

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2012

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

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL COMPETES AT NATIONALS!

By Sue H. Johnson

NCAJ Mock Trial Program Administrator



Team members (and one sibling) enjoy the view atop a stone cabin on Sandia Peak, more than 10,000 feet above sea level.

On May 1 - 6, North Carolina state champion Gaston Christian School traveled to the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Forty-six teams, from 42 states as well as from Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, and South Korea, converged on the Hyatt Regency in downtown Albuquerque, prepared to argue the case of *United States v. Rawley Winsor*. In this fictional case based loosely upon the novel *Sinister Pig* by New Mexican author Tony Hillerman, former United States Representative Rawley Winsor stands trial for solicitation of murder committed by former intelligence officer Budge DeBaca. Students had only 5 weeks to prepare for the trial, as the complex case, full of red herrings and unexpected twists, was only released for pre-trial preparation on April 1st.

Team members arrived in Albuquerque late in the evening on Tuesday, May 1st. Numerous family members and friends accompanied the team to lend encouragement and support. On Wednesday, in between preparing diligently for competition, the team members rode the tram up to the top of Sandia Peak – over 10,000 feet above sea level – where they hiked in snow and enjoyed a vista spanning 11,000 square miles! During the Thursday evening pin exchange, they had the chance to meet the other teams in a relaxed atmosphere before the excitement of competition round the following day.

On Friday and Saturday, the team competed against students from Florida, New Jersey, Arkansas, and Oklahoma in four preliminary rounds. They did an excellent job, winning two of their four rounds and losing other ballots by very close margins. The team placed 28th overall; full results can be viewed on the NHSMT site at <http://www.2012nationalmocktrial.org/>. Megan Pearson earned one of only ten Outstanding Witness awards for her compelling portrayal of "Budge DeBaca," the confessed assassin who implicated Congressman Rawley Winsor in a murder-for-hire of a former Marine and Department of Homeland Security field officer.

The students had a fantastic time working together to prepare for Nationals. As one of three freshmen on the team, Jamison Brown attested: "Mock trial has impacted my life so much this season. It has shown me what teamwork can accomplish, [and] taught me that a group can get . . . work done as it can play." Megan agreed: "Nationals was phenomenal! It was the first time our school had ever been, so we were excited just to be there. Competing against four incredible teams was really fun. I enjoyed every minute of our time in New Mexico. It was a great way to cap off my senior year!" And team captain Jordan Brown summed it all up, writing "It was such an honor and a privilege to end four years of high school Mock Trial by representing North Carolina at the National Competition. I will never forget the amazing experience in Albuquerque, New Mexico, facing the best Mock Trialers in the world with my team. A big thank you to the North Carolina High School Mock Trial Competition . . . and my beloved coach, Mrs. Jane Painter, for making this experience possible."



The team enjoys lunch at "The Forque" restaurant, scene of a meeting between alleged co-conspirators Budge DeBaca and Rawley Winsor

THANK YOU AGAIN TO OUR 2011-12 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!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .

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.***