



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER -- DECEMBER 2017

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Carolina Center for Civic Education*  
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"

### **GRIT AND RESILIENCE – KEYS TO EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT**

*By Sue H. Johnson, CCCE Mock Trial State Coordinator*



**“Sustained. Move on, Counselor.”** The student attorney looked disconcerted. During the months of pre-trial preparation, the attorney advisor assured her that the testimony was admissible if she argued the point correctly. She was certain she had done so. Nothing to do now but move on. Calm and composed, she soon outmaneuvered the opposing witness, obtaining key points for her team’s closing argument.

**During oral comments after the trial,** the judge commended her for her unflappable demeanor. “You argued that point well. I sustained the objection to see how you would handle it – and you responded in admirable fashion. Well done!”

**Unexpected rulings from the bench.** Obstreperous witnesses on cross examination. Less time than desired for direct examination. Every student attorney has experienced one – or all – of these scenarios. And every witness has faced unexpected questions on cross, giving them pause as they formulate an answer. The pressure can seem overwhelming to some, while others relish the challenge and confidently rise to the occasion. Why the difference? Why do some get flustered, while others flourish?

**The presence, or lack, of grit and resilience**, that's why. Research by social psychologists, business leaders, and educators reveals the crucial role of grit and resilience in promoting lifelong health, wellbeing, and success. Fortunately, these qualities are not inborn; they can be developed with coaching and guidance. And mock trial provides a perfect venue to develop these qualities in a safe environment.

**According to Merriam-Webster**, grit is "firmness of character; indomitable spirit." Individuals with grit display courage, tenacity, and perseverance in the face of adversity. They learn to manage their emotions, overcome fear or doubt, and embrace vulnerability. They understand that valuable lessons can be learned from defeat.

**"Gritty" individuals embody the words of Teddy Roosevelt**, who proclaimed: "The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by sweat and blood...who errs, who comes again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds...who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."



**Failure, for those who dare, is inevitable.** Yet resilience enables you to "pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again." Resilience is defined by author Andrew Zolli as "the ability of people, communities, and systems to maintain their core purpose and integrity among unforeseen shocks and surprises." Zolli further describes resilience as a "dynamic combination of optimism, creativity, and confidence, which together empower one to reappraise situations and regulate emotion." Resilience enables you to learn from your failures, persevere through obstacles, and move forward with hope, believing that change and improvement are possible.

**In short, resilient individuals have a growth mindset** and a determination to learn from their mistakes. They trust that by working hard, their efforts can affect outcomes and achieve excellence in the end.

**Teachers and advisors play a crucial role** in helping youth develop a growth mindset. By modeling grit and resilience themselves, encouraging students to learn from mistakes, and exhibiting confidence in their students' ability to handle adversity, coaches make a lasting difference in their students' lives.

**Just like real attorneys**, students across North Carolina put untold hours into preparing for their mock trials. Yet even the most diligent student is likely to feel a few butterflies when the words ring out, "All rise." By facing down their fears and proceeding anyway, these students develop grit and resilience that will stand them in good stead as they face obstacles in the future. And by teaching, challenging, and encouraging these students along the way, team mentors play a part in enabling young, shy individuals to blossom into confident, self-assured leaders. What a privilege!

**We hope you'll consider how you can help "create tomorrow's leaders" by investing in eager high school students.** Teams in **Apex** and **Davidson** have asked for attorney advisors to mentor their teams. If you can help or would like more information, contact State Coordinator Sue Johnson at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com).

## **CALENDAR 2017 – 2018 MOCK TRIAL SEASON**

Final Registration Deadline and \$175 Team Fee Due	Friday, Dec. 15, 2017
Team Member List, Code of Ethics, Release Forms Due	Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2018
**Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty**	Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2018
Regional Competition	Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018
Widenhouse Award Nomination Materials Due	Weds., Feb. 21, 2018
State Finals Competition	Fri. – Sat., March 9-10, 2018
National Championship, Reno, NV	May 10-12, 2018

## **THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 – 2018 COMPETITION SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS!**

State Finals:	TBD
Asheville:	Melrose Law and TBD
<i>Supporter:</i>	28 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District Bar Association & Asheville Area Paralegal Assn.
Fayetteville:	Britton Law, P.A.
<i>Supporter:</i>	Cumberland County Bar Association
Gastonia:	The Sumwalt Law Firm
Greenville:	Hardee & Hardee, LLP
High Point:	Manger Law Firm
Pittsboro:	Glenn Mills Fisher & Mahoney, P.A.
Raleigh:	Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, P.A. & Maurer Law
Salisbury:	Rowan County Bar Association
Wilmington:	Shipman & Wright, LLP
<i>Supporter:</i>	New Hanover County Bar Association

**CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW** - partnering with CCCE to host our State Finals!

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR** – also hosting rounds at State Finals!

## **THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 – 2018 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSOR!**

**Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina**

### ***IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .***

***Special thanks to our 2017-18 Regional Coordinators and CCCE Board Members:*** Asheville Regional Coordinator Mark Melrose, Fayetteville Regional Coordinator Rebecca Britton, Gastonia Regional Coordinators Holden Clark and Daniel O'Shea, Greenville Regional Coordinator Phil Entzminger, High Point Regional Coordinator Rich Manger, Pittsboro Regional Coordinator Robert Jessup and Russell Johnson, Raleigh Regional Coordinators Christine Scheef and Lindsey Granados, Salisbury Regional Coordinator Darrin Jordan, Wilmington Regional Coordinator John H. Anderson, Jr.; and CCCE Board Members Gordon Widenhouse, Rebecca Britton, Rich Manger, Bradley Bannon, Adrienne Blocker, Christine Scheef, Brooke Schmidly, Mark Sumwalt, and Valerie Johnson (ex officio).

### ***Special thanks also to our 2017-18 Site Coordinators:***

***Asheville:*** Brett Pinkston, ***Fayetteville:*** Tanja Shurling and Karen Kueny, ***Gastonia:*** Beverly K. Moore, ***Greenville:*** Jeffrey Cannon, ***High Point:*** Rose Pratt, ***Pittsboro:*** Patti Clapper, ***Raleigh:*** Michelle Keely, ***Salisbury:*** Emily Applewhite, and ***Wilmington:*** Brandy Jo Lea.