

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 2012

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Carolina Center for Civic Education and the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"*

MESSAGE FROM MOCK TRIAL COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr. and Rebecca J. Britton

The new Mock Trial season is almost here! The Case Committee has been busy finalizing the last touches on this season's case and preparing for a great competition year. We look forward to the return of our veteran "Mockers" and are excited to have new students and new teams joining the program from around the state. Thank you to everyone who continues to support this wonderful program and the amazing students who impress us more and more every year. Thank you to NCAJ for its continued sponsorship and to all of you who step up each year with your time and your financial support to make this happen. We are truly *investing in our future and creating tomorrow's leaders*. Read on to find out more about volunteering for mock trial and about the OUTREACH program we are implementing this year.

VOLUNTEERS ARE KEY TO NCAJ MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM SUCCESS!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator

During the 2011-2012 season, over **350** members of the legal profession volunteered their time to provide this opportunity to more than **550** high school students across North Carolina. Justices, judges, attorneys, and law students invested in our students by serving as attorney advisors for teams as they prepared for competition, or by providing feedback as presiding judges and scoring jurors at Regional and State Finals competitions. Dozens of paralegals and legal assistants served behind the scenes as Site Coordinators and site volunteers to ensure that all the logistical details at the Regional competitions ran smoothly. The untold hours invested by these volunteers have already paid dividends in the lives of the students, helping them to develop self-confidence, communication skills, and analytical thinking abilities which are crucial to their future success. But the students are not the only ones to benefit; the volunteers are enriched by the experience as well. Listen to the words of two of our long-term volunteers:

"I would not take anything for the experience of judging or scoring for the Mock Trial program. I have been doing it off and on, as time has permitted, since the inception of the program. I got my older son, who is now an attorney, involved as a student in high school, and he now regularly coaches a team. I guess it's in our blood! It is always so rewarding to see the young people who have spent so much time and effort in preparation for the competitions, and I believe it is such a worthwhile and positive endeavor for them. I look forward to many more competitions in the future."

– *The Honorable Mary Ann Tally*





“I have been participating as a coach [attorney advisor] in the NCAJ mock trial competitions since I graduated law school in 2005. Over the past several years, mock trial has given me the opportunity to be a part of the lives of dozens of the most amazing young men and women a person could ever meet. My first class of students just recently graduated from college. Some are now in law school; some

are working in business; others are working in software companies; one is teaching English in South Korea. Every single one has taught me as much as I ever taught any one of them.

“The most rewarding aspect of coaching mock trial is to see the development in the confidence of the students. Before the first round of regionals one year, we had a student in the hallway who was crying and shaking in terror about giving her opening statement. Her fears proved unfounded, since she performed well enough to get an award for Best Attorney for her performance that round. I would not trade anything for the smile on her face when she was walking back with that certificate in hand.

“While I view my primary role as building up and encouraging them, I experienced a bit of role reversal recently. After I wrapped up my closing arguments in a first degree murder case I was prosecuting, I looked out into the audience and saw a few of my mock trial students there to encourage me.” - *Darren C. Allen, Attorney*

WHY I SERVE AS AN ATTORNEY ADVISOR FOR MOCK TRIAL: The Real World vs. the Mock Trial World

By Fran Muse

Attorney Advisor, Jordan High School, Durham

In the real world, I am dealing with people that are in trouble with the law, battling for custody of their children, unable to pay their child support, etc. While non-lawyers think that we can waltz into a courtroom, like Perry Mason, and solve our clients’ problems in the span of one hour, most lawyers know that these cases can go on for months and can be exhausting. I love the practice of law and have no regrets about becoming a lawyer.

However, there are days where being a lawyer in the real world is simply not fun.

Being a lawyer in the Mock Trial World is fun! You get to teach high school kids to do all the things that you often wish you could do in a real trial, such as doing cross examinations on your feet or making flawless opening and closing arguments. The most satisfying thing is to watch them master a technique during the competition that you have been teaching them for months, such as successfully objecting to hearsay or character evidence.



Advising a Mock Trial team brings out the lawyer, teacher and actor in me. The reality of our world is that we don't always get to prepare for trial as much as we would like. In the Mock Trial world, you have months to prepare your students, with a given set of facts. On competition day, you can sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labor. If you are like me, you are taking vigorous notes or sitting on the edge of your seat. One attorney advisor that I know can't even watch his team. He sits outside. Sometimes they stumble and sometimes they just nail it. In either case, you will leave that day very proud of their hard work and the role that you played in it.

I became an Attorney Advisor seven years ago when my oldest child helped start the Mock Trial team at her school in Durham. I have continued to coach all three of my children through Mock Trial. I love watching all of my Mock Trial students become better public speakers, learn to think quickly on their feet, and come to truly understand trial by jury. My students often tell me what a difference I made in their life. While being an Attorney Advisor can take a lot of your time, the return on this investment into your local high school community is worth every minute.

OUTREACH PROGRAM TO SUPPORT NEW SCHOOLS IN UNDERSERVED AREAS!!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator

As state budget cuts have put greater burdens upon public school teachers during the last several years, we have seen a disturbing decline in the participation of schools in rural and inner city urban areas across North Carolina. Fewer schools have fielded teams near several of our regional sites, including Asheville, Wilmington, Greenville, and Fayetteville. In addition, several of our well-attended sites have seen fewer public schools taking part in the program as teachers have to do more with less. To address this concern, we are embarking on an outreach program to provide additional teacher materials and on-site training to give new schools the support they need to be successful in the program. We are committed to making sure that **all** students across North Carolina have the opportunity to learn about our justice system and trial-by-jury through the hands-on, fun activity of mock trial.

We are also developing plans to start a new summer mock trial camp program in the summer of 2013 at several locations across North Carolina. These camps will provide a fun, interactive venue for both new and experienced mock trial students and teachers to gain the knowledge and skills they need to experience success. We will share more details in upcoming newsletters!

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THIS OUTREACH A REALITY!!

Our new fall teacher training materials are being developed, but to bring these on-site training sessions to schools from Asheville to Wilmington requires additional resources. We are very grateful that several organizations have already agreed to partner with us in providing funding for this outreach (see below). Yet additional partners are needed in order to fully fund the outreach and begin the summer camp program. If you or your firm would like to help reach these students in underserved areas, we would love to talk with you!

We also hope you will be inspired to devote some of your time to help these students. Each new team will need an attorney advisor to mentor them and help them understand the legal issues involved in the case. As you have just read, serving as an attorney advisor can be a wonderful way to share your legal knowledge and be reenergized yourself because the students' enthusiasm is infectious! It is also a rewarding way for young attorneys to sharpen their own trial skills and application of the Rules of Evidence. If you are interested in more information, please contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com or CCCE Co-Chair Rebecca Britton at Rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com.

In the upcoming 2012-2013 season, we will again host Regional competitions at eight sites across North Carolina: Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Fayetteville, Greenville, High Point, Raleigh, and Wilmington. The date of the Regional competition is **Saturday, February 9, 2013**. I hope you will mark your calendars now and will plan to join us by serving as a scoring juror or presiding judge at Regionals! **Please note that all the 2012-13 mock trial program dates are listed below!**

CALENDAR 2012/2013 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

Final Team Registration Deadline	Friday, November 30, 2012
Team Roster, Registration Fee, Photo Release Due	Friday, January 11, 2013
Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty	Wednesday, January 18, 2013
Regional Competition	Saturday, February 9, 2013
State Finals - Campbell Law School, Raleigh	Friday & Saturday, March 1 - 2, 2013
National Championship - Indianapolis, Indiana	Thursday - Sunday, May 9 - 12, 2013

THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSORS!

**Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina
Mary Duke Biddle Foundation**

THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 COMPETITION SPONSORS!

State Finals: Rudolf Widenhouse & Fialko
Asheville: Melrose, Seago & Lay, P.A.
Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm
Durham: The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin
Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.
Greenville: Hardee & Hardee, LLP
High Point: Crumley Roberts, LLP
Raleigh: Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, P.A.
Wilmington: Shipman & Wright, LLP

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with NCAJ to host our State Finals!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators who have agreed to serve for the 2012/2013 season: Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), Russell Johnson (Durham Regional Coordinator), Philip Entzminger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger and Adrienne Blocker (High Point Regional Coordinators), Christine Scheef (Raleigh Regional Coordinator), John H. Anderson, Jr., (Wilmington Regional Coordinator), Ken Campbell, Sheila Chavis, Elizabeth Kuniholm, Carlos Mahoney, Chris Nichols, John O'Neal, Katy Parker, Elizabeth Spruill, and Mark Sumwalt.

Special thanks also to our Site Coordinators who will serve at Regionals in the 2012/2013 season!
Asheville: Cindy Bryson, ***Charlotte:*** Beverly K. Moore, ***Durham:*** Patti Clapper, ***Fayetteville:*** Elizabeth Owens, ***Greenville:*** Kristen Miller; ***High Point:*** Karen Parrish, ***Raleigh:*** Lakisha Chichester and Fran LaFrankie, ***Wilmington:*** Brandy Jo Lea.

*****If you are interested in serving on the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee, please contact either Sue Johnson, Program Coordinator, at sueheathjohnson@gmail.com, or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Committee Co-Chairs, at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com or mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com.***