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FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY (FMU) LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO FOSTER NEXT GENERATION OF BLACK LAWYERS WITH WEISS, SEROTA, HELFMAN, COLE, AND BIERMAN

March 3, 2021, Miami Gardens, FL— Florida Memorial University (FMU) and Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman (WSH) have partnered to launch the FMU Legal Scholars Pipeline Program.

Attorney [Chanae Wood](#), Chair of Weiss Serota's Diversity & Inclusion Program, and Alexander Rundlet, Esq., Chief Strategist at FMU's Social Justice Institute, will lead the new program, which is set to launch with its first students this fall.

The FMU Legal Scholars Pipeline Program is designed to locate and inspire students to consider careers in the legal profession. Through collaboration with regional high schools and other organizations, the program will create a pipeline of talented students who are college-ready and prepared to successfully pursue undergraduate degrees in Law and Government from Florida Memorial University and ultimately enter law school.

The goal of the program is to create a talent pipeline from secondary to postsecondary institutions to educate and mentor future attorneys, judges and law professors. The program will accomplish this goal by expanding awareness of career opportunities within the legal profession and increasing enrollment and graduation rates for students in the Law and Government program at Florida Memorial University.

"I am honored to be a part of this program and am confident that it will greatly impact the lives of young Black leaders in underserved areas of South Florida," said Wood. "Better representation in the legal profession is not only beneficial to underserved and minority communities, but to all lawyers, judges, staff and clients to allow the work we do be done with understanding, respect and clarity for all people." Key components of the program include career-readiness clinics, mentorships and internships to instill students with the values of leadership, character, service, scholarship and accountability, and to expose participants to the work of social justice and connect them with social justice practitioners to prepare the next generation of change agents.

Rundlet emphasized that "[t]he past year has only reinforced the need to redouble our efforts to prepare the next generation of Black lawyers and judges to advance the cause of racial and economic justice. The Legal Scholars Pipeline Program seeks to meet that need."



FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Joseph Serota, a founding partner of Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman, P.L., has been involved since the inception of the initiative. “I am impressed with the leadership and insight that Ms. Wood and Mr. Rundlet bring to the program, as well as that of the Associate Provost of FMU, Dr. Tameka Hobbs. With their skills and the participation of the local legal community, I am confident of the program’s future success,” stated Serota.

“It is initiatives like the Legal Scholars Pipeline Program that will help produce more legal scholars of color who will help shape policies that are equitable for all,” said Jaffus Hardrick, Ed.D., President of Florida Memorial University.

While the FMU Legal Scholars Pipeline Program is set to launch this fall, it is possible only with generous donations from the community to make the program a reality. To find out how to contribute, please contact Cory Witherspoon, Vice President for University Advancement, at cory.witherspoon@fmuniv.edu or 305-626-3611.

About Florida Memorial University

Located in the City of Miami Gardens, Florida Memorial University is a private, historically Black institution that offers 27 undergraduate degree programs and four graduate degree programs to a culturally diverse student body. Since its inception in 1879, the University has upheld a commitment to provide an academic education solid foundation built upon the pillars of leadership, character, and service. FMU is South Florida’s only Historically Black College or University (HBCU). FMU is among the leading HBCUs in the nation leveraging partnerships with public and corporate partners to develop academic training and certification programs in emerging markets such as Aviation Management and Environmental Science, Cybersecurity, and Computer Information Technology. FMU also offers a robust study abroad program and award-winning Broadcast Communications and Public Relations programs. The university is also part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the Sun Conference and offers eight collegiate sports programs, including men/women’s basketball, men/women soccer, men/women’s track and field, baseball and volleyball. More than 14% of the student population are international students representing Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and Africa.