

# Professor Flowers Directs New Advocacy Center

**ROBERTA KEMP FLOWERS IS THE** new director of Stetson's Center for Excellence in Advocacy, succeeding the recently-retired **William Eleazer**, who developed the trial advocacy program and was the inaugural director. Stetson University College of Law has consistently been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as having one of the top five trial advocacy programs in the nation – holding the number one position for three years.

"They used to say law school teaches you to think like a lawyer, and that you'd learn the rest when you get out," said Professor Flowers, who teaches evidence, criminal procedure and professional responsibility, and is faculty advisor for Stetson's Trial Competition Team. "You've got to train students not only to think like lawyers, but also to act like lawyers. We're really proud that we also teach them how to do that."

Professor Flowers draws on her experience as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Miami, a Deputy District Attorney in Colorado and a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida in Tampa to build on the proven components of the advocacy program.

Classes teach hands-on skills like interviewing and counseling clients, negotiating, and pre-trial, trial and appellate practice. Clinics give students a chance to represent clients before graduation as prosecutors, public defenders, local government lawyers, or in elder or poverty law. They also can

work for federal and state court judges. Practicums place students with practicing lawyers in agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the FBI and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Students also can compete on client counseling, negotiation, mediation, moot court and trial teams. The trial competition team is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, and has won the Chester Bedell Memorial Trial Competition for 14 of 18 years, and the Student Intrastate Mock Trial Competition for 11 of 15 years.

Team members get a taste of the pressures of life as a trial lawyer when they practice 40 hours a week just before a competition while managing a full class load. "It's a good preparation for real life," Professor Flowers said, adding that practice rounds and trials are held in front of area judges.

Students may pursue a Certificate of Concentration in Advocacy, which is good preparation for those thinking about pursuing judgeships, she said. The program also offers on-going training to students after they become practicing lawyers. The Office for Continuing Legal Education provides advocacy training, such as the programs on labor law trial skills and appellate advocacy scheduled last summer. And the Institute for Litigation Ethics offers



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instruction on how to deal with ethical dilemmas.

A new class offered during Fall 2000 combines trial advocacy training with the academic evidence course. "You're doing the book learning at the same time you're learning the skills," she said. Also in the works is an annual symposium in the *Stetson Law Review* on advocacy issues, which will include an annual advocacy update to be published for Florida lawyers.

And as Stetson moves into its second century, the advocacy program is teaching students to master technological advances that allow video coverage of conferences, depositions, trial testimony and court hearings, Professor Flowers said. "Our judiciary has just taken off with the use of technology in the courtroom, so we are very dedicated to preparing students for the future."

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