



MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2014

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

CENTRAL CAROLINA HOMESCHOOLERS WIN SECOND CHAMPIONSHIP!

*By Sue H. Johnson
CCCE Program Coordinator*



On **Friday, February 28, 2014** the eight Regional mock trial champions converged upon Campbell Law School in Raleigh, five-time host of the state finals competition. Before engaging in their own legal battles, the students toured the North Carolina Supreme Court, where they learned about appellate advocacy and the making of legal precedent in North Carolina. Justices Mark D. Martin, Robert H. Edmunds, Jr., and Paul M. Newby inspired the students with stories from N.C. legal history as well offering advice for those students desiring to become attorneys. Returning to Campbell Law, the students were greeted by Campbell Dean J. Rich Leonard before the presentation of the “M. Gordon Widenhouse Jr. Award for Visionary Leadership” (story below). After tours of the law school led by Campbell Law students who devoted part of their spring break to serving as gracious hosts, the participants proceeded to the evening reception to enjoy food and fellowship. To conclude the festivities, NCAJ President David Teddy inspired the students to work hard, relating stories from his own experience as a law student and attorney. He encouraged them not to give up on their dreams, but to know that with determination, great things are possible.

On **Saturday, March 1**, the students displayed impressive legal knowledge and convincing witness portrayals as they advocated once on each side of the criminal case *State of Utopia v. Quinn Penner*. At the end of the two preliminary rounds, eight students earned “Best Attorney” and “Best Witness” awards. Sean Maroney, former “mock” on the state champion teams from Asheboro High School, congratulated the students on their accomplishments; then all waited with hearts pounding for the announcement of the two finalists: J. H. Rose “Green” and Central Carolina Homeschoolers (the 2013 State Champions).

As the Honorable Justice Robert H. Edmunds, Jr. presided over (and scored) the championship round, the students argued the case with passion and professionalism before the prestigious jury panel of Janet Ward Black, S. Quon Bridges, Burton Craige, N. Lorrin Freeman, Dick Taylor, and David Teddy. In the end, the **Central Carolina Homeschoolers** were again declared State Champion on split ballots, earning the right to represent North Carolina at the National High School Mock Trial competition in Madison, Wisconsin in May. Congratulations to the Central Carolina Homeschoolers and all eight regional champions for their accomplishments this year! (*For complete results and a list of all judge/jurors, visit ncmocktrial.org and look under “latest news” in the right-hand column.*)

THANK YOU to the **STATE FINALS HOST, CAMPBELL LAW SCHOOL; STATE FINALS SPONSOR, RUDOLF WIDENHOUSE & FIALKO; and the many legal professionals who volunteered their time as presiding judges, scoring jurors, and site volunteers at the State Finals competition! Over forty judges and attorneys and a dozen paralegals and other individuals devoted their Saturday to serving at state finals. Their willingness to invest in the students is greatly appreciated!**

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT WINS M. GORDON WIDENHOUSE JR. LEADERSHIP AWARD!

*By Sue H. Johnson
CCCE Program Coordinator*

At the State Finals evening reception on Friday, February 28, **Abigail Jarratt** of Gaston Christian School received the “M. Gordon Widenhouse Jr. 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 twenty-second 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; rather, the student may be the “glue” who holds the team together through practices and competition.

Gaston Christian School attorney advisor **Jane Painter** explains why she nominated Abigail for the award: “Abigail Jarratt . . . is the definition of humbleness. She is someone who always tries to ‘fly below the radar screen.’ If you have read her essay, you know that she discussed the leadership qualities of her teammates and what she has learned from them. She did a great job of pegging each team member and the unique contributions they bring to the team. What she did not tell you is that, while doing her best to deflect any attention from herself, she was and is the intellectual powerhouse of our team. She didn’t tell you this because she doesn’t know it herself.

“Mock Trial gives Abigail the opportunity for an intellectual exchange with others that she simply cannot find anywhere else. In her very quiet and reserved way, Abigail leads our team by contributing information, arguments, and critical reasoning that are beyond impressive . . . Many people with Abigail’s intelligence would become proud or develop a high opinion of themselves. However, Abigail truly has no idea of the leadership she has provided to the team . . . I think that Abigail is exactly the type of leader that you had in mind when this award was established . . . I would love to recognize the amazing worth of that quiet voice and the immense value of the bits of wisdom humbly shared with the rest of us.”

In her application essay, **Abigail** describes the impact of her mock trial teammates on her growth as a leader. “If there is one thing I have learned from the past few years of mock trial, it is that I have a lot of room to grow as a person and as a leader. I have never been an optimist, a cheerleader, or one to rally the troops and deliver inspiring messages. . . .

What I have learned about leadership from the mock trial experience has not come from any internal source, inspiring journey of self-discovery, or anything like that. Instead, my teammates have been the leaders, and I have been the follower seeking to learn from each of them. Each member of my team exemplifies specific qualities of effective leaders that I desire to emulate. [Abigail recounts particular traits of each teammate in fond and insightful detail.]

“Throughout my mock trial experience my teammates have been my greatest teachers, and they have instructed me in the art of leadership. . . . As I go out into the world beyond high school and mock trial – a world that is in desperate need of leaders – I hope to follow the examples of my precious mock trial teammates and become to other people what they have been to me.”

We know that Abigail is one of many students across North Carolina who possess increased self-confidence, greater critical thinking abilities, and new leadership skills because of their participation in mock trial. We extend a hearty congratulations and best wishes to Abigail and all of the other graduating seniors, and we look forward to hearing about your future accomplishments!

AND THE RESULTS ARE IN: SCORING AND CASE BALANCE

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator

Congratulations to the eighty teams that argued their cases with passion and excellence at our eight regional tournaments in February. We know that the students invested months of time and untold hours in preparation, and their diligent efforts resulted in exciting performances. We have heard from many judges and scoring jurors, expressing how impressed they were by the students’ knowledge of the law, effective direct and cross examinations, and compelling witness portrayals.



Our regional coordinators, site coordinators, and scoring directors work hard to provide the students with a positive experience at the competitions. The CCCE Board particularly stresses the importance of unbiased scoring on the part of our judges and jurors, as well as accurate tabulation of those scores to ensure fair results. Our volunteer judges and jurors take their responsibilities very seriously. Yet, understandably, a recurring concern of team advisors is the effect of jurors who may give higher or lower scores than some of their peers, unintentionally impacting team rankings and pairings if total points are used as a ranking criterion.

To assuage these concerns and to prevent inadvertent skewing of results, this season we used **Point Differential**, rather than **Total Points**, as a criterion in ranking teams. In short, it no longer matters whether a team wins a ballot by a score of 66 to 60, or 106 to 100; the six point differential (+ or -) is the only value recorded. In this fashion, the CCCE is able to ensure that differences in team performances, rather than any variations of judge scoring, determine team ranking and pairings.

In addition, we are happy to report that our original competition case *State of Utopia v. Quinn Penner* ran almost perfectly balanced between prosecution and defense. Out of 80 preliminary rounds of trials at regionals, the prosecution won 39 rounds (49%) while the defense won 41 rounds (51%). And of 240 ballots from our scoring jurors in those trials, 115 ballots (48%) were won by the prosecution and 125 (52%) by the defense. Given that some high school cases in other states have resulted in one side winning 62% of trial rounds, we are pleased that we have once again provided our students with a case that was both enjoyable and fair to both sides.



All of us with the CCCE are devoted to providing our students with the best possible experience. Scoring integrity and case balance are important aspects, and ones that we will continue to evaluate and improve.

Thank you to the volunteers, teachers, and students who make this program possible. We look forward to seeing you again at our summer camps or in competition next year!

CALENDAR 2013 – 2014 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

National Championship – Madison, WI
CCCE Chapel Hill Summer Camp
CCCE Asheville Summer Camp
CCCE Fayetteville Summer Camp

Thursday – Sunday, May 8-11, 2014
Wednesday – Saturday, June 25-28, 2014
Wednesday – Saturday, July 9-12, 2014
Wednesday – Saturday, July 30-Aug. 2, 2014

THANK YOU TO OUR 2013 – 2014 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSORS!

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

MORE SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT IS NECESSARY to fully realize the goals of our outreach program. If you can join us in this important mission, please contact Sue at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com

THANK YOU TO OUR 2013 – 2014 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 CCCE to host our State Finals!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators who served for the 2013-2014 season: Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Frances Knox and Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinators), Russell Johnson and Robert Jessup (Durham Regional Coordinators), Philip Entzinger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger (High Point Regional Coordinator), Christine Scheef and Lindsey Granados (Raleigh Regional Coordinators), John H. Anderson, Jr., (Wilmington Regional Coordinator), Ken Campbell, Sheila Chavis, Laura Jenkins, Carlos Mahoney, Chris Nichols, John O'Neal, Katy Parker, Mark Sumwalt, and Kim Vukovich.

Special thanks also to our Site Coordinators who served at Regionals in the 2013-2014 season!
Asheville: Cindy Bryson, ***Charlotte:*** Beverly K. Moore, ***Durham:*** Patti Clapper and Lakisha Chichester, ***Fayetteville:*** Elizabeth Owens, ***Greenville:*** Kristin Miller; ***High Point:*** Karen Parrish, ***Raleigh:*** Fran LaFrankie and Michelle Keely, ***Wilmington:*** Brandy Jo Lea.

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