



MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER MARCH 2018

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CENTRAL CAROLINA HOMESCHOOLERS WIN 5TH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP!

By Sue H. Johnson, CCCE Mock Trial State Coordinator



On Saturday, March 10th, the Central Carolina Homeschoolers – and 2017 National Champions – earned the right to defend their national title by defeating the strong East Chapel Hill High School White team in a thrilling display of legal knowledge, professionalism, and skill. The Hon. Lucy N. Inman once again presided over our final round, joined by the distinguished juror panel of S. Quon Bridges, Burton Craige, Robert Edmunds, Elizabeth Kuniholm, and new state finals sponsor Janet Ward Black.

Spectators were on the edge of their seats as East Chapel Hill High argued for the state,

urging jurors to find student Alex Buckley guilty of first degree arson and felony murder in the death of classmate Carly Walsh. The Central Carolina Homeschoolers put on an able defense, seeking to raise reasonable doubt by pointing the finger at Carly's abusive former boyfriend, Todd Larkin. When the final results were announced, the Central Carolina Homeschoolers were overjoyed to hear they would represent our state for the 5th time in six years, advancing to the national championship in Reno, Nevada on May 10-12!

This year's state finals field was the toughest yet, hosting twelve outstanding teams from across North Carolina. The two-day state championship event began on Friday, March 9 with a tour of the North Carolina Supreme Court led by Justice Paul Newby. The students enjoyed learning about appellate advocacy, the history of the Court, the rule of law, and the making of legal precedent in North Carolina. Teams also relished the chance to take photos in the beautiful courtroom prior to returning to Campbell Law to be greeted by adjunct professor and attorney Allegra Collins.



After partaking of food and fellowship at the evening reception, the students were inspired by the words of attorney Burton Craige as he relayed stories of his work representing those whose rights have been violated, including many subjected to sexual harassment decades before the #MeToo movement. Afterward, Jessica Gross of the J.H. Rose High School Green team was recognized as this year's recipient of the "M. Gordon Widenhouse Jr. Award for Visionary Leadership." (*see next article*)



On Saturday morning, the students got down to business as they advocated both sides of our criminal case *State of Utopia v. Alex Buckley*. This fictional case, authored by program alumna Elise Wilson and State Coordinator Sue Johnson, was well-received by teams and judges alike and ran perfectly balanced, with each side prevailing in exactly 50% of trials. Competitors enjoyed the extra challenge of utilizing an enlarged map exhibit generously donated by Mark Valentine of *A Visual Advantage*. Distinguished judges presided over each preliminary round, and dozens of noted attorneys volunteered their time by serving as scoring jurors. In addition, more than a dozen paralegals, students, teachers, and supporters worked behind the scenes to make the day a success (*see full list of volunteers below*).

At the conclusion of the two preliminary rounds, twelve students earned "Best Attorney" and "Best Witness" awards to the applause of family and friends. Everyone then waited with bated breath for the announcement of the two finalists: East Chapel Hill White and Central Carolina Homeschoolers Veritas. Winning the coin toss, the Central Carolina Homeschoolers elected to represent the defendant, and all proceeded to room 312 for a final round highlighted by compelling witness portrayals, nuanced objection arguments, and impassioned closing arguments worthy of the occasion.



Reflecting on their experiences this year, CCH student Madysen Bailey remarks, "This year has been so enjoyable. Getting to see teams that we had met in prior years and making new acquaintances was a highlight of both Regionals and States. The experience of preparing for competition with such amazing teammates was not only fun but also life-changing....It has been a year of building deeper friendships as we continue to mature as individuals, mockers, and lifelong friends."

Teammate Emily Polson is also thankful for the experience. "My incredible coaches, supportive family and encouraging teammates push me to be better; in mock trial and life! This mock family is such a blessing and I'm thrilled to share another adventure with them.... I'm also grateful for the people who make mock trials happen: organizers, volunteers, and the many committed mockers in North Carolina, whose excellence pushes CCH to work our hardest."

CCH Captain David Bainbridge agrees. "Our coaches have challenged us and pressed us toward excellence, and we enjoy every minute of it (or most of them at least). Every year, I feel the bar keeps getting raised higher. The quality of competition keeps getting better and better. We encountered many awesome student attorneys and witnesses this year, and feel very fortunate to have the honor of representing North Carolina in Reno."



Congratulations to our State Champs and to all twelve state finals teams for their accomplishments this year! (*For complete results, visit ncmocktrial.org and look under “latest news” in the right-hand column*).

Many thanks to State Finals sponsor Ward Black Law, Mark Valentine of *A Visual Advantage*, State Final host Campbell Law School, and all those who volunteered as judges, jurors, and site volunteers to make our state finals event possible. We couldn't have done it without you! (For full list, see below).

J.H. ROSE HIGH SCHOOL TEAM CAPTAIN WINS WIDENHOUSE AWARD!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE State Coordinator



At the State Finals evening reception on Friday, March 9, **Jessica Gross** of the J.H. Rose High School “Green” team received the “M. Gordon Widenhouse Jr. Award for Inspirational Team Leadership.” This award was established to honor the visionary leadership of Gordon Widenhouse, who has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the North Carolina Advocates for Justice High School Mock Trial Program, now in its twenty-sixth year. The award is only open to seniors who are recommended by a team advisor. It seeks to

recognize an individual who may not be the “star” of the team; rather, the student may be the “glue” who holds the team together through practices and competition.

Long-time J.H. Rose teacher coach Liza Knight explains why she nominated Jessica for the award: “I have worked with many outstanding student leaders in my sixteen years of coaching mock trial, including several Widenhouse Award winners, but Jessica may be the most outstanding leader I have ever coached.”

In her nomination essay, Liza extols Jessica’s work ethic, passion for justice, and ability to inspire the best from her teammates. No task was too small for Jessica; she took an active role in “recruiting, assigning roles, fundraising, helping to train new members, helping plan practices, identifying areas for improvement, motivating teammates, and planning travel logistics.” Jessica even helped create an advanced independent study class in law and justice to help strengthen the program. Liza concludes, “She has been my rock the past three years, and I am not sure what I am going to do without her next year.”

In her application essay, Jessica describes the impact of mock trial on her growth as a leader. “Mock trial has left a much bigger impact on me than I on it. It has given me confidence in my academic abilities and my public speaking. I have found a love for law, especially civil, that has shaped the way I want to contribute to the world in the future. I have found a place and niche for myself, and I hope that through my captain position on my team, I have helped cultivate that in others as well.”

We know that Jessica is one of many students across North Carolina who possess increased self-confidence, greater critical thinking abilities, and new leadership skills because of their participation in mock trial. We extend a hearty congratulations and best wishes to Jessica and all of the other graduating seniors, and we look forward to hearing about your future accomplishments!



CALENDAR 2017 – 2018 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

National Championship, Reno, NV
Mock Trial Summer Camp, Chapel Hill

May 10-12, 2018
July 25-28, 2018

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

State Finals: Ward Black Law
Asheville: Melrose Law and TBD
 Supporter: 28th Judicial District Bar Association & Asheville Area Paralegal Assn.
Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.
 Supporter: 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
 Supporter: New Hanover County Bar Association

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with CCCE to host our 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; 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.

*****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.***

THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 STATE FINALS SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS!

Statewide Program Sponsor: North Carolina Advocates for Justice

State Finals Sponsor: Ward Black Law

State Finals Host: Norman Wiggins Campbell University School of Law

Special recognition to Dean J. Rich Leonard, Allegra Collins, Larry Essary, Linda Davenport, Jo Anne Phillips, and Brian Church

Presiding Judges:

NC Court of Appeals: Wanda Bryant, Richard Dietz, Christopher Dillon, Richard Elmore, Lucy Inman, and John Tyson

NC Superior Court: G. Bryan Collins, Rebecca Holt, and Paul Ridgeway

NC District Court: Keith Gregory, Jefferson Griffin, Curtis Stackhouse, and Christine Walczyk

Scoring Jurors:

Karl Amelchenko, Matthew Ballew, Bradley Bannon, Carmen Bannon, Janet Ward Black, Daniel Blau, Anne Bleyman, S. Quon Bridges, Dylan Buffum, Burton Craige, Geroge B. Currin, Andrew DeSimone, Robert Edmunds, Caroline Elliott, Rob Ennis, Whitney Fairbanks, Keith Gordon, James Grant, Robert Hale, Staples Hughes, Robert M. Hurley, Jillian C. Katz, Elizabeth Kuniholm, Tacker LeCarpentier, Matt Lee, Thomas K. Maher, Deborrah L. Newton, Mary Pollard, J. Michael Ricks, Christine Scheef, John Taylor, Keith Williams, Nick Woomer-Deters, Amanda Zimmer

Board Members and Site Volunteers:

Adrienne Blocker, Rebecca Britton, Jenny Creech, Kelly Eckhardt, Frankford Johnson, Sue Johnson, Michelle Keely, Richard Manger, Amy Marschall, Vera Morris, Alex Pritchard, Lexus Sanders, Christine Scheef, Logan Serino, Charlotte Tate, Gordon Widenhouse, and Diane Wright