

Shutts Partner to Join FSU College of Law and Launch First Amendment Clinic

Tallahassee

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Shutts & Bowen LLP is proud to announce that partner Denise M. Harle will join the faculty of the Florida State University College of Law in August as a professor and founding director of the law school's new First Amendment Clinic. In this role, she will lead law students in hands-on, pro bono litigation involving free speech, religious liberty, and other key First Amendment issues.

Harle, a partner in Shutts & Bowen's Tallahassee office, has been a leading member of the firm's Appellate Practice Group and Constitutional Law Practice Area, where her work has focused on administrative, commercial, constitutional, and appellate litigation. During her tenure at Shutts, she has played a pivotal role in shaping appeal strategies, drafting complex legal briefs, and delivering oral arguments in high-stakes cases before state and federal courts—often addressing critical constitutional questions and nuanced issues of statutory interpretation.

At FSU Law, Harle will not only direct the First Amendment Clinic but also teach substantive courses in First Amendment law. The clinic will serve as a hub for legal education and discourse, hosting speakers, conferences, and events centered on free expression and religious freedom.

In addition to her faculty appointment, Harle will lead the Conscience Liberty branch of FSU's Institute for Governance & Civics. In this role, she will foster campus-wide engagement through teaching, scholarship, and dialogue on constitutional law and foundational principles of liberty and civil society.

"Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to work alongside and learn from extraordinary legal professionals, including my excellent colleagues at Shutts," said Harle. "I'm excited to begin this new chapter and help equip the next generation of lawyers to thoughtfully engage with one of the most dynamic areas of law."

"While we'll greatly miss Denise at Shutts, we're thrilled to see her take advantage of this excellent opportunity to bring her expertise and passion to FSU College of Law," said Benjamin J. Gibson, Managing Partner of Shutts & Bowen's Tallahassee office. "Her commitment to constitutional principles will greatly benefit the law school and the broader legal community. Shutts has long been a supporter of FSU Law, and we look forward to partnering and collaborating with FSU Law and Denise in this new endeavor."

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Before joining Shutts & Bowen, Harle served as Deputy Solicitor General of Florida under then-Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, and in 2022, she was named a finalist by the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission for a seat on the state's highest court.

About Shutts & Bowen LLP

Shutts & Bowen LLP, established in 1910, is a full-service business law firm with approximately 280 lawyers in offices in Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Sarasota, Tallahassee, Tampa and West Palm Beach. Learn more about Shutts & Bowen at www.shutts.com.

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