



## MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2013

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

### STATE CHAMPS EXCEL AT HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL NATIONALS!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator

From May 8 – 12, 2013 North Carolina state champion **Central Carolina Homeschoolers** participated in the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Indianapolis, Indiana. Forty-eight teams from 43 states as well as from Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, and South Korea, converged on the beautiful JW Marriott in downtown Indianapolis. North Carolina team members were accompanied by numerous friends and family who lent support and encouragement.



One vocal supporter was Lydia Boyette, a member of the team in 2011-12, its inaugural season. Lydia shares her insights about the team's experiences at Nationals: "When the clock struck midnight on April 1, 2013, members of Central Carolina Homeschoolers (CCH) Mock Trial Team were already anxiously awaiting the release of the 2013 National High School Mock Trial Competition case online. Full of excitement, many members of the team stayed up late to finish reading the case the very night it came out.

"*Vintage Theater Productions vs. Pro Propane Products* was the name of the game. Loosely based on an historical event, the case revolved around determining liability in a propane tank explosion at Vintage Theater. Jo Kerr, an employee at Vintage, knocked with a wrench on a propane tank used for a popcorn warmer to open the valve, which she claimed was rusty. When examined after the explosion, one of the tanks was reported to have rust and traces of anhydrous ammonia, a chemical used in forming methamphetamine. A former employee of Pro Propane Products was convicted of selling methamphetamine after leaving the company. Was the tank damaged by the negligence of Vintage Theater Productions' own employee, or was it damaged as a result of its use in methamphetamine production and improper storage inside an unventilated room at the theater?"

"Hours and hours each day during the month of April were spent practicing! [To prepare for competition, the team arranged scrimmages with the Tennessee and South Carolina teams prior to leaving home. Upon arriving in Indiana, the CCH scrimmaged] teams from Georgia, Minnesota, and New Hampshire. A surprise came for the team members when their first round opponent was the New Hampshire team! [The team argued for the plaintiff three times and defense once, also facing strong teams from Arkansas, New Jersey, and Michigan.]



“At the awards ceremony at the JW Marriott Hotel in the heart of Indianapolis, the grand ballroom was decked out in theater decorations identifying with the national case. Drake Smith, a senior, won one of the top ten witnesses in the nation for his credible portrayal of an expert witness on both sides of the case. Andrew Kelly, also a senior, won a top ten attorney award for his natural abilities to handle difficult witnesses, to form extemporaneous closings, and to argue objections with ease. As the team placements were finally revealed, CCH mock trial team was waiting excitedly and expectantly. ‘And eighth place in America is..... North Carolina.’ Cheers and applause erupted from the three tables occupied by CCH members, their families, and friends. Darren Allen, CCH's attorney coach and assistant district attorney of Montgomery County, and Alice Boyette, teacher coach, small-business owner, and home educator, could not be more proud of the team members' hard work and dedication.

“While sad that nationals are over, the entire team agrees that this experience was extraordinary, and they will never forget it! The CCH team members, Sydney Bartholow, Sarah Boyette, Rachel Cline, Blake Davis, Adam Gaskins, Matthew Gentry, Andrew Kelly, Hannah Presnell, and Drake Smith, and coaches, Darren Allen and Alice Boyette, want to thank CCCE Program Coordinator, Sue Johnson; Secretary, Rich Manger; Vice-President, Rebecca Britton; and President, Gordon Widenhouse, for their encouragement and support. Also, to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Britton, the team wishes to express thanks for attending the rounds, offering advice, and patiently answering hundreds of questions.” -- by *Lydia Boyette, former CCH team co-captain and avid supporter*

The CCCE wishes to congratulate the Central Carolina Homeschoolers for their success; they represented our great state with integrity and excellence! To see the results, visit <http://www.inmocktrial.org/2013Nationals.aspx> and click on “2013 NHSMT Final Results.”

## **MOCK TRIAL NATIONALS LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION**

*By M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr.*

*CCCE President and NHSMT Board Member*

I had the privilege and pleasure to attend the NHSMT in Indianapolis. A number of experiences left an impression on me, in no particular order.

First, I was wandering what I thought were the empty corridors of the hotel late one night. I passed three young women who were lying on the floor, apparently practicing their roles. It was nearly midnight, and these teenagers, likely far from home and without any adult nearby, were not sending text messages or playing video games; they were working. That’s impressive.

Second, I met and interacted with members of the National Board throughout the event. These legal professionals, who came from all across the country, worked diligently: managing the logistics, judging rounds, addressing competition issues, cleaning courtrooms . . . whatever the situation demanded. I never heard a single complaint, despite how early or late it was (and for some tasks it was both). Even more remarkably, the focus of each person, at every turn, was insuring a quality competition experience for the students.

Third, hundreds of people volunteered to make the competition possible. The day started by arriving at the courthouse at 7:30 a.m. (except for those “running the show,” who undoubtedly were there much earlier) and ended at 4:30 p.m. (except for those “running the show,” who undoubtedly stayed much later). With twenty-four trials during each of four rounds, and a minimum of five volunteers in each trial (presiding judge, three scoring



jurors, a courtroom liaison), scores of helpers were needed. I was especially impressed both by the large number of judges and lawyers who came from across the country to volunteer, as well as by the number of them who participated in all four rounds.

Fourth, about 500 students from across the globe participated. [Yes, several foreign countries fielded teams.] While serving as a scoring juror in four trials and also spending the better part of four days with these young people, all of whom were competing to win, I did not see one act or hear one comment I considered unprofessional. Competitors cheered their teammates and congratulated their opponents. It was uplifting.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not say how proud I was of the students on the North Carolina team, as well as their coaches and advisers and the parents who accompanied them. Their skills, their focus, their determination, and their sportsmanship reminded me of what our high school mock trial program is about.

It reminded me again that none of this endeavor would be possible without the countless people who, year after year, for more than twenty-two years, have kept our state program going. Thanks for all you do, and do not ever forget the endless ripple effect of what comes from the time you give to it!

### **SUMMER CCCE CALENDAR**

CCCE Mock Trial Camp – UNC Campus, Chapel Hill

Thursday - Saturday, June 27 - 29, 2013

CCCE Mock Trial Camp – Methodist University, Fayetteville

Thursday - Saturday, July 11 - 13, 2013

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

**SunTrust**

**North Carolina Lawyers Weekly**

**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 served 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 served at Regionals in the 2012/2013 season!***

***Asheville:*** Cindy Bryson, ***Charlotte:*** Beverly K. Moore, ***Durham:*** Patti Clapper, ***Fayetteville:*** Elizabeth Owens, ***Greenville:*** Kristin 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).***