

## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

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*Carolina Center for Civic Education*

**"Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"**

### **REGIONAL CHAMPIONS ADVANCE TO STATE FINALS!**

*By Sue H. Johnson*

*CCCE Program Coordinator*



On Saturday, February 6, 2016, nearly 700 high school students excitedly entered courthouses across North Carolina, ready to argue the case of *State of Utopia v. Grayson Zayne* in our 24<sup>th</sup> annual NCAJ High School Mock Trial competition. From Asheville to Wilmington, students ardently sought to prove Zayne guilty of first degree murder in the morning and fervently fought to acquit Zayne in the afternoon (or vice-versa). After three intense rounds, the following regional champions earned the right to compete at State Finals, hosted by Campbell Law School in Raleigh on March 11 – 12:

**Asheville Regional Champion:**

**Charlotte Regional Champion:**

**Durham Regional Champion:**

**Fayetteville Regional Champion:**

**Greenville Regional Champion:**

**High Point Regional Champion:**

**Raleigh Regional Champion:**

**Wilmington Regional Champion:**

HARC Alpha

Gray Stone Day School Garnet

East Forsyth High School

J.H. Rose High School Blue

J.H. Rose High School Green

Gaston Christian School Red

Central Carolina Homeschoolers Veritas

Wake Classical

**THANK YOU** to the many legal professionals who volunteered their time as presiding judges, scoring jurors, and site volunteers at the Regional competitions. Altogether, **22 judges, 290 attorneys, 85 paralegals, and 20 law or pre-law students** volunteered their time to make the Regional competitions a success. We could not have done it without you!



### **CASE BALANCE: THE STREAK CONTINUES!**

*By Sue H. Johnson*

*CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator*

Eighty-six teams took part in our regional competitions on February 6, an increase of 12% from the previous year. Because we know students and teachers invest untold hours in their case preparations, we strive to provide them with cases that are educational, balanced, and fun. This year's criminal case dealt with issues such as hazing, social media fads, academic fraud, and forensic entomology. The students' hard work paid off in performances that were compelling and believable – many of our judges could hardly believe that the students were still in high school!

The CCCE, and previously NCAJ, have often created original cases for use in our state competition. This year's case was a bit different, modified from the 2015 PA state case due to the work involved in hosting the 2015 National High School Mock Trial Championship in Raleigh last May. Many NC-specific references were added, however, including references to a Krispy Kreme donut run and to the "Save the Fox" bone marrow donor drive on behalf of Judge Carl Fox.

Since 2012-13 we have tracked the outcomes at Regionals to measure case balance. Our cases have proved to be well-balanced, making the outcome of each trial dependent upon the students' own skills rather than upon the "luck of the draw." We are happy to report that our 2015-16 case was balanced as well. Across all preliminary trial rounds statewide, the prosecution won 48% and the defense won 52% of the trials. Of the 252 ballots cast by our scoring jurors in those rounds, 123 were won by the prosecution (49%) and 129 by the defense (51%).

All of us at the CCCE want to provide our students with the best possible educational and competition experience. We are pleased we have once again delivered a case that was enjoyable and fair to both sides.

## **THANK YOU TO OUR 2015 – 2016 OUTREACH PROGRAM SPONSOR!**

Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of North Carolina

## **THANK YOU TO OUR 2015 – 2016 COMPETITION SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS!**

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

Asheville: Melrose Law, PLLC

Supporter: 28<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Bar Association

Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm

Durham:

Supporter: Durham County Bar Association

Fayetteville: Britton Law, P.A.

Supporter: Cumberland County Bar Association

Greenville: Hardee & Hardee, LLP

High Point: Manger Law Firm

Raleigh: Leone Noble & Seate and Twiggs Strickland & Rabenau, Co-Sponsors

Wilmington: Shipman & Wright

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

## **CALENDAR 2015 – 2016 MOCK TRIAL SEASON**

Widenhouse Award Nomination Materials Due

Weds., Feb. 24, 2016

State Finals Competition

Fri. – Sat., March 11-12, 2016

National Championship, Boise, ID

May 12-14, 2016

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

***Special thanks to our 2015-16 Regional Coordinators and CCCE Board Members: Asheville Regional Coordinators Mark Melrose and Marion Parsons-Groat, Charlotte Regional Coordinator Jennifer Errington, Durham Regional Coordinators Russell Johnson and Robert Jessup, Fayetteville Regional Coordinator Rebecca Britton, Greenville Regional Coordinator Phillip Entzminger, High Point Regional Coordinator Rich Manger, Raleigh Regional Coordinators Christine Scheef and Lindsey Granados, Wilmington Regional Coordinator John H. Anderson, Jr.; and CCCE Board Members Gordon Widenhouse, Rebecca Britton, Rich Manger, Adrienne Blocker, Chris Nichols, Katy Parker, Christine Scheef, and Brooke Schmidly.***

### ***Special thanks also to our 2015-16 Site Coordinators:***

***Asheville:*** Victoria Townley, ***Charlotte:*** Beverly K. Moore, ***Durham:*** Patti Clapper and Lakisha Chichester, ***Fayetteville:*** Elizabeth Owens, ***Greenville:*** Kristin Byrum; ***High Point:*** Adrienne Blocker, ***Raleigh:*** Michelle Keely and Sandra Strickland, ***Wilmington:*** Brandy Jo Lea and Christi Wert.

***\*\*If you are interested in supporting or learning more about the NCAJ High School Mock Trial program, please contact Sue Johnson, Program 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).***