



MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2012

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

NC MOCK TRIAL TEAM RETURNS SAFELY FROM THE BIG APPLE!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator

Imagine you have been working hard for months, preparing to join 35 other outstanding high school mock trial teams at the Empire City Invitational in New York City. The excitement builds as you prepare to leave your small N.C. town to compete against teams from 18 states and 5 countries – teams which all excelled in their state or national competitions. Finally the time arrives, and you find yourself standing on the Brooklyn Bridge, amazed at the Manhattan skyline, eagerly awaiting your first round of competition. Soon you will compete against teams from California, South Korea, Florida, and Ireland, and two of your team members will earn individual awards as Outstanding Witness and/or Outstanding Attorney. What an adventure! Yet little do you know the additional challenges you are about to face – for Hurricane Sandy, or “Frankenstorm,” will strike NYC on the competition weekend!



The Central Carolina Homeschoolers mock trial team from Randolph County doesn't have to imagine this scenario because they just returned from the Empire, bound together not only by their mock trial rounds, but also by their experiences being stranded in Brooklyn in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. The students were accompanied by family members as well as their attorney advisor, Montgomery County ADA Darren Allen. Fortunately the Brooklyn

Bridge Marriott never lost power, providing a safe haven in the storm and even serving as a FEMA headquarters.

Making the most of their situation, the stranded students enjoyed the extra time with other “mockers” from around the world, growing particularly close to the students from Ireland, South Korea, and North Myrtle Beach. Team member Lydia Boyette recounts “We all played cards and did karaoke.” But more important lessons were learned as well; Lydia notes “It was a wonderful team building experience. We’re now not just a team, but a family.” With a combination of rented cars and a tour bus chartered from Holiday Tours of Randleman, NC, the team eventually arrived home safe and sound.

Congratulations to the team on their fine showing in NYC! You can read more about their adventures at <http://courier-tribune.com/sections/news/local/mock-trial-team-returns-safely-nyc.html>. And thank you to Darren Allen and all of the other legal professionals across N.C. who volunteer countless hours so students can have such wonderful opportunities!

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: SHIPMAN& WRIGHT, LLP and THE LAW OFFICES OF JAMES SCOTT FARRIN

This month we want to recognize the contributions of our **Wilmington** and **Durham** Regional sponsors and volunteers. **Shipman & Wright, LLP** has sponsored the Wilmington regional for a number of years, enabling hundreds of area high school students to reap the benefits of the mock trial program. We are grateful for their long-term support! Gary Shipman shares his insights as a program sponsor:



“Do you remember the days as a child/teenager when you wondered what it was *really* like to be a lawyer? No, not the times when you watched TV (Perry Mason) and knew that what you were watching was fiction. For me, it was the occasions when I was in high school and sat in the Wake County Courthouse watching real lawyers represent real clients and argue real cases. That’s when I wondered – what is that *really* like and will I ever really know?”

“The closest to reality that I ever came as a high school student was as a member of my high school debate team. That experience helped me sharpen my advocacy skills, but it all seemed so ‘canned’ to me. What I longed for was the real world experience of examining a witness; scoring points on cross examination; arguing my client’s position before a judge and a jury; the thrill of victory; the agony of defeat. Something that a “best orator” trophy from debate tournaments just didn’t satisfy.

“I have been a proud sponsor of NCAJ’s Mock Trial Program for several years, and have participated (and continue to participate) as a judge for years prior to our sponsorship. I participate in this Program for incredibly selfish reasons – I get back far more than I give. Each year, I relive those years of wondering what it was really like by watching students actually find out. Year after year, I sit in stunned amazement at the level of analysis and preparation demonstrated by the teams, and occasionally feel that twinge of jealousy of not having been able to do that myself as a high school student. Each year, I see the eager eyes of the participants as they receive constructive critique from ‘real lawyers,’ and finish that day with a renewed sense of why I chose (and why many of them will choose) this profession.” **Gary Shipman, Shipman & Wright, LLP**



The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin is the new sponsor of the Durham regional; we are glad for their involvement and look forward to what we hope will be another long-term relationship! Tara Williams describes the reasons behind JSF's decision to support the program:

“Many student participants in mock trial competition describe and value the experience as an opportunity to grow and learn in more ways than they would have imagined. Attorney volunteers in the program watch the young adults grow in knowledge about the legal system, about analytical thinking and about team playing. Attorneys also see the students grow in their confidence

and in their aspirations. That is truly a rewarding process to witness. Volunteers often say that they get more out of a volunteer opportunity than the recipients of their volunteerism. We think this is particularly true for mock trial competitions. The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin is delighted to support this effort by sponsoring the Durham regional competition for the NC High School Mock Trials.” **Tara Williams, The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin**

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS: SITE AND REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Our regional sponsors provide the financial support to help cover the myriad expenses involved in hosting a Regional Competition. Equally vital is the “boots-on-the-ground” service of our Regional and Site Coordinators. John H. Anderson Jr. describes his experiences as the Regional Coordinator for the **Wilmington** Regional Competition:

“I became involved in the NCAJ Mock Trial Competition three years ago, when I was asked to serve as a volunteer juror for the Wilmington Regional Competition. As I watched the students put on their cases, I realized that this was a program every trial lawyer needed to be involved in. Just watching the students present their cases, it was evident to me that they had all worked very hard. The following year I jumped at the chance to volunteer as the Regional Coordinator for the Wilmington Competition. As far as volunteering goes, I think all lawyers should consider this program because it helps you to reflect on where you started out (with no experience), and it allows you to encourage teenagers with an interest in our great profession to continue their journey. For me, it's an opportunity to be involved with a passion of mine while helping others to experience the adrenaline of a jury trial.”

John H. Anderson Jr., Wilmington Regional Coordinator



The **Durham** Regional Competition is overseen by Regional Coordinator Russell W. Johnson and Site Coordinator Patti Clapper. Both of them wrote to share their reasons for serving in these significant capacities:

“I have to be honest here: becoming a Regional Coordinator for the high school mock trial competition was not something that I wanted to do. First, it is a lot of work. Second, it takes a lot of time. Third, coordinating the competition means you have less opportunity to watch the trial—something I really enjoyed when I used to volunteer as a juror. Yet when I was asked to take over the coordinating role in Durham in 2010, I couldn't say no because I knew firsthand what an important impact the program had on the students who participate.

“When I was in high school, it was during a mock trial competition that I knew I was going to be a lawyer. Years later at UNC law school, I was fortunate enough to be on the trial team; and there I learned more about teamwork and the preparation it takes to be a successful advocate than any of my courses taught me. And after

becoming a practicing attorney, I had the chance to help a friend coach a high school team and saw students make amazing transformations right in front of my eyes. One student told his coach later that the mock trial program was the first time he had ever equated hard work with success—a revelation that led to a dramatic improvement in his academic performance. That once-struggling student is now well on his way to becoming a lawyer.



“So it was with a sense of commitment and obligation that I took on the task of coordinating the Durham regional competition. But much to my surprise, I found it to be an even more rewarding experience than volunteering as a judge or juror! One of the best parts of coordinating was I got a chance to see more of the teams and could watch the dramatic improvements they made from the early to later rounds. It still amazes me that every year I catch a glimpse of the proverbial “light bulb going off” in a student’s mind when they realize they have a talent for rhetoric or the quick wits to deal with an objection, or the poise to stand and deliver in a room full of people.

“I’m honored to continue to be part of this program that combines the time and talents of so many busy volunteer attorneys from across the state and that continues to provide students with the same types of inspiring positive experiences that I have had and witnessed. I hope the mock trial program continues to grow and thrive and that I see some eager and determined teams this year in Durham. Work hard and good luck!” **Russell W. Johnson, Durham Regional Coordinator**



“I have been involved in the mock trial program for over 10 years. I started out as a site volunteer in Durham, Wake and Cumberland counties. When the opportunity arose to take over the site coordinator in Durham, I decided to do it. I enjoy seeing the students dressed up professionally and love to hear them argue their cases. I have seen quite a few students who could give some practicing attorneys a run for their money. The mock trial competition is a great program that introduces the younger generation to the law and I am proud to be a part of it.” **Patti Clapper, Durham Site Coordinator**

THANK YOU to the attorneys who have already agreed to serve as **attorney advisors** this season. As new schools register, we will be in touch with those new attorneys who have contacted us and expressed a willingness to help. ***In addition, we need attorneys to advise teams in the following locations:*** **MISENHEIMER (near Concord), RANDLEMAN (between Asheboro and Greensboro), and RALEIGH.** If you can help, please contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com.

CALENDAR 2012/2013 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

Final Team Registration Deadline
Team Roster, Registration Fee, Photo Release Due
Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty
Regional Competition
State Finals - Campbell Law School, Raleigh
National Championship - Indianapolis, Indiana

Friday, November 30, 2012
Friday, January 11, 2013
Friday, January 18, 2013
Saturday, February 9, 2013
Friday & Saturday, March 1 - 2, 2013
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

We still need more sponsorship support to fully realize the goals of our outreach program. If you can join us in this important outreach, please contact Sue at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com

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.*