

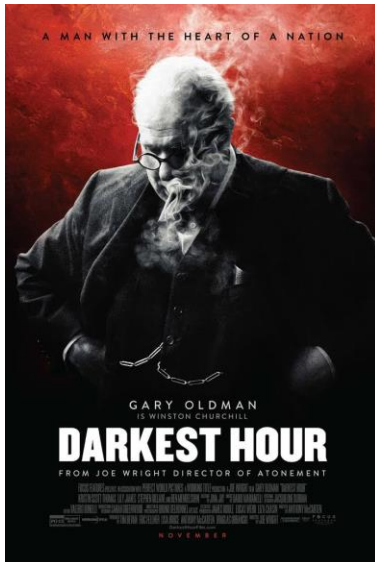


MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018

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TRIUMPHING IN OUR DARKEST HOUR: LESSONS FROM CHURCHILL

By Sue H. Johnson, CCCE Mock Trial State Coordinator



World War II films have enjoyed a recent resurgence – perhaps, as *Guardian* author Andrew Rawnsley surmises – because film directors recognize our yearning for “leadership that combines principle, vision and humanity with the capacity to mobilize and unify people behind a collective and heroic endeavor” (www.theguardian.com/). One of the most inspiring recent releases is *Darkest Hour*, which earned Gary Oldman a well-deserved Golden Globe award for his portrayal of Winston Churchill.

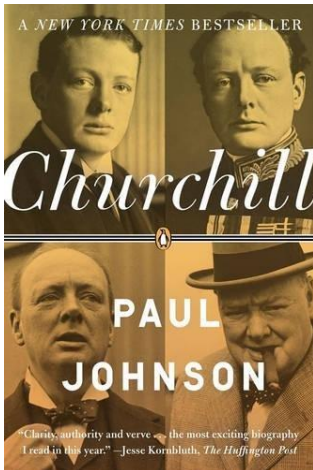
The film focuses on Churchill’s early days as prime minister in 1940, when many in Parliament were advocating negotiating with Hitler in an attempt to stave off invasion. Thankfully, Churchill used his unmatched oratorical skills to “mobilize the English language and send it into battle” in the fight for freedom.

As Churchill cautioned the House of Commons on June 18, 1940, “Hitler knows he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can

stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.” By inspiring the British to stand firm, Churchill arguably saved Western Europe and civilization as we know it. Rawnsley rightly concludes that “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to one man’s brilliance with words.”

I hope none of us ever face an hour as dark as that faced by Churchill and Britain in 1940. Yet even though we are unlikely to impact civilization as Churchill did, we will surely have opportunities to inspire those around us to face difficulties with courage and confidence. What lessons can we learn from Churchill’s conduct during his decades of service to others?





In his biography of Churchill, renowned British historian Paul Johnson details five lessons we can incorporate into our own lives in 2018 and beyond. First, **aim high**. Churchill did not have a tranquil childhood; his parents were distant and uninvolved, and he suffered failures at school. Yet he did not let his struggles deter him. He invested considerable time and effort in improving his weaknesses and reinforcing his strengths. He put himself in situations where he had to learn and adapt, both as a youth and as an adult. Facing the Nazi threat, he knew that negotiation would lead to annihilation and victory was the only option, for “without victory, there is no survival.” The stakes were high, yet he was confident that Britain could, and must, prevail.

Lesson number two: there is **no substitute for hard work**. Churchill’s work habits could be unconventional; he often spent the mornings in bed while writing, consulting, telephoning, or making decisions. Yet he put in many 16 hour days, exhibiting an incredible ability to focus and keep going when the need was great. Wisely, he balanced his hard work with leisure, taking up such diverse pastimes as painting, bricklaying, and gardening. Churchill recognized that a balance between work and play was necessary for maintaining mental and physical health.

Third and perhaps most important, according to Johnson: Churchill **never let failures or setbacks get him down**. He accepted responsibility for his failures and sought to learn from them. As Johnson notes, Churchill’s “powers of recuperation, both in physical illness and in psychological responses to abject failure, were astounding....He had courage, the most important of all virtues, and its companion, fortitude. These strengths are inborn but they can also be cultivated, and Churchill worked on them all his life.” Churchill was resilient. His example serves as a model and inspiration to us.



Fourth, Churchill **didn’t waste time on the “meannesses of life”**: harboring grudges, shifting blame, seeking revenge. He fought hard for his beliefs, but he didn’t waste time or emotional energy engaging in vindictiveness or gossip. Instead, he sought to replace enmity with friendship.

Lastly, Churchill **looked for, and relished, the joy in life**. He did not care about social class or status. He loved a good joke and could laugh at himself as well as with others. He found joy in simple pleasures; he liked to share his joy and give joy. Surely his ability to appreciate the positives in life helped him maintain perspective and hope in the midst of dark times.

No doubt the coming year will bring both unexpected joys and sorrows to each of us. Implementing these lessons drawn from Churchill’s life can help us find light even in our darkest hours and enable us also to inspire those around us to achieve greatness.

 On **February 3**, hundreds of students across NC will strive to achieve their own victory in the **NCAJ High School Mock Trial Competition**. You have a chance to encourage and inspire them by serving as a judge, juror, or site volunteer at one of our 9 regional locations. **For more information or to register**, visit <https://ncmocktrial.org/get-involved/volunteer/register/> or email State Coordinator Sue Johnson at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com. **Join us and make a difference!**

CALENDAR 2017 – 2018 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

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
Mock Trial Summer Camp, Chapel Hill	July 25-28, 2018

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

State Finals:	Ward Black Law
Asheville:	Melrose Law <i>and</i> TBD
<i>Supporter:</i>	28 th 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, LLC
<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 Coordinators 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; 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:*** Brandi Jo Lea and Brianna Huff.

*****If you are interested in supporting or learning more about the NCAJ High School Mock Trial program, please contact Sue Johnson, State Coordinator, at sueheathjohnson@gmail.com, or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Mock Trial Committee Co-Chairs, at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com or mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com.***