

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER
Brought to you by the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee
August 2009
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"

STANDING UP INSTEAD OF SITTING BACK
(The impact of our decision to accommodate in 2005)

In 2005 NCATL hosted the National High School Mock Trial Competition (NHSMTC) in Charlotte. It took more than 3 years to plan this 3 day event. Teams from 42 states and two territories were only 6 weeks away from coming to Charlotte for the big event when a request came from New Jersey to change the competition dates. As it turned out, New Jersey's State Championship team was from an Orthodox Jewish high school - The Torah Academy. The students could not compete from sunset Friday through darkness Saturday due to their religious observances. They had earned the right to compete, but the schedule prohibited their meaningful participation. While it was impossible to change dates so close to the event, NCATL, in spite of fierce opposition by the national competition board, came up with and implemented a reasonable accommodation that would allow the Torah Academy to fully compete. We knew we did the right thing then. We saw it in the faces of the Torah Academy team and their families. We saw it in the faces of the rest of the students who learned the importance of making this kind of accommodation.

After the 2005 competition, the NHSMTC board resolved never to make such an accommodation again. Our NC representatives on the national board resigned and NC and NJ pulled out from the NHSMTC and joined forces to start our own national competition known as the American Mock Trial Invitational (AMTI).

This issue was revisited in Atlanta this past spring when The Maimonides School won the Massachusetts State Championship and faced the same issue with NHSMTC that New Jersey faced in 2005. Unfortunately, the Georgia host did not take a stand. In the end the Maimonides School fought for an accommodation and won. Jeffrey Kosowsky is a parent of one of the Maimonides School team members (Michael Kosowsky) and an alumnus of the Maimonides School in Brookline, Massachusetts. He shares with us below their decision to stand up instead of sitting back and what role our stand in 2005 played in that decision and in winning the accommodation:

*Perhaps surprisingly, the initial reaction of many of the Maimonides School parents and students was a mix of disappointment and resigned understanding that perhaps nothing could be done to allow our students to participate while observing the Jewish Sabbath without seriously disrupting the entire tournament schedule. The students were still excited about winning the Massachusetts state championship. Believing that there was no alternative, the team accepted the fact that at the 2009 Atlanta championship they would be forced to forfeit the Saturday rounds and give up on any chance of winning or even placing in the top half. Such is the price that sometimes must be paid for remaining faithful to one's beliefs and traditions. **However, our reaction changed from acceptance to dogged activism as we learned about the noble behavior of the North Carolina Trial***

Lawyers Association in the face of an intransigent NHSMTTC Board when a similar situation occurred in 2005, the year that North Carolina hosted the championship.

TO READ JEFF KOSOWSKY'S INSPIRATIONAL STORY IN FULL, SEE SEPARATE LINK ON MOCK TRIAL WEBSITE

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

When regional competitions and state finals are held in February and March 2010, we need you to serve as scoring jurors, presiding judges and site volunteers!

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

Sponsor a Regional Competition! For \$3,500 your firm can sponsor a regional competition near you! (The following regions are available for sponsors: Durham, Wilmington, High Point, and Asheville)

For more information on the NCAJ High School Mock Trial Program, visit the NCAJ website at <http://ncatl.org/page/15288/> or call or e-mail Rebecca Britton at (910) 864-6888, Rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com.

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators: Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger, Adrienne Blocker and Celeste Harris (High Point Regional Coordinators), Ken Campbell and Andy McVey (Wilmington Regional Coordinators), Russell Johnson, Carlos Mahoney and Katy Parker (Durham Regional Coordinators), Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Michelle Robertson, John O'Neal, Chris Nichols, Mark Sumwalt, Elizabeth Kuniholm and Steve Schmidley.

Special thanks also to members of the Legal Assistant's Division who have agreed to serve as site coordinators!

Asheville: Debbie Dante and Cindy Bryson, **Charlotte:** Beverly King, **Durham:** Patti Clapper,

Fayetteville: Diane Long and Beth Owens, **High Point:** Karen Parrish,

Wilmington: If you are interested in serving as site coordinator for Wilmington, please contact us!

TEACHER'S CORNER



Terry Sanford State Championship Team 2006

The Mock Trial program has been an invaluable part of my curriculum since starting our AP US Government and Politics course in 2000. We have fielded at least one team every year since except one. We have even had as many as 8 teams in one year. Although all of our teams weren't successful in terms of the competition each student learned a great deal about the law and the legal profession. I have been extremely fortunate to have two outstanding attorneys serve as my coordinators. They have coached teams themselves, but also helped find other attorneys to coach additional teams. Randy Gregory worked tirelessly for years to help build the program. He is the one who found attorney-coaches for those eight teams. During his tenure, we won 9 regionals and were state runners-up in 2001. After a year off, Scott Flowers stepped in and helped us win two more regionals and the 2006 State Championship. Without those two men it would have been difficult to keep our program going.

The students who have participated have all gone on to college and most are doing very well. Many have graduated and moved into careers. It has been interesting to note how many chose political science or law as a major. All of these students have benefited from their participation because they developed confidence in public speaking and enhanced their ability to think on their feet. I was relieved to hear that the program will remain intact because I have come to rely on it to hone leadership and speaking skills, as well as help develop confidence in students in ways that just cannot be replicated in a normal classroom environment. I wish we'd had this program when I was in school. I hope more schools will become involved. Everyone associated with this program should be proud of the quality product that has been produced for all of these years!

Robert Hight
Terry Sanford High School
Fayetteville, NC

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Lionel Earl - Mock Trial impacting his future!

My name is Lionel Earl and I was fortunate enough to have the chance to participate in Mock Trial at Terry Sanford High School in Fayetteville. The complex and competitive nature of the program pushed me to develop skills of critical thinking and public speaking. My mentorship and exposure to the legal field influenced me to seek a liberal arts education as a possible foundation for Law School. But perhaps more importantly, I had fun with my friends learning about the court system and I suspect I will fondly look back at the memories I created during this time.

I am currently a sophomore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and I am pursuing a degree in Political Science. The skills and confidence I gained in High School Mock Trial has allowed me to pursue opportunities such as the Southeast Asia Summer (SEAS) Program where I am now studying abroad in Singapore and Thailand. In Mock Trial, I gained the ability to think deeply about a subject and argue both sides; this has become essential to the discussions and debates in my International Migration and Citizenship course.

Continuing with my passion for Mock Trial, I joined the organization at UNC last year. Having met some success and support from my colleagues, I am now a captain on the Carolina Mock Trial team and I look forward to mentoring and teaching younger members about the organization. In addition to this, Mock Trial opened the way for me to join other related activities. For example, I am now a counsel on the UNC Attorney General Staff in which I take real cases involving students violating the Honor System. In this way, I have found a way to apply my skills to help the university community. Needless to say, I am grateful for the openings that my experience in Mock Trial has provided and I hope that others will continue to have the chance to participate in the program.

*Lionel Earl
Class of 2006
Terry Sanford High School, Fayetteville, NC*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are pleased to announce our new partnership with Campbell University School of Law! Campbell's beautiful new law school building in Raleigh will be our home for Mock Trial State Finals in March, 2010. We'll have more on this partnership in our September newsletter!

Mock Trial 2009/2010 Calendar:

Teacher training: Raleigh 10/17/09, Triad 10/24/09

Case Release: 10/9/09

Registration deadline: 12/11/09

Payment/Rosters deadline: 1/13/10

REGIONAL COMPETITIONS: 2/20/10

STATE FINAL COMPETITION: 3/20/10

Thank you to the following sponsors/contributors to the Mock Trial Program:

The Florence L. Rogers Charitable Trust

Regional Sponsors for 09/10 season:

Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm

Fayetteville: Hutchens, Senter & Britton, P.A.

State Finals: Rudolf, Widenhouse & Fialko

***Sponsorships are available for Durham, Wilmington, Asheville and High Point. For information, call or e-mail Rebecca Britton at (910) 864-6888, rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com.*

Individual Pledges: Doug & Peggy Abrams, Mike Anderson, Brad Bannon, Don Beskind, Janet Ward Black, Steve Bowden, Cliff Britt, Becky Britton, Wade Byrd, Heidi Chapman, Joe Cheshire, John Cox, Burton Craige, Kathleen Glancy, Gary Jackson, Lucy Inman, David Kirby, Albert Kirby, Liz Kuniholm, Carlos Mahoney, Andy McVey, Mark Melrose, Phillip Miller, Chuck Monnett, Chris Nichols, Annemarie Pantazis, Katy Parker, Spencer Parris, Doug Parsons, Karen Rabenau, Lloyd Smith, Adam Stein, Don Strickland, Mark Sumwalt, Hank Teich, Hoyt Tessener, Howard Twiggs, Bob Whitley, Elise Whitley, James Williams.

Mark Valentine - The Visual Advantage, Raleigh, NC: Donating regional competition signs, and signs and exhibits for state finals

Larry Wolfe - Wolfe Audiovisual Productions, Fayetteville, NC: Donating audiovisual services for promotional videos and filming Championship round at State Finals.

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with NCAJ to host our state final competition!