



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 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"

### **HEADS UP! CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS: 2012-13 CASE TOPIC**

*By Sue H. Johnson*

*CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator*



The 2012-2013 Competition case was released on September 21, 2012; it is available for free download on the CCCE website. Written as an original case for our competition, it focuses on a youth soccer player, Mia Donovan, who suffered debilitating injuries after sustaining multiple concussions on a youth soccer team. Mia's single parent, Casey Donovan, has filed a civil negligence suit against Rubicon Soccer Club, Club Director Jordan Reddick, and Mia's club soccer coach Shannon Dempsey. Additional witnesses for the plaintiff include researcher Dr. Bevin Register and Mia's school soccer coach Tobin O'Reilly; the defense team will call the co-defendants as well as Mia's friend and fellow student Chris Durant.

While fictional, the case draws upon actual North Carolina law and current research in the field, exposing mock trial students to a topic that is interesting, timely, and important. Thank you to our case committee for their time, input, and contributions to this year's case; I am grateful to Case Committee Chair Gordon Widenhouse, Carlos Mahoney, Katy Parker, and Burton Craige for their leadership and insights in refining the case. We look forward to watching the students bring the case to life at the Regional and State Finals competitions!

### **THE SPEED OF TRUST**

*By Sue H. Johnson*

*CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator*

Last month we focused on "Starting with Why": recognizing the importance of keeping our "WHY" as the foundation for what we do. The CCCE Mission Statement and "motto" remind us that the mock trial program seeks to create engaged citizens who gain valuable academic and life skills while learning to value our trial-by-jury system. This year, each monthly mock trial newsletter will highlight several of our program sponsors and volunteers, both to thank them and honor their service, and to inspire others to invest time in "creating tomorrow's leaders."

One of our long-term supporters is Mark Sumwalt, who has sponsored the Charlotte regional since the very beginning. In his article (below), Mark comments on how the public's perspective of the legal profession is positively impacted by the dedicated involvement of attorneys, judges, paralegals, and law students in the mock trial program. Indeed, as a (former) mock trial coach myself, seeing the selfless service of so many legal professionals had a major impact not only on my students, but also on me, prompting me to change careers. I am privileged to support the CCCE Board and all of you as you dedicate so many hours to making this program possible!

All too often, attorneys are portrayed by the media in a very negative light, leading members of the public to distrust legal professionals or question their motives. In his book *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen M. R. Covey addresses the enormously damaging effect of a loss of trust on business and personal relationships, noting that a lack of trust causes increased stress and reduced effectiveness in both work and personal arenas. Covey describes “13 Behaviors of High Trust Leaders,” many of which correspond strongly with the Professional Rules of Conduct. For example, consider the following:

- **Talk Straight**: Be honest. Demonstrate Integrity. Don’t manipulate people or distort facts.
- **Demonstrate Concern**: Genuinely care for others, especially those who can’t do anything for you.
- **Right Wrongs**: Demonstrate personal humility. Do the right thing.
- **Get Better**: Be a constant learner. Develop feedback systems. Act upon the feedback you receive.
- **Practice Accountability**: Take responsibility for results. Don’t blame others when things go wrong.
- **Keep Commitments**: Say what you are going to do, and then do it; keep commitments at all costs.

These principles form the foundation of the legal profession; integrity, accountability, concern for others, and a desire to “right wrongs” underlies much of the work that attorneys do. Too often the public does not recognize this truth. But you can help to change their misperceptions! As Mark Sumwalt so aptly notes below, by investing in the mock trial program, legal firms and professionals not only positively impact the lives of countless students across North Carolina, they also build bridge of trust between the legal profession and members of the public. I know you will enjoy reading about the experiences of Mark Sumwalt, Phil Entzminger, and Beverly K. Moore. And to find out how you also can get involved, contact me at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com) or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at [Rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto:Rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com).

### **SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: THE SUMWALT LAW FIRM**

**The Sumwalt Law Firm** has sponsored the Charlotte Regional competition since the very beginning. Mark Sumwalt describes his experiences as a program sponsor: “I got involved in Mock Trial early on because (1) Becky [Rebecca Britton] asked me to and I have never been able to tell her no and (2) I believed it was the best program that our organization offered that attempted to make a difference in the community and the public image of our profession. My firm began sponsoring the regionals I think the very first year that sponsorships were introduced in the early 2000s and have sponsored them every year since. I became more actively involved during my year as President in 2003-2004 because Nationals was hosted in Charlotte in 2005. I enjoyed assisting in the arrangements to secure the courthouse and Lowe’s Motor Speedway for the festivities for the students, attending the banquet, and attending the final round with Allen Bailey.



I have been a judge or juror almost every year it has been held and thoroughly enjoy this involvement. I continue to stay involved for a number of reasons. First, the benefit to the students is substantial. It helps them overcome their fear of public speaking, think on their feet, and plant the seed that they can do anything in life to which they commit. Second, it remains the best thing that our organization does for the public image of our profession. I wish other organizations would be involved for the same reason. Finally, it is a way to give back to the community and it is individually rewarding. The appreciation expressed by the students, parents, advisors, etc. is inspiring and reminds me that we are making a difference at least in the lives of those participating.

Thanks for continuing to allow me the opportunity to be and stay involved. And thanks to you and Becky and all the others who devote so much of their time and energy to making this program a success.”

The CCCE is very grateful for the long-term support of firms such as The Sumwalt Law Firm. We are also excited when new firms support the program by sponsoring a regional competition! **Hardee and Hardee, LLP** is sponsoring our Greenville Regional for the second straight year, helping to make this educational opportunity available to schools in the eastern part of N.C. Their willingness to invest in the Greenville community is much appreciated! It makes the job of our Regional Coordinators, such as Phil Entzminger (see below), much easier!

### **FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS: REGIONAL AND SITE COORDINATORS**

For the past several years, current **Greenville Regional Coordinator Phil Entzminger** has served in various capacities at that competition. Phil describes his experiences using his trademark humor and insights: “I am asked many (many) times by friends, colleagues, and family members: ‘Why, oh why, are you in charge of the Pitt County competition year after year?’ The short answer I always give: ‘It’s all about the money.’ Once they realize I am joking and that the regional coordinators who spend countless hours putting together their individual sites are paid nothing, the actual answer becomes clear. Regional coordinators simply have passion and purpose for what they do, both in their jobs and their communities.



When I was in high school, I was actively involved in the Teen Court program. Throughout college and law school, I was constantly engaged in mock trials. In fact, my favorite courses in law school were advanced trial advocacy and pre-trial litigation. In 2008, I was employed at a civil law firm in Greenville and assisted with the regional Mock Trial Competition. However, I quickly realized I missed the courtroom and was spending too much time on the phone and not enough time in front of judges and juries. Thus, I took a job as Assistant District Attorney for Pitt County in 2009.

Since then, I have still tried to keep my ‘foot in the door’ regarding getting young people involved in our legal system - and not just seeing them in court as defendants. From advising and judging with the Pitt County Teen Court program to acting as regional coordinator for the North Carolina High School Mock Trial Competition, my hope is to increase the interest for our legal system within our schools.

Having worked with students in middle and high school, I can attest that the program increases participants' confidence - both in public speaking and in critical thinking. Whether the student is asked to formulate an argument against a popular position or give a persuasive closing statement that will tug at heart-strings, participants in the program are encouraged to passionately and logically represent their teams. Students spend months practicing opening statements, perfecting their questioning techniques, and applying rules of evidence which have even the most seasoned of lawyers scratching their heads. To be sure, witnessing the confidence and creativity the participants bring to the table makes the day worthwhile.

So now I will go back to ordering breakfast and lunch for the judges, photocopying signs indicating where the bathrooms are located, and making sure I have enough stopwatches for each courtroom. Sure, the planning can get arduous. But the real payoff will come on the day of competition. And though not monetary, this payday will be realized in the resolve of all involved, from parents and teachers to coaches and participants.

I wish all teams good luck in the 2013 competition. Arrive ready with your passion, your preparation, and, perhaps most important - *your* purpose.”

Regional Coordinators play a vital role in making sure that the competitions run smoothly. Equally crucial are the behind-the-scenes labors of the paralegals who serve as Site Coordinators. **Charlotte Site Coordinator Beverly K. Moore** describes her long-term service as follows: “I started my involvement with the Mock Trial program as a site volunteer. I went to the old Mecklenburg County Courthouse ready to offer directions, fix food, etc., but that Saturday they were short on scoring jurors so I got to sit on the jury. I had a blast. I got to meet attorneys, judges and paralegals I had worked with. I decided that day that I wanted to keep being a part of the Mock Trial program.



I have been serving as [Charlotte Site] Coordinator for several years now, and I really do enjoy it. I have a great Regional Coordinator in Paul Goodson. He helps fill the long day with lots of laughs! It has truly become a family affair. My mom helps me with the judge's refreshments, my sister is our Power Matcher and my husband helps with all the lifting and whatever else is needed. We also have a wonderful group of site volunteers and scoring jurors that come in and do a wonderful job.

I encourage my paralegal friends to come out and volunteer as a networking tool. You never know who is going to be around. It is a great way to give back to the community. The students that participate in Mock Trials are outstanding, and it is great seeing students be involved in such a program.

I am happy to be associated with such a wonderful program and look forward to continuing to serve as Site Coordinator.”

**WE ARE GRATEFUL** for the program sponsors, Regional and Site Coordinators, site volunteers, scoring jurors and presiding judges, and attorney advisors who invest untold hours in making this program possible!

**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: ASHEVILLE, LUMBERTON, and MISENHEIMER (Stanly County).*** If you can help, please contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com).

### **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	Friday, 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**

**WE STILL NEED MORE SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT** to fully realize the goals of our outreach program to new schools. If you can join us in this important outreach, please contact Sue at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com) or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto: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](mailto:sueheathjohnson@gmail.com), or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Committee Co-Chairs, at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto:rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com) or [mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com).***