

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER
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NCAJ Mock Trial Committee and the Carolina Center for Civic Education
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STATE CHAMPION CROWNED AT CAMPBELL LAW SCHOOL!

By Sue H. Johnson

NCAJ Mock Trial Program Administrator



On **Friday, March 2, 2012**, the eight Regional Champions from across North Carolina converged on Campbell Law School, three-time host of the state finals competition. Taking advantage of the school's strategic location, the students learned about the history of the North Carolina Supreme Court as they visited the Supreme Court building, where they had the honor of meeting Justices Paul M. Newby and Robert H. Edmunds, Jr. Returning to Campbell Law, the students were welcomed by Timothy R. Zinnecker, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who congratulated them on earning the chance to compete the next day. Next, teams toured the law school, guided by Campbell Law students who devoted part of their spring break to serving as gracious hosts. At the afternoon reception, **Zachary G. Aldridge**, nominated by coach **Liza Knight** from **J.H. Rose High School**, was awarded the "M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr. Award for Inspirational Team Leadership" (see story below). Soon, leadership skills would be put to the test as the morning competition rounds began.

On **Saturday, March 3**, impressive legal knowledge and convincing witness portrayals were on display as each team competed once as prosecution and once as defense in the cyberstalking case *State of Arcadia v. Kinsley Williams*. At the end of the preliminary rounds, eight students earned "Best Attorney" and "Best Witness" awards; then, as all waited with breathless anticipation, the two finalists were announced: Jordan High School from Durham and Gaston Christian School from Gastonia. As Justice Edmunds presided, both teams argued

their cases with professionalism and passion before the prestigious jury panel of Burton Craige, Janet Ward Black, the Hon. Mary Ann Tally, Rep. Richard Glazier, and E. Spencer Parris. In the end, the outstanding team from **Gaston Christian School** was declared State Champion, earning the right to represent North Carolina at the National High School Mock Trial competition in Albuquerque, NM, in May! Congratulations to Gaston Christian School and to all eight Regional Champions for their accomplishments this year! (*For complete results, visit our website at <http://ncmocktrial.org/> and look under “latest news” in the right-hand column.*)

THANK YOU to the **STATE FINALS SPONSOR, RUDOLF WIDENHOUSE & FIALKO**, and the many selfless individuals who volunteered their time as presiding judges, scoring jurors, and site volunteers at the State Finals competition!! Over forty legal professionals and a dozen other individuals devoted their Saturday to serving at state finals, including (in addition to those mentioned above) N.C. Supreme Court Justice Barbara A. Jackson, N.C. Court of Appeals Judge Richard A. Elmore, N.C. Superior Court Judges Lucy N. Inman and Carl R. Fox, and N.C. General Court of Justice S. Quon Bridges. Their willingness to invest in these students is greatly appreciated!

J.H. ROSE STUDENT WINS M. GORDON WIDENHOUSE LEADERSHIP AWARD!



On Friday, March 2, **Zachary G. Aldridge** of J.H. Rose High School in Greenville, N.C. received the M. Gordon Widenhouse Award for Inspirational Team Leadership. This award was established to honor the visionary leadership of Gordon Widenhouse, who has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the North Carolina Advocates for Justice High School Mock Trial Program, now in its twentieth year. The award is open only to seniors who are recommended by a team advisor; it seeks to recognize an individual who may not be the “star” of the team, but rather the “glue” who holds the team together throughout practices and competitions.

In his application essay, Zachary described his mock trial experience as “the single most important learning experience of my life. Not only have I been given incredible opportunities through the program, but I have become a more confident person and better leader through the many principles I have obtained, [which include] confidence, teamwork, and listening. . . . To participate successfully in the program, students have to muster enough confidence to go into a large courtroom, filled with many spectators, and convincingly deliver their evidence. For a high school student, this task can be very challenging regardless of being an attorney or witness. I can honestly say the mock trial program taught me how to stand in front of a crowd and speak with

confidence. . . . Mock trial taught me that I could boost team morale with encouragement and bonding to have a noteworthy outcome. This idea can be applied outside of the courtroom . . . I personally used what I learned about teamwork in many activities, such as an anti-genocide concert that I helped organize. Lastly, listening is crucial to doing well in the courtroom. I realized that as a leader, one has to listen to effectively complete a task . . . This is important to remember as a leader because every opinion is worthwhile and valuable. Sometimes one has to follow while leading, to show that the spotlight shouldn't always be on a sole person.”

Liza Knight, the teacher advisor for the four J. H. Rose High School mock trial teams, praised Zachary as “one of the most outstanding students that I have ever worked with, and he has continued to impress me with his scholarship, his leadership, and his character. Zach has been a valuable member of our mock trial program since his freshman year . . . We had a record 52 students audition for our mock trial team this year, and many of them had been recruited by Zach. . . . Zach helped many of the new students prepare for competition [and even] stepped in and helped coach. . . . He always communicates clearly and leads by example. He is well respected by both his peers and the coaches because he always gives his best. . . . He has encouraged other students to participate in mock trial, and he has made them feel welcome and valuable. He does not have to be the star of the team, but he is always the most valuable member because of his dedication and consistency. Zach is irreplaceable, and Rose mock trial will miss him immensely next year.”

We know that Zachary is one of many students across North Carolina who have developed critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills through their participation in mock trial. We extend a hearty congratulations and best wishes to Zachary and all of the other graduating seniors, and we look forward to hearing about your future accomplishments!

THANK YOU AGAIN TO OUR COMPETITION SPONSORS!

State Finals: Rudolf Widenhouse & Fialko

Asheville: Melrose, Seago & Lay, P.A.
Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm
Durham: Howard, Stallings, From & Hutson, P.A. *and*
Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina
Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.
Greenville: Hardee & Hardee, LLP
High Point: Crumley Roberts, LLP
Raleigh: Twiggs, Beskind, Strickland & Rabenau, P.A.
Wilmington: Shipman & Wright, LLP

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with NCAJ to host our state final competition!

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators who agreed to serve for the 2011/2012 season: Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger and Adrienne Blocker (High Point Regional Coordinators), John H. Anderson, Jr., (Wilmington Regional Coordinator), Russell Johnson (Durham Regional Coordinator), Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Christine Scheef and Sheila Chavis (Raleigh Regional Coordinators), Philip Entzminger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), John O'Neal, Chris Nichols, Mark Sumwalt, Elizabeth Kuniholm, and Elizabeth Spruill.

Special thanks also to our Site Coordinators who served at Regionals in the 2011/2012 season!

Asheville: Cindy Bryson, Charlotte: Beverly K. Moore, Durham: Patti Clapper, Fayetteville: Elizabeth Owens, Greenville: Dalas Young, Kristen Miller; High Point: Karen Parrish, Raleigh: Lindsey Granados, Wilmington: Brandy Jo Lea .

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