



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2013

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

### **DNA EVIDENCE: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION**

*By Sue H. Johnson*

*CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator*

Just as attorneys have the opportunity to delve into many different topics as they prepare for trial, our students are exposed to a variety of fascinating subjects as they engage with our competition case. Last year, our students were introduced to cutting-edge research on the causes, symptoms, and effects of sport-related concussions – much of it conducted at the Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center in Chapel Hill. The topic was a timely one, especially given the ongoing lawsuit against the NCAA and the recent NFL settlement.

This year our students learn about fingerprint and DNA analysis in the affidavit of Forensic Specialist Kris Vinson. Kris Vinson has an impressive C.V., including co-authoring a scholarly paper with two famous fictional NCIS agents, Abby Sciuto and Dr. Donald Mallard! Yet while the television actors portraying NCIS agents often go beyond the bounds of believability, we have tried to confine our case descriptions of CSI investigations to the “real world.” And again we have a local connection: Dr. Maher “Max” Nouredine of ForensiGen, one of the expert presenters at the April 4, 2013 NCAJ CLE “Examination of Forensic Experts in Criminal Cases.” Dr. Nouredine assisted in writing the explanation of DNA analysis in Vinson’s affidavit.



DNA and forensic analysis is an intriguing field to many of our students. To assist those who may want to learn more about DNA analysis on their own, Dr. Nouredine co-authored an introductory article that we have posted on our website. In addition, we posted links to several websites on forensics. Dr. Nouredine’s article with diagrams and the other links can be accessed at <http://ncmocktrial.org/resources/other-resources>.

Even though students are limited to the actual case materials in their trial presentations, we are glad for the opportunity to help interested students explore many of the areas that trial attorneys address in their own practices. We very much appreciate the investment of experts such as Dr. Nouredine who help to bring our cases alive for the students. For more information about Dr. Nouredine and ForensiGen, visit his website at <http://www.forensigen.com>.

## **FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS: CCCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

By Chris Nichols

*Editor's note: Chris Nichols has been involved in all aspects of the NCAJ High School Mock Trial Competition from its inception. He has served as an attorney advisor, judged at regional and state competitions, and recently taught at both the Chapel Hill and Fayetteville summer mock trial camps. In July Chris was elected to serve on the CCCE Board of Directors. Chris practices personal injury and civil litigation in the Triangle area.*



I coached my first mock trial team as a 2L at Wake Forest School of Law. Over the last 20 years I've served as a coach, judge, and juror for mock trial. Every year, no matter how difficult it is for me to set aside the time, I come away from the experience feeling that I got more from the kids than I gave them. It would be impossible to describe every gift this program gives to the lawyers who participate, but here are a few:

1) Wonderment. Remember when the law was new and fresh and exciting? Remember finding out that a rule of evidence turned the course of a trial? When you coach mock trial you see the wonderment and the excitement of discovery of the law in your students.

2) Enthusiasm. Sharing the experience of the "perfect" cross examination or the closing argument that hits just the right note is another benefit of volunteering for mock trial. The students really "get" what makes a statement miss or hit the target. You will get enthusiastic, too.

3) Gratitude. The gratitude you experience is both given and received. The students genuinely appreciate the help you provide to them and the time that you contribute. The parents thank you for truly teaching their children and helping them develop skills such as public speaking, active listening, and analysis. But after each volunteer session, I was deeply grateful to have been part of my students' lives: sharing jokes, learning about them, and bonding through mutual respect for the law and the court system. Mock Trial makes the law fun. For that I am grateful.

**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 attorneys who have contacted us previously and expressed a willingness to help. ***In addition, we need attorneys to advise teams in the following locations: RALEIGH, WAKE FOREST, CONCORD, MONROE (near Charlotte), RAEFORD (Hoke County), and WINSTON-SALEM.*** If you can help, please contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com).

### **CALENDAR 2013 – 2014 MOCK TRIAL SEASON**

Final Team Registration Deadline	Friday, December 13, 2013
Registration Fee (\$150/team) Due	Friday, December 13, 2013
Team Member List, Code of Ethics, Release Forms Due	Friday, January 10, 2014
Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty	Friday, January 10, 2014
Regional Competition (Final roster due)	Saturday, February 1, 2014
Widenhouse Award materials due	Wednesday, February 19, 2014
State Finals - Campbell Law School, Raleigh	Friday – Saturday, Feb. 28 - March 1, 2014
National Championship – Madison, WI	Thursday – Sunday, May 8-11, 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**

**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](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com) or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto: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 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 2013/2014 season: Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Frances Knox and Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinators), Russell Johnson (Durham Regional Coordinator), Philip Entzminger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger and Adrienne Blocker (High Point Regional Coordinators), 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, Elizabeth Spruill, Mark Sumwalt, and Kim Vukovich.***

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