

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by the
NCAJ Mock Trial Committee and the Carolina Center for Civic Education
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"
February 2011

REGIONAL COMPETITION RESULTS

Congratulations to our Regional Champions! They will be competing in our State Finals March 4th and 5th hosted by **Campbell Law School** and sponsored by **Rudolf, Widenhouse & Fialko**. All are welcome to attend Saturday. The NC State Champion will be attending the National High School Mock Trial Championship May 5th-7th in Phoenix Arizona.

Asheville – **Hendersonville High School (Cats), Hendersonville**
Charlotte – **Hendersonville High School (Bears), Hendersonville**
Durham – **C. E. Jordan High School, Durham**
Fayetteville – **NCHE Speech Club, Chapel Hill**
Greenville - **East Carteret High School (Newton's Law), Beaufort**
High Point – **Asheboro High School (Blue), Asheboro**
Raleigh – **Raleigh Charter (Silver), Raleigh**
Wilmington – **Raleigh Charter (Lapis), Raleigh**



Why Mock Trial?

By Robin Setzer
Calvary Baptist Day School
Winston-Salem, NC

My students and I have just concluded our 5th High School Mock Trial Competition and, once again, it has more than met my expectations. This one day competition provides a real world practical application experience, teaches student first-hand the legal system, and increases their analytical and persuasive speaking skills in a fun environment. And yet each year while I, overworked and exhausted, stand to sign in and register a team, I find myself saying, "This will be my last year. I'm overworked, exhausted..." However, following a day of observing my students as they compete, I am once again hooked – not because we made it to the finals or even to the semi-finals because we didn't – but because this simple competition changes lives.

Specifically, this year we had one young man that earned "Best Witness". This young man came to us from another school where the kids called him dumb and the teachers told him he would never amount to much in life due to his physical challenges – he is deaf in one ear and speaks with a lisp. I was hesitant to put him on the team as I was not sure how he would handle the challenge – perhaps I was the one challenged – challenged to see past the obvious. While playing the part of a witness, I saw the struggle on his face as he attempted to articulate every syllable of every word, I

saw him struggling to hear the other attorney and even turn his left ear closer to them straining to hear their questions, and I saw a young man rise above the challenges learning to stand on his own two feet in a competitive setting.

Likewise, this year we had another student that really wanted to be on the team; however, she was extremely shy and never spoke louder than a whisper. So I, wanting to build confidence in her, put her as a backup. Well, the flu hit and we lost several players, putting her officially on the team. For a couple of weeks I worked with her on getting her to project so that a jury could hear her. On the day of the competition, she was so nervous that she physically became ill; however, she pulled it together and did an outstanding job as a witness. She not only projected audibly so the jury could hear her, but she also projected an air of confidence that I had never seen before. She did not earn the highest witness score that day, but that smile never left her face all day long. She is already saying she wants to be a witness next year and possibly an attorney.

I can write paragraph after paragraph of life changing story that I personally have witnessed from our participation in the Mock Trial program, and I often wonder why does this competition produce more dramatic results than some of our other speech and debate competitions (National Forensic League, Congress, Moot Court). I believe the answer is the nature of the competition itself. Many competitions that high school students participate in are segregated – Math students, Science students, Foreign Language students – however; Mock Trial provides a level playing field. All students are needed and all students have an opportunity to equally contribute to the success of the team. Depending on the case material, we need those gifted in various academic areas, we need the outgoing crazy student, we need the logical detail oriented student, and we need the student that does not fit anywhere else. We need them all for a team. . . . together they are all a part of a team. Thanks to all of you for your dedication to our young people! What you do does make a difference.

MANY THANKS TO OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS!

A special thank you to our Regional Coordinators (RC) and Site Coordinators (SC) who volunteer countless hours to organize and run our 8 regional competitions. They are...

Asheville: **Mark Melrose (RC), Cindy Bryson (SC)**

Charlotte: **Paul Goodson (RC), Beverly King (SC)**

Durham: **Russell Johnson (RC), Patti Clapper (SC)**

Fayetteville: **Rebecca Britton (RC), Elizabeth Owens (SC)**

Greenville: **Sonia Privette, Phil Entzminger (RCs), Debi Welsh (SC)**

High Point: **Rich Manger , Adrienne Blocker (RCs), Karen Parrish (SC) (assisted by Rhonda Rodenbough and Drew Bland)**

Raleigh: **Christine Scheef, Sheila Chavis (RCs), Lindsey Granados (SC)**

Wilmington: **John Anderson (RC), Brandy Lea (SC)**

Over **375 volunteers** from across the state dedicate a portion or their whole Saturday to assist with judging, scoring, and assisting in various ways. We cannot thank these individuals enough! It takes an army to put this all together and those who volunteer year-after-year we are so appreciative of.

We also must extend our thanks to our regional sponsors, to **NCAJ** and the **Florence Rogers Trust** for their generous donations and support.

Asheville-**Melrose, Seago and Lay**

Charlotte-**The Sumwalt Law Firm**

Fayetteville-**Britton Law, PA**

Greenville-**Lawyers East**

High Point-**Crumley Roberts LLP**

Raleigh-**Twiggs, Beskind, Strickland & Rabenau , PA**

Wilmington-**Shipman & Wright, LLP**

CALENDAR SET FOR 2010/2011 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

STATE FINALS COMPETITION DATE **FRI/SAT, MARCH 4 & 5, 2011**

NATIONAL COMPETITION DATE **THURS/SAT, MAY 5-7, 2011**

***If you are interested in serving on the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee, please contact either Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Committee Co-Chairs, at Rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com or mqwidenhouse@yahoo.com.*

***If you would like to coach a team next season, let us know and we'll connect you with a high school in your area!*

For more information on the NCAJ High School Mock Trial Program, visit the NCAJ website at www.ncaj.com, click on public information and mock trial.