



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER MAY-JUNE 2018

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### **STATE CHAMPS HIT THE JACKPOT, EARNING SIXTH PLACE AT NATIONALS!**

*By Sue H. Johnson  
CCCE State Coordinator*



**“All rise. Court is now in session.”** In 23 courtrooms scattered across three courthouses in downtown Reno, NV, hundreds of eager high school students stood, trying to squelch their nerves as Round 1 of the National High School Mock Trial Championship tournament got underway on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. Students from 42 states, South Korea, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands had been preparing diligently to prosecute or defend Jordan Kendall, who was accused of murder in the (fictional) death of Taylor Garcia at the Burning Man festival outside of Reno. Now the time had come for these state and territorial champions to demonstrate their best trial advocacy skills.

**Our state champions, the Central Carolina Homeschoolers,** were one of those enthusiastic teams. When they arrived in Reno, they had already spent untold hours perfecting their case presentations. As team member Allyn Sims relates, “The preparation heading into Nationals was intense, but invigorating. Working around the clock and knowing that my team is, too, is an inspiring feeling: that everyone is pursuing a common goal, and no one is alone in doing so. Regionals and States, and then the preparation and competition of Nationals, really taught us how to work together as one unit, growing stronger and closer as the season progressed.”



**Although intense, Nationals is also a time** to make new friends among like-minded peers. As Julia Bainbridge remarks, “Nationals was REALLY fun!! I enjoyed the pin exchange where I met so many sweet mockers! The teams we faced were adept but also so kind. I especially enjoyed de-stress-dancing before a couple of the rounds with several girls from the other teams.

I think our coaches thought we were crazy but it was worth it.” Emily Polson agreed: “We met and competed against excellent teams. So many of them were genuinely kind and professional, even though all 46 teams are there to win. One of the many fun memories is from our first round. We had a little bit of extra time that morning. Talking with our soon-to-be opponents turned to laughing, then breathing exercises to calm nerves, and somehow even a little dancing to loosen up before things got serious.”

**On Friday, our team faced tough competition** from Kentucky and Indiana, but they rose to the challenge, presenting their case with passion and professionalism. Attorney coach Darren Allen notes, “One of the most enduring benefits of mock trial is that it gives an opportunity for students to develop resilience. This year, we faced some tactics we had never seen before. Just like every year, of course, we also faced some really strong competition. I’m proud that our kids responded to every challenge with skill, poise, and grace. Our kids really represented our state well.”

**On Saturday, our team comported themselves superbly** in one of the best mock trial rounds I have ever seen, against the outstanding team from Creekview High School in Texas. The objection arguments by both sides were nuanced and well-defended; the witnesses were



compelling; the attorneys were polished; and the presiding judge was knowledgeable and fully engaged. It was an incredible experience to be part of a round of such high caliber! Our team wrapped up the day with an excellent round against the Tennessee champion, then grabbed a quick bite to eat before the awards ceremony.



**After dancing and talking with their new friends** in the Reno Convention Center, team members and supporters took their seats for the announcement of individual and team awards. Seth Finch sums up the energy in the room: “My favorite part (other than the competition itself) was the awards ceremony. Every time a name or team was called, people would stand and applaud or give high-fives. It was great to see people from opposite sides of the country congratulate each other like that.” Given the high caliber of the competition, our team was thrilled when junior David Bainbridge earned recognition as a top ten Outstanding Attorney at the event. Even more exciting was the team’s award for 6<sup>th</sup> place in the nation!



**As the weekend drew to a close**, team members reflected on their experiences. David Bainbridge summarizes the event thusly: “Nationals this year was an incredible and sobering experience. As always, every single one of my teammates and coaches put in their utmost to propel the team as a whole forward to do our very best. One of the aspects of nationals that I personally enjoy the most is the community. Simply meeting teams and interacting



through competition and random meetings in the hallway is an incredible opportunity. However, I could not be more thankful for the blessing of my team as a whole, they encourage constantly and constructively, and we all work as a unit to push each other to excellence.” Madysen Bailey agrees. “It was an honor for us to represent North Carolina. Although winning trophies and awards is nice, being able to spend time with our mock family and growing closer as friends is so much more rewarding. When I look back on my time in mock trial, I know I’ll remember the friendships and memories we made as a team most of all.” Darren Allen concludes, “We are grateful for the tireless dedication of Sue Johnson, the CCCE Board, and the hundreds of sponsors and volunteers that made this experience possible.”

**CALENDAR 2017 – 2018 MOCK TRIAL SEASON**

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 *and* TBD
- Supporter:* 28<sup>th</sup> 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

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

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

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***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](mailto:sueheathjohnson@gmail.com), or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Mock Trial Committee Co-Chairs, at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto:rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com) or [mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com).***