

CURRICULUM VITAE

MATTHEW W. DIETZ

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EDUCATION

Brooklyn Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 1996

Boston University, B.S., Business Administration, 1992

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Nova Southeastern University, Shepard Broad College of Law

Director & Professor of Law, Disability Inclusion and Advocacy Law (DIAL) Clinic
(2022–2026)

- The DIAL Clinic was the only fully interdisciplinary cross-disability civil rights clinic in Florida. I lead the Clinic's litigation, policy initiatives, community partnerships, and statewide advocacy while supervising between twenty and twenty-five students annually in federal and state trials, appeals, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) hearings, administrative hearings, and systemic civil rights matters involving the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act (FHA), and the Rehabilitation Act (RA).
- The Clinic operated as a full-service civil rights practice with students conducting interviews, preparing litigation strategy, drafting complaints, participating in negotiations, and engaging in appellate work. My role included designing and delivering a curriculum grounded in trauma-informed advocacy, reflective practice, disability justice principles, and the American Bar Association's emphasis on professional identity formation. I integrated these components with live-client representation, guest speakers, simulation-based training, and early lawyering responsibility.
- The DIAL Clinic operated as a full civil-rights law firm where students assume meaningful responsibility under close faculty supervision. Students develop litigation skills, engage in professional identity formation, and work directly with clients from multiply marginalized communities. Students participate in all portions of a case's lifecycle, from demand letters, administrative complaints, discovery and motion practice, negotiation and settlement, class action litigation, trial and appellate proceedings.

- Students handled more than one hundred fifty guardianship and supported decision-making matters each year, preparing petitions, advising families on legal alternatives, conducting accessibility-based negotiations, and advocating for autonomy-centered supports.

Classes Taught

- **DIAL Clinic** – The DIAL Clinic included a two-hour weekly course and two hours of clinical rounds where the clinic gathered to discuss case elements and strategies.
- **Civil Rights Litigation Seminar** (Fall 2024 and Fall 2025) – upper-level writing requirement seminar that examined litigation under 42 USC 1983 from a litigation point of view. Included guest lecturers who are leaders in the civil rights bar.

University committees –

- **Faculty Research Advisory Committee** (FARC) serves as a key governance body at NSU that promotes and supports faculty scholarship across the university.
- The former **NSU BEDI Council** (Belonging, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) served as a university-wide advisory body dedicated to advancing inclusive practices, promoting equity, and fostering a sense of belonging across all academic and administrative units.

College of Law Committees

- Ad Hoc Lawyering in the 21st Century Committee
- ABA Accreditation Committee

Role as Faculty Advisor

- Muslim Law School Association
- Lambda Law Society
- Disability Allied Law Student Association (DALSA)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Disability Independence Group, Inc. (DIG) - Miami, Florida

Founder and Board President (2002 – present) and Litigation Director (2014 to 2022)

DIG is a disability advocacy center that led major litigation, policy reform, training, and public education initiatives across Florida. In the capacity of Litigation Director, I

represented clients in more than five hundred disability civil-rights cases involving the ADA, the FHA, RA employment discrimination statutes, and constitutional claims.

I built statewide advocacy networks, supervised attorneys and fellows, and led national trainings that strengthened cross-system coordination in healthcare, corrections, housing, education, and public accommodations.

Law Offices of Matthew W. Dietz, P.L. – Miami FL (2001 to 2013)

Founder and Managing Attorney

I was the Founder and Managing Attorney of the Law Offices of Matthew W. Dietz, one of Florida's earliest private disability-rights practices. My work included significant federal litigation, systemic housing discrimination actions, effective communication cases involving hospitals, and extensive consultation with disability rights and independent living organizations.

St. Thomas Law School -- Miami, FL (Spring 2012)

Adjunct Professor

I taught "Disability Rights Law and Practice." I developed and delivered lectures, guided students through practical applications and case studies, and evaluated their performance through assignments and exams. I also provided mentorship to students pursuing careers in disability rights law.

Gaebe, Murphy, Mullen & Antonelli -- Coral Gables, FL (1997-2001)

Associate Attorney

I represented clients in a variety of legal matters, primarily focusing on insurance defense in state and federal courts. My experience included personal injury, admiralty law, civil rights, disability and employment discrimination, medical malpractice, personal injury, wrongful death, intellectual property, and insurance coverage disputes. This broad practice gave me expertise in complex, multi-faceted litigation.

ADMISSIONS

All Florida State Courts, 1996
All New York State Courts, 1999
All Georgia Courts, 2011
U.S. District Court, Florida Southern District, 1997
U.S. District Court, Florida Middle District, 2000
U.S. Circuit Court, Eleventh Circuit, 1999

U.S. District Court, Florida Northern District, 2009

U.S. Supreme Court, 2019

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Annual Family Café

- From 2023 to 2025, The DIAL Clinic attended the Family Café, the largest cross-disability event in Florida for families with children that have disabilities. I organized and delivered impactful workshops on guardianship alternatives, fair housing rights, and inclusive communication, while creating the Independent Living Kitchen to provide practical guidance on essential legal documents during the conference. These initiatives not only educated thousands of attendees but also offered law students hands-on experience in client interaction and advocacy under real-world conditions. Additionally, I managed event logistics, budgeting, and community engagement, reinforcing the clinic's visibility and commitment to disability rights advocacy.

Summer Internship Program

- In the Summer of "Make an Impact in Law and Medicine" Summer Internship at the DIAL Clinic was a six-week interdisciplinary program bringing together law students, medical students, and high school scholars to explore the intersection of disability rights, healthcare, and civil law. Designed to foster mentorship and professional development, the internship combined classroom instruction, courtroom observation, and independent research projects focused on disability advocacy and effective communication in healthcare. As Law Clinic Director, I led program coordination, delivered lectures on civil rights and disability law, and supervised student research.

Inclusive Communications and Technology Day

- On October 25, 2024, NSU hosted the Inclusive Communications and Technology Day, a hybrid event designed to advance accessibility and inclusion through technology. The program featured sessions on assistive tools such as speech-to-text, text-to-speech, captioning, and emerging applications of generative AI for individuals with cognitive, sensory, and developmental disabilities. I organized and led the event, shaping its agenda to highlight universal design principles and practical strategies for integrating AI into accessibility solutions.

Guardian Advocacy Workshops

- From 2022 to the Winter of 2025, the DIAL Clinic hosted Guardian Advocacy Workshops each semester to assist families of adults with developmental disabilities to plan the least restrictive form of support required.. These events provide free legal guidance, reduce waitlists, and empower participants through one-on-one consultations. Supported by law students, attorneys, and community volunteers, workshops address immediate legal needs and promote advocacy skills.

Simulation for Providing Effective Communication to a Deaf Patient during Labor and Delivery

- As part of an interdisciplinary training initiative, I designed and facilitated a high-impact simulation addressing communication barriers in healthcare for individuals with disabilities. The scenario centered on a deaf woman in active labor arriving at a hospital requiring effective accommodations to demonstrate best practices required under the ADA and RA, particularly regarding informed consent and patient autonomy. In my role as lead legal educator, I am collaborating with medical faculty and simulation faculty to integrate legal standards into clinical practice. This initiative provides participants with experiential learning at the intersection of law and medicine, reinforcing the critical role of proactive accommodations and cultural competence in healthcare delivery.

LEADERSHIP IN THE FLORIDA BAR

Since 1998, I have led a coordinated effort to ensure the inclusion of lawyers and other people with disabilities to be seen and accommodated by the Florida Bar

- In 2004, the Disability Independence Group coordinated a bar-wide survey on lawyers with disabilities, producing actionable data that informed policy changes and enhanced inclusion within the Bar.
- Advocated modification Florida Bar rules by eliminating discriminatory mental health inquiries for bar applicants, ensuring equitable admission standards.
- Authored Florida Rule of Judicial Procedure 2.540, mandating ADA accommodations across all Florida courts to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Chaired the Equal Opportunity, Animal Law, and Public Interest Law Sections of The Florida Bar, leading initiatives that advanced diversity and inclusion.
- Strengthened legal education and bar readiness through active service on the Student Education and Admission to the Bar Committee (SEABC), collaborating with Florida law schools.
- Founded the Puppy Pit wellness initiative as Chair of the Animal Law Section, promoting mental health and well-being for attorneys and law students statewide.

- Increased student engagement in Florida Bar activities by demonstrating how to develop a professional identity by participating at the Florida Bar conference.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROFESSION

Curated a selection of groundbreaking cases from a portfolio of over 350 reported and unreported decisions published on Westlaw.

Disability-Related Obligations by Public Entities

- Time frame for statute of limitations for ADA claims does not commence until a person with a disability has standing to bring an action. (*Karantsalis v. City of Miami Springs, Fla.*, 17 F.4th 1316 (11th Cir. 2021))
- Child protective investigators must provide accommodations in the dependency system and are not protected by qualified immunity. (*Freyre v. Chronister*, 910 F.3d 1371 (11th Cir. 2018))
- Limitations of investigation into mental health or alcohol abuse for the Florida Board of Bar Examiners. Case No.: (*Hobbs v. Florida Board of Bar Examiners*, Case No.: 4:17-cv-00422, 2018 WL 5905467 (N.D. Fla. 2018))
- Obligations for police not to assume that men who are autistic are all dangers. (*Soto v. City of North Miami*, Case No.: 1:17-CV-22090-RNS, 2017 WL 4685301 (S.D. Fla. 2017))
- Obligations to provide commercial driver's licenses to deaf applicants. (*McClain v. Florida Dep't of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles*, 6:16-CV-1734, 2017 WL 4541575 (M.D. Fla. 2017))
- Objection to Amendments to Florida Bar Rule 2-13.1 regarding investigations of applicant's mental health or substance use disorders. (*In Re: Amendments to the Rules of the Supreme Court Relating to Admissions to the Bar – Rule 2-13.1 and 3-11*, Case No. SC20-850.)

Deinstitutionalization of Children with Disabilities

- Provision of adequate home health care for medically fragile children held in pediatric skilled nursing facilities (*A.R. v. Dudek*, Case No. 0:12-cv-60460-RSR 2016 WL 3221140 (S.D. Fla 2016.))
- Prevention of forced transfer from KidCare to managed care services. (*A.R., et al., v. Florida Department of Health*, Case No.: 15-3735RU, 2015 WL 5676956 (Fl. Dept. of Admin. 2015))

Public Accommodation Discrimination

- Extraterritorial application of the Americans with Disabilities Act on foreign flagged cruise vessels. (*Access Now, Inc. v. Carnival Corp.*, Case No. 00-7233 (S.D.Fla. 2000); *Access Now, Inc. v. Holland America Line-Westours, Inc.*; 147 F.Supp.2d 1311 (S.D.Fla. 2001); *Stevens v. Premier Cruises, Inc.*, 284 F.3d 1187 (11th Cir. 2002))
- Mootness determination in Title III ADA cases and entitlement to damages under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. (*Sheely v. MRI Radiology Network P.A.*, 505 F.3d 1173 (11th Cir. 2007))
- Applicability of the Florida Civil Rights Act to removal of architectural barriers and other discrimination under the ADA. (*McGuire v. Peabody Hotel Group*, 99 So. 3d 984 (Fla. 1st DCA 2012))

Removal of Architectural Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

- Class Action regarding removing architectural barriers and widening aisles in 2600 girls accessories stores – (*Access Now and Koors v. Claires Inc.*, 00-14017-CIV-MOORE (S.D. Fla. 2000))
- Class Action regarding removing architectural barriers and internet access across major nationwide chain store. *Access Now v. Brookstone Properties*, 00-00740 (S.D. Fla 2001)

Removal of Voting Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

- Accessible Voting machines in Palm Beach, mootness for public entities. (*Troiano v. Supervisor of Elections in Palm Beach County, Fla.*, 382 F.3d 1276 (11th Cir. 2004))
- Ensuring accessible vote-by-mail for Floridians with vision or print disabilities (*Nielsen v DeSantis*, Case No. 4:20-cv-00236-RH-MJF, 4:20-cv-00236-RH-MJF (N.D. Fla 2020))

Employment Discrimination based upon Disability Status

- Failure to have electronic access to employment-related software for persons who are blind. (*Rogers v. Florida Department of Children & Families*, 4:09-cv-00313 (N.D. Fla. 2010))
- Failure to have accessible software and internet access for employees of Miami-Dade County Schools. (*Bartleson v. Miami-Dade County School Board*, Case No. 18-cv-21605-KMM (S.D. Fla. 2018))
- Termination because of recovering from cancer. (*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. IDEX Corp.*, 15-CV-22777 (S.D. Fla. 2015))

- Failure to provide sign language interpreters to all FedEx ground package handlers. (*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. FedEx Ground Package System, Inc.*, 15-cv-00256 (W.D. Pa. 2015))

Education Discrimination

- Reasonable accommodations for service animals in public schools. (*Alboniga v. School Bd. of Broward County Fla.*, Case No. 0:14-cv-60085, 87 F.Supp.3d 1319 (S.D. Fla. 2015))
- Eligibility bars that prevent people who are Deaf from obtaining nursing degrees. (*Daniel-Rivera v. Everglades College*, Case No.: 0:16-cv-60044-WPD (S.D. Fla. 2017))
- Predetermination of placement in a public school of a student with autism. (*R.L. v. Miami-Dade County School Bd.*, 757 F.3d 1173 (11th Cir. 2014))
- Ensuring that science and math students who are blind at Florida State University received auxiliary aids and information in alternate formats. (*Toth and Principato v. Florida State University Board of Trustees*, Case No., 4:11-cv-00317 (N.D. Fla. 2012))

Effective Communication for the Deaf

- Definition of deliberate indifference with respect to damages for failure to provide effective communication. (*Liese v. Indian River Memorial Hospital, Inc.* 701 F.3d 334 (11th Cir. 2012); *Crane v. Lifemark Hospitals, Inc.*, CASE NO.: 15-21960, 898 F.3d 1130 (11th Cir. 2018); *Fuller v. Wellington Reg. Med. Ctr.*, 2008 WL 11333270 (S.D. Fla. 2008); *Sunderland v. Bethesda Hospital, Inc.*, Case No. 13-80685, 686 Fed.Appx. 807 (11th Cir. 2017))
- Definition of effective communication for the Deaf in hospital settings. (*Silva v. Baptist Health South Florida, Inc.*, Case No.: 1:14-cv-21803, 856 F.3d 824 (11th Cir. 2017))
- Provisions of interpreters and video relay services to Miami-Dade inmates and criminal defendants. (*Martos v. Miami-Dade County*, Case No.: 16-21501 (S.D. Fla. 2017))

Application of Florida Civil Rights Statutes

- Preemption of local human rights ordinances by the Florida Civil Rights Act. (*Yanes v. OC Food & Beverage LLC.*, 300 So. 3d 798 (Fla. 5th DCA 2020),
- Interpretation of state and federal fair housing laws. (*Hous. Opportunities Project v. SPV Realty, LC*, 212 So. 3d 419 (Fla. 3d DCA 2016))

COVID-19 Advocacy

- Attempts to make supervised practice in lieu of the Florida Bar Exam. (*In re Petition to Amend Rules of Supreme Court Relating to Admissions to Bar & Rules Regulating Florida Bar*, 301 So. 3d 854 (Fla. 2020))

Reasonable Accommodations/Modifications for Persons with Disabilities in Housing

- Reasonable accommodations for Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals in Housing. (*Bhogaita v. Altamonte Heights Condominium Assn., Inc.*, 765 F.3d 1277 (11th Cir. 2014))
- Amount of proof that is necessary for a service animal. (*Sabal Palm Condominiums of Pine Island Ridge Association, Inc. v. Fischer*, Case No.: 12-cv-60691, 6 F.Supp.3d 1272 (S.D. Fla. 2014))
- Failure to provide a reasonable accommodation of a live in aide, causing the death of the resident. (*Fernandez v. Orlando Housing Authority*, Case No. 6:15-cv-1341-Orl-40DAB, 2016 WL 2784989, 2016 WL 4382656 (M.D. Fla. 2016))
- Financial Accommodation deemed reasonable and necessary for a substantial impairment in working. (*Schaw v. Habitat for Humanity of Citrus County, Inc.*, 938 F.3d 1259 (11th Cir. 2019))

Eviction Due to a Disability

- Perception that a person who has an intellectual disability is a direct threat. (*Hunt v. Aimco Properties, L.P.*, 814 F.3d 1213 (11th Cir. 2016))
- Evicting and placing conditions on reinstatement because of an autism-related meltdown. (*Danforth v. Jamaica Bay E. Mgmt. Co., Inc.*, 304 So. 3d 13, 15 (Fla. 4th DCA 2020))

Failure to Rent Due to a Disability

- Failure to rent to a person who is autistic, *Hart v. Murphy*, 2013 WL 1278161 (M.D. Fla. 2013)
- Failure to rent to a person who is blind (*Herrin v. Lamachys Vill. at Indigo Lakes, Inc.*, 6:09-CV-1562, 2011 WL 7333928 (M.D. Fla. Dec. 8, 2011))
- Failure to rent to a person with a mobility impairment. (*Root v. Salazar*, 406 F.Supp.3d 1322 (M.D. Fla. 2019))

Failure to Design and Construct an Accessible Multi-Family Dwelling Compliant with Fair Housing Design Standards

- Jury Trial on the design and construction of a college campus and dormitories. (*Barker v. Emory University*, 1 02-CV-2450 (N.D. GA 2002))

Familial Status Discrimination under the Fair Housing Act

- Occupancy standards as having a disparate impact to residency by a family with children. (*Milsap v. Cornerstone Residential Mgmt., Inc.*, 05-60033 (S.D. Fla. 2005))
- Space limitation as discrimination against families with children. (*Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence, Inc. v. Key Colony No. 4 Condominium Assoc., Inc.*, 510 F.Supp.2d 1003 (S.D. Fla. 2007))

PUBLICATIONS

- Matthew Dietz, What We Got Here is Failure to Communicate – The legal, ethical and monetary considerations of effective communication, Florida Bar Journal, 96 Fla. Bar J. 26 (May/June 2022)
- Mathew Dietz., Animal Law: Assistance Animals in Foster Care, 91 Fla. Bar. J. 40 (October 2017)
- Matthew Dietz, A Safe Haven: for people with disabilities, finding safe housing that meets their needs can be a difficult process, but fair housing laws offer some protection, American Association for Justice, Trial Magazine (October 2016)
- Matthew Dietz, How Can the State of Florida Improve Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Benefit the Business Community, 15 Fl. Coastal L. Rev. 277 (Winter 2014)
- Matthew Dietz, Reasonable Accommodations for Attorneys with Disabilities, Florida Bar Journal, 81 Fla. Bar. J. 66 (April 2007).
- Comment, *Equal Electoral Opportunity: The Supreme Court Reevaluates the Use of Race in Redistricting in Johnson v. De Grandy*, Journal of Law and Policy, 497 (1995)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Voting Rights for Persons with Disabilities - Finalizing an article for publication in 2026 analyzing Voting Rights for Persons with Disabilities (PWD), emphasizing compliance gaps under the current law. The proposed article identifies systemic barriers such as inaccessible polling sites, signature verification issues, and absentee voting limitations, supported by turnout data showing persistent disparities for PWD. Proposed actionable reforms and enforcement strategies to ensure independent and private voting access.

Mental Health and the Florida Bar's Evolving Standards - How the Bar's rules and ethics opinions have adapted to address mental health challenges among attorneys.

Chapter in book on **Mastering AI and the Law** - chapter focusing on inclusive design and the use of artificial intelligence for job accommodations and educational accommodations.

Institutions or Resorts – Intentional Communities for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - How Intentional Communities function as institutional placements rather than integrated living environments, analyzed through the lens of Murphy v. Noah's Landing. It will explore the legal and policy implications of clustering individuals with disabilities in segregated settings, contrasting these practices with the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Olmstead decision, which mandate community integration.

MEDIA INVOLVEMENT

Over my career, I have been featured or quoted in more than 80 media interviews, articles, and broadcast segments on disability civil rights, accessible housing, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and major statewide policy issues. My commentary has appeared in the Tampa Bay Times, Miami Herald, WLRN, Florida News Service, CBS12 Palm Beach, and multiple national legal outlets, reflecting longstanding recognition as a trusted source on disability-rights law and systemic reform.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- American Bar Association Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights (2019)
- Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section Terl Award for Individual Rights and Responsibilities (2018)
- Florida Bar Animal Law Section Animal Lawyer of the Year Award (2018)
- Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence - Answering the Call Award (2018)
- Florida's Children First Outstanding Advocate for Children with Special Needs (2017)
- Florida Fair Housing Summit – Advocacy Award (2015)
- Lawyers to the Rescue Lawyer of the Year Award (2013)
- Florida Bar's 2003-2004 G. Kirk Haas Humanitarian Award