



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2012

*Brought to you by the  
Carolina Center for Civic Education and the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee  
"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"*

### **FORMER "MOCKER" GIVES BACK AS ATTORNEY ADVISOR AT ALMA MATER!**

*By Liza Knight*

*Mock Trial Teacher Coach, J.H. Rose High School*

After coaching mock trial for eleven years, it is easy for me to come up with a long list of reasons why I believe the North Carolina Advocates for Justice High School Mock Trial Program is one of the best programs for a young person to get involved with: It improves students' public speaking and critical thinking skills, it encourages teamwork and collaboration, it promotes ethical behavior, and it gives young people positive role models in the attorneys who generously give of their time. I have been reminded of all of these wonderful benefits this year as one of our former team members has now returned as an attorney coach.

Caroline Lawler first joined the J.H. Rose mock trial teams in 2003, when she was a junior in high school. She quickly became one of our strongest team members and was named the captain of our varsity team her senior year. Under her leadership, her team won the state championship and represented North Carolina at the national championship the year that North Carolina hosted the national tournament. (I still have pictures of her and her teammates dancing at the dance party that used to be the Saturday night of the state tournament, but she has threatened to stop coaching if I ever show the pictures to anyone.) Caroline took the valuable knowledge and skills that she gained from participating in the high school mock trial program and put them to good use while pursuing her undergraduate degree at Wake Forest University, where she also competed in mock trial.

Nine years later, Caroline has now returned to the Rose mock trial teams, but this time as one of our attorney coaches. Caroline has now graduated from Wake Forest's Law School and is working in the District Attorney's office in Greenville. She was sworn-in in the same courtroom where we held mock trial practices when she was in high school. When I looked at the picture of her being sworn in, I flashed back to a decade ago when she would stand in that same spot and argue objections with her attorney coach, Jeff Miller. Jeff and I are now thrilled to have her back as a coach.



Caroline is now doing a remarkable job coaching our teams. She is incredibly generous with her time, which I know is difficult since she is just starting out her career as an attorney. The students love working with her and are learning so much from her expertise. When I asked one of our team members what he thought of our new attorney coach, he responded, "It is so cool getting to work with her. She really understands mock trial and what we are going through. It motivates us to think that she was sitting where we are sitting several years ago and now she is an attorney."

Attorney coaches and teacher coaches spend many hours working with students to prepare them for competition, and at some point, I'm sure each of us asks ourselves if it is really worth all of the time and effort. I can assure you that it is. When I watch Caroline work with my current students, I see the positive influence that participating in mock trial has had on her life, and I couldn't be more proud that she has decided to follow the model of her coach Jeff Miller by giving back to future generations through volunteering with the mock trial program.

### **SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: CRUMLEY ROBERTS LLP and TWIGGS STRICKLAND & RABENAU, PA**

In December we want to recognize the long-term contributions of our **High Point** and **Raleigh** Regional sponsors and volunteers. **Crumley Roberts** has sponsored the High Point regional for many years, enabling hundreds of students in the western piedmont to learn about trial-by-jury. The High Point competition is consistently one of our most popular regional sites, and the support of Crumley Roberts is a key part of the event's success.



Don Strickland and Karen Rabenau of **Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, P.A.** are tried and true supporters in our Raleigh Region. Karen shares her thoughts on the program: “Mock Trial is a wonderful way that NCAJ gives back to our future leaders. Mock Trial equips students with lifelong skills in public speaking, advocacy and critical thinking, building their self-confidence. It also enforces core values of hard work, preparation, and teamwork. Mock Trial educates students about the American justice system and the way we resolve disputes in our society. As Mock Trial team members, students have the opportunity to meet and work with practicing attorneys, which is a great way to promote and preserve the integrity of the legal profession.

“I was a national moot court team member many moons ago in law school. Being part of that team was a great learning experience for me, and I remember vividly the nervous energy before standing up to give my first argument and

the feeling of self-confidence I had when I rested my first case. I am a firm believer that each and every student who participates in Mock Trial will gain something from the experience and that regardless of the career path they choose later in life, skills learned in Mock Trial will serve them well.

“One of our founding partners, the late Howard Twiggs, who served as President of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice and as President of The American Association for Justice on the national level, was a passionate advocate for our civil justice system and educator. We are proud to carry on that tradition in sponsoring and being a part of Mock Trial. We also want to send our heartfelt thanks to Becky Britton for the endless amounts of energy she puts into the program and to the volunteers who share their skills and enthusiasm for the law with students across our state.” **Karen Rabenau, Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau**



## **FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS: REGIONAL AND SITE COORDINATORS**

**Raleigh** Regional Coordinator Christine Scheef brings a wealth of experience to her role. “I first became involved with the High School Mock Trial Program in 1996, when I graduated from college and took a job with the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers (now the N.C. Advocates for Justice). During my first year on the job, I



worked under the State Coordinator, Erin Reynolds; after she moved out-of-state, I became the State Coordinator myself, and served in that role for two years. Competition days were busy, and I did not always have the opportunity to watch a full round. But once all the teams were in their respective courtrooms and the rounds were under way, there were usually at least a few free minutes to observe. Over and over again, these students left me in awe. They showed such poise. Even those who were clearly nervous and unused to speaking in front of a crowd were resolved. The stories that I heard from coaches, of students who initially clung to note cards and didn’t make eye contact but ended up winning best witness or best attorney awards, were equally amazing.

“When I left North Carolina in early 1999, I did not imagine that I would find myself immersed in the mock trial program again more than 10 years later. After finishing law school in 2006, my family and I moved back to

North Carolina. I was thrilled when Rebecca Britton and Gordon Widenhouse asked me in the fall of 2010 to serve as a regional coordinator in Raleigh. The program provides wonderful opportunities for students to learn about the law, to develop public speaking skills, and to achieve whatever individual goals they have set for themselves. I believe in the program so much that when I learned that its website was due for an overhaul, I volunteered my husband, a web designer and developer, for the job. Justin worked closely with Program Coordinator Sue Johnson to develop the new website and continues to provide ongoing support as issues and needs arise. We are both glad to contribute our skills to the program, and we feel tremendously lucky to be a part of it.” **Christine Scheef, Raleigh Regional Coordinator**

When dedicated long-term **Raleigh** Site Coordinator Lindsey Granados stepped down to welcome a new addition to their family, Fran LaFrankie and Lakisha Chichester enthusiastically agreed to try to fill Lindsey’s shoes. Lakisha describes her reasons for taking on the Site Coordinator role: “When I volunteered for the first time at the regional mock trial competition last year in Durham, I was a paralegal student at Meredith College and part-time legal assistant. Helping out required a minimal time commitment, and I could spend a few hours networking with paralegals, attorneys, and other legal professionals. I arrived early and had an opportunity to chat with legal professionals from all areas of law. I watched the enthusiastic students arrive with their family, friends, and supporters. I worked behind the scenes in the courtrooms, and, before I knew it, I was so wrapped up in the excitement and energy of the day that a few hours turned into a whole day! Besides making personal and professional connections, I appreciated the opportunity to witness the students’ achievement, professionalism, and camaraderie. The experience was very rewarding, so when the opportunity came up this year to volunteer as a new site coordinator in Raleigh, I jumped at it. I’m looking forward to meeting a new group of volunteers and being a small part of a great organization.” **Lakisha Chichester, new Site Co-Coordinator for the Raleigh Regional**



**High Point** Site Coordinator Karen Parrish has been involved in the mock trial program for more than a decade. Her dedication is a key part of that Regional's ongoing success. Karen remarks on her experiences: "I am a past Chair of the Legal Assistant's Division of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice. I have served as a mock trial volunteer for many years, including serving as the site coordinator at the High Point regional competition



since 2003. In fact, I have made it a family affair. My daughters, Haley and Anna (ages 22 and 17) have both served as volunteers. We all look forward to serving each year. It has given my daughters insight about my job as well as educated them about the legal system.

"It is uplifting to see that the high school students are excited about their participation. It is inspiring to see their level of commitment. The competition day is a long day but I always feel rewarded for having participated.

"My mock trial experience has been enhanced by my working relationship with Richard Manger and Adrienne Blocker, the Regional Coordinators for High Point. The High Point regional competition is expertly organized. Adrienne and Rich run the competition as one expects that they run their law offices, professionally and appreciative of all involved.

"I am proud to be a part of the Mock Trial Competition. The February 2013 competition is just around the corner and it is time to begin recruiting volunteers. I encourage others to participate even if you only have a few hours to spare. Your time will make a difference to those high school students and you will be rewarded in the process." **Karen Parrish, High Point Site Coordinator**

**THANK YOU** to the attorneys who have already agreed to serve as **attorney advisors** this season. ***We still need attorneys to advise teams in the following locations: GREENVILLE, GREENSBORO, CARY, and WINSTON-SALEM.*** If you can help, please contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com).

### **CALENDAR 2012/2013 MOCK TRIAL SEASON**

Team Roster, Registration Fee, Photo Release Due	Friday, January 11, 2013
Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty	Friday, January 18, 2013
Regional Competition	Saturday, February 9, 2013
State Finals - Campbell Law School, Raleigh	Friday & Saturday, March 1 - 2, 2013
National Championship - Indianapolis, Indiana	Thursday - Sunday, May 9 - 12, 2013

### **THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSORS!**

**Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina**  
**Mary Duke Biddle Foundation**

**We still need more sponsorship support** to fully realize the goals of our outreach program. If you can join us in this important outreach, please contact Sue at [SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com](mailto:SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com) or CCCE Vice-President Rebecca Britton at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto:rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com)

## **THANK YOU TO OUR 2012-13 COMPETITION SPONSORS!**

### **State Finals: Rudolf Widenhouse & Fialko**

Asheville: Melrose, Seago & Lay, P.A.  
Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm  
Durham: The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin  
Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.  
Greenville: Hardee & Hardee, LLP  
High Point: Crumley Roberts, LLP  
Raleigh: Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, P.A.  
Wilmington: Shipman & Wright, LLP

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

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

***Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators who have agreed to serve for the 2012/2013 season: Mark Melrose (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), Russell Johnson (Durham Regional Coordinator), Philip Entzminger (Greenville Regional Coordinator), Rich Manger and Adrienne Blocker (High Point Regional Coordinators), Christine Scheef (Raleigh Regional Coordinator), John H. Anderson, Jr., (Wilmington Regional Coordinator), Ken Campbell, Sheila Chavis, Elizabeth Kuniholm, Carlos Mahoney, Chris Nichols, John O'Neal, Katy Parker, Elizabeth Spruill, and Mark Sumwalt.***

### ***Special thanks also to our Site Coordinators who will serve at Regionals in the 2012/2013 season!***

***Asheville: Cindy Bryson, Charlotte: Beverly K. Moore, Durham: Patti Clapper, Fayetteville: Elizabeth Owens, Greenville: Kristen Miller; High Point: Karen Parrish, Raleigh: Lakisha Chichester and Fran LaFrankie, Wilmington: Brandy Jo Lea.***

***\*\*If you are interested in serving on the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee, please contact either Sue Johnson, Program Coordinator, at [sueheathjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:sueheathjohnson@gmail.com), or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Committee Co-Chairs, at [rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com](mailto:rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com) or [mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com).***