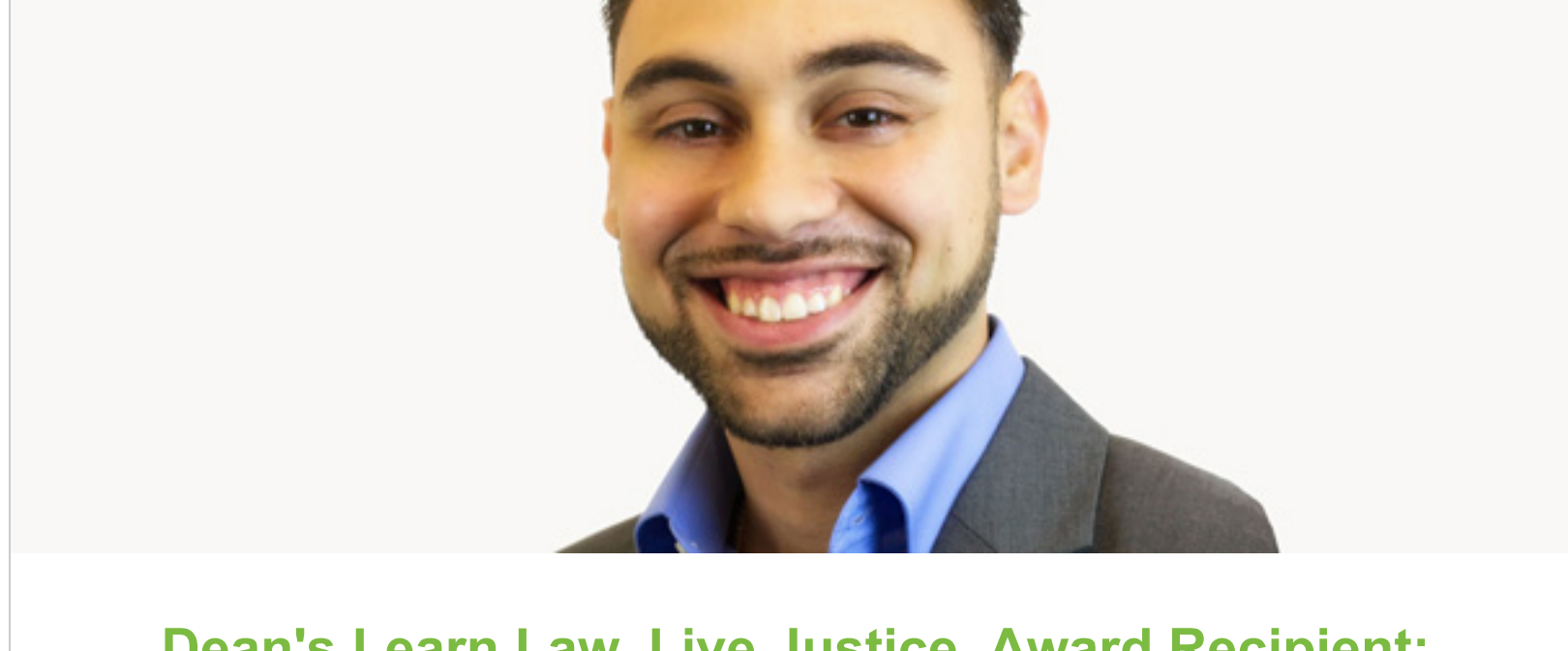
## Congratulations

### CSU C|J|LAW Class of 2020

**CSU C|J|LAW Celebrates the Class of 2020**

Congratulations to our CSU Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Class of 2020! Virtual Commencement will be held Saturday, May 30, 2020, at 1 p.m. and an in-person ceremony will be scheduled at a later date. In the meantime, we honor and celebrate the tremendous achievement of our outstanding graduates who have earned their degrees this year.

[Learn More >](#)



#### Dean's Learn Law. Live Justice. Award Recipient: Anthony Alto '20

Anthony Alto '20 graduated from Cleveland State University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and put his degree to use as an Election Recruitment Official with the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. In that role, he engaged in the community to recruit and train workers to assure quality and balanced elections. It was during that time, Anthony realized that in order to make the impact in the community that he truly wanted, he needed to acquire the skills and tools that come with a legal education.

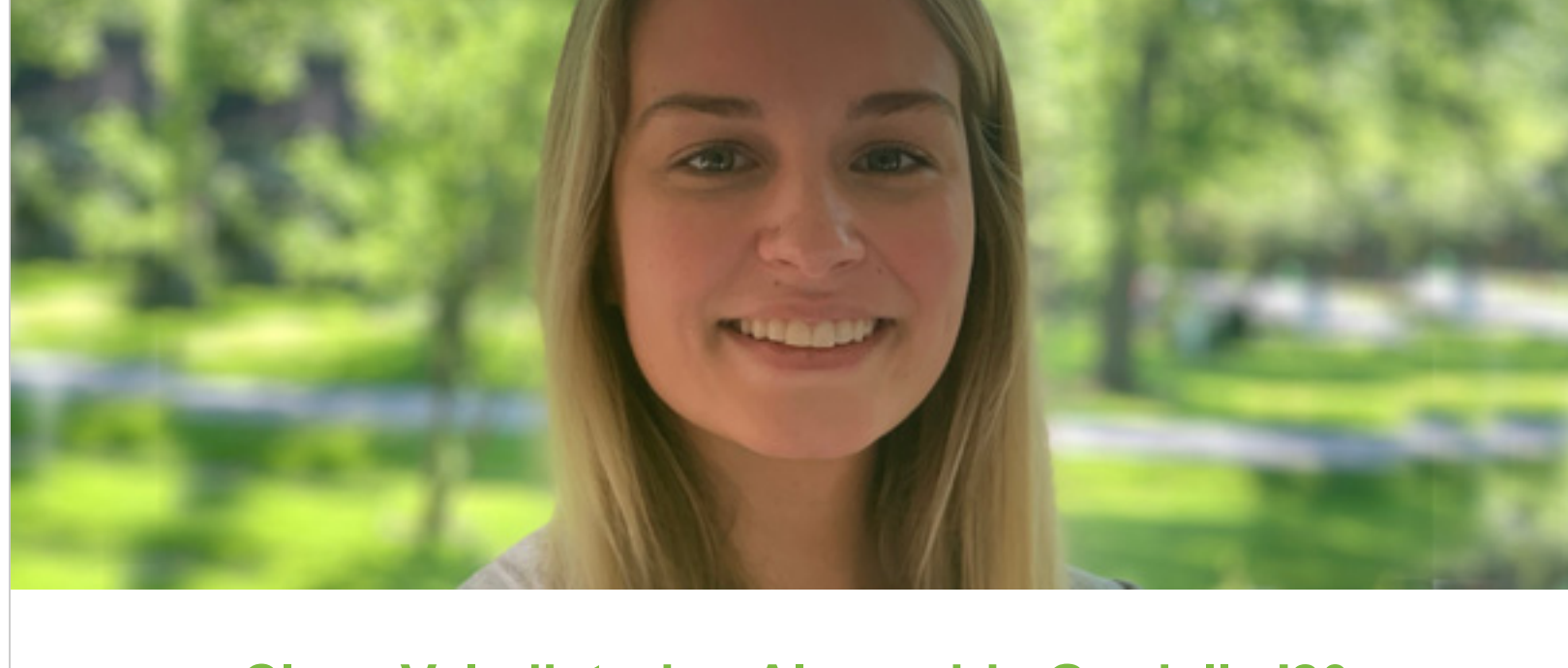
"When someone is hungry, most people can make them a meal to meet their needs," Anthony explained. "But when someone is getting evicted, only a few people can fight for them in court to keep their home. I want to be one of those few people."

Anthony returned to his alma mater to attend CSU's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 2016 and from the onset, focused on using his expanding legal knowledge in the community. His impact during his time in law school was so pronounced that Dean Lee Fisher selected him as the 2020 recipient of the *Dean's Learn Law. Live Justice Award*.

Each year, a graduating student receives the *Dean's Learn Law. Live Justice Award*, by not only achieving academic success, but also by demonstrating what it means to *live justice* — being committed to making clients' lives better and the community stronger. Anthony was nominated for the award by members of the CSU C|J|LAW faculty and staff.

"I'm very humbled and honored to receive this award," Anthony said. "I try to positively impact my community every day in small ways, but I've always done it because I feel it's our responsibility as citizens. It makes me feel great knowing that others have noticed me, but I really hope others realize that doing small things is not difficult and can have a far-reaching impact."

[Read More >](#)



#### Class Valedictorian Alexandria Gardella '20

When Alexandria (Alex) Gardella entered law school at CSU's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in the fall of 2017, she was not sure what to expect. She had graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts from John Carroll University in business management and was a member of the University's pre-law society but was unsure of her place in law school. Alex quickly learned to thrive within the law school environment and three years later will graduate CSU C|J|LAW this spring as class valedictorian.

"Graduating law school is the biggest accomplishment of many of our lives and finishing as valedictorian makes the accomplishment even more special," Alex said.

Alex became interested in law school during her business law and human resource courses while attending John Carroll. She knew she wanted to stay in Cleveland and felt CSU Cleveland-Marshall gave her the best opportunity to obtain a job in the legal field in Cleveland because of its terrific alumni network.

Alex enrolled in law school with an interest in employment law sparked by her background in business and human resources. That interest was confirmed during an externship after her first year of law school with the Ohio Attorney General's Office, where she researched and drafted briefs and memoranda for legal issues in criminal law, consumer protection, worker's compensation, bankruptcy, civil rights and collections enforcement.

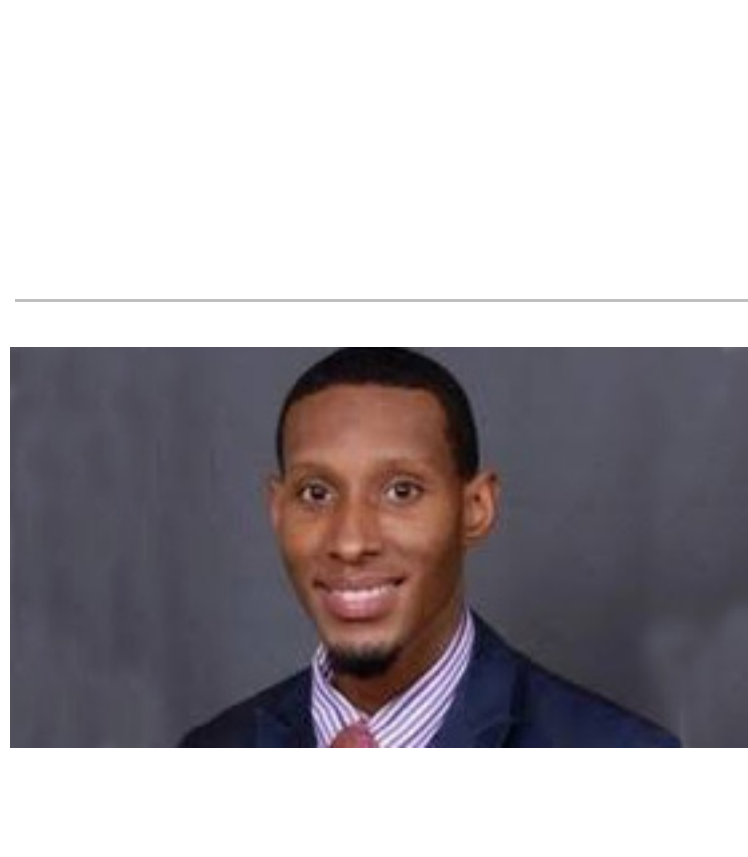
[Read More >](#)



### Prof. Witmer-Rich and Dean Beznoska named SBA Faculty and Staff of the Year


CSU C|J|LAW's Student Bar Association (SBA) recognized Professor & Associate Dean for Academic Enrichment Jonathan Witmer-Rich and Assistant Dean for Student and Career Services Sarah Dylag Beznoska as the recipients of the SBA's 2020 Faculty Member of the Year and the Staff Member of the Year awards

[Prof. Witmer-Rich Bio >](#)  
[Dean Beznoska Profile >](#)



### Adjunct Prof. Hudson Honored with Judge Richard Markus Adjunct Faculty Award


Adjunct Professor Theophilus Hudson '12 was named the 2020 Judge Richard Markus Adjunct Faculty Award recipient. The award, named after former Adjunct Professor and Retired Ohio Court of Appeals Judge Richard Markus, is presented to one adjunct professor each year to recognize the importance of the practitioner's perspective in academia and the unique expertise that adjunct faculty bring to the classroom. Theo teaches Banking Law and coaches the Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition Team while working in third party management and operational risk at KeyBank.



### Prof. Ray Named Plevin Professor of Law

Professor and Director of the Center for Cybersecurity and Privacy Protection Brian Ray was named the Leon and Gloria Plevin Professor of Law.


[Prof. Ray Bio >](#)



### Prof. Green Named Ruben Professor of Law

Professor Matthew Green, the 2020 Dean Wilson G. Stapleton Award for Faculty Excellence recipient, was named the Professor Alan Miles Ruben and Judge Betty Willis Ruben Professor of Law.


[Prof. Green Bio >](#)



### Prof. Forte Named Dean's Scholar

Professor David Forte was named Dean's Scholar. Dean Fisher created the Dean's Scholar and Dean's Teacher designations to provide a way to acknowledge faculty excellence in addition to the named professorships. The Dean's Scholar is awarded every two years to a faculty member who has demonstrated outstanding research and scholarship, a sustained commitment to excellence in teaching performance, and an exemplary record of service to the law school and university.

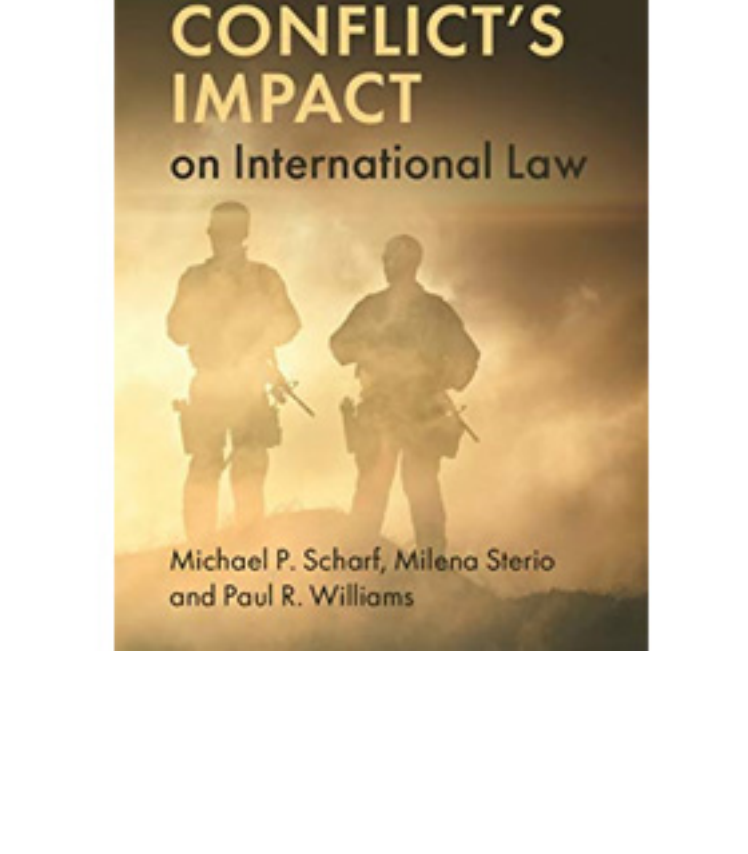
[Prof. Forte Bio >](#)



### Prof. Mika Promoted to Senior Legal Writing Professor

Professor Karin Mika, a Legal Writing Professor who has been involved with CSU C|J|LAW's Legal Writing Program since 1988, was recently promoted to Senior Legal Writing Professor.

[Prof. Mika Bio >](#)



### Prof. Sterio Co-Authoring Book on Impact of the Syrian Conflict

Professor Milena Sterio co-authored a book, *The Syrian Conflict's Impact on International Law*, exploring the fundamental legal issues regarding the Syrian crisis and offering insight into whether international law has developed and adapted in response to such conflicts and crises. The book, co-authored with Dean Michael P. Scharf, Case Western Reserve University and Paul R. Williams, American University Washington College of Law, was published by Cambridge University Press and launched with a virtual book event in May.

[Learn More >](#)

CSU Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

## COVID-19 Archive

CMLAW

The Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Library is creating a COVID-19 Archive to capture and document the impact of, and our responses to, the events surrounding this historic crisis.

Your contribution can help researchers of the future to understand the social and economic effects of the pandemic on the CSU Cleveland-Marshall community. Therefore, we are collecting materials in a digital format created by C|J|LAW students, staff, faculty, alumni, and affiliates during these extraordinary times. The materials will be housed in the university's institutional repository [Engaged Scholarship](#).

[Visit COVID-19 Archive Home and Submission Form >](#)

Note: For the latest information on CSU C|J|LAW events, visit [law.csuohio.edu/news/events/news-csu-cmlaw-event-status](http://law.csuohio.edu/news/events/news-csu-cmlaw-event-status).

## LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWS & EVENTS






cmlaa-csuohio.org

### CMLAA Unveiled New Website

The Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association (CMLAA) recently launched its new website, [cmlaa-csuohio.org](http://cmlaa-csuohio.org). The user-friendly website was designed to provide CMLAA membership easy access to the CMLAA's most requested content - Continuing Legal Education, Annual Recognition Luncheon, Scholarship & Giving and more. The website will serve as a touch point for connecting alumni with CMLAA social media, providing information on upcoming events and as a platform for updating contact information with the CMLAA and CSU C|J|LAW.

[Visit cmlaa-csuohio.org >](http://cmlaa-csuohio.org)

Have exciting news to share? Send us [AlumniNews@law.csuohio.edu](mailto:AlumniNews@law.csuohio.edu) or in a future newsletter. Email [AlumniNews@law.csuohio.edu](mailto:AlumniNews@law.csuohio.edu).

**LEARN LAW. LIVE JUSTICE.**

GIVE

VOLUNTEER

If you have news or a story you would like included in this newsletter, please send an email to [Lee.Fisher@law.csuohio.edu](mailto:Lee.Fisher@law.csuohio.edu).