



MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

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2015 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IS RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator



From May 12 – 17, Raleigh was the “place to be” in North Carolina! More than 1,000 high school students, coaches, and supporters descended upon our fair capital city, ready to match wits in the courtroom and enjoy all the sights and sounds of the South. The culmination of years of work by our dedicated volunteers, the 2015 NMSMTC was a resounding success – “the best nationals ever!!” as proclaimed by many students and coaches throughout the week.



Although the trials took place on Friday and Saturday, with scheduled meetings and social events on Thursday, many teams arrived as early as Tuesday



to tour the city and adjust to time zone changes. The efforts of hundreds of volunteers assured that they felt warmly welcomed. From those who hauled tons (literally!) of boxes into and out of hotels and

courtrooms, to those who checked the teams in, to those who manned the information desks and set up for team scrimmages and meetings, to those who took tickets at the Thursday Pin Exchange, it truly took a “village” to start the week off smoothly.

Volunteers continued to work behind the scenes as the trials began, setting up for the Friday night team scavenger hunt, staffing the judge reception, fielding team questions at the information desks, taking photos, assisting with determining the Best Attorney and Best Witness Award winners, putting together flower arrangements, and setting up for the culminating Awards gala.



Meanwhile, hundreds of volunteers were needed for the trial rounds. On Friday, trials were held at four locations: the Wake County Courthouse, Wake Justice Center, Campbell Law School, and the State Bar Building; on Saturday, we utilized the WCC and Campbell Law school, with the championship round taking place at the Justice Center.



More than 200 judges and attorneys volunteered as presiding judges and scoring jurors in the 92 preliminary trials, many serving in multiple rounds. While 150 came from North Carolina, others who accompanied teams from as far away as Wyoming, New Mexico, and the Northern Marianas Islands volunteered to serve. In addition, nearly 100 local paralegals, law students, college students, and other community volunteers served as courtroom liaisons to make sure that the rounds proceeded smoothly. Without the investment of these dedicated volunteers, this amazing competition could not have taken place.

The NC Host Committees are also very grateful for our sponsors and supporters whose financial contributions were crucial to the quality and success of our event. Your vision and generosity in supporting these future leaders of our nation made a life-changing difference in these students’ lives.



Many thanks to all of you who played an important role in the 2015 NHSMT Championship! We hope you enjoyed the experience and were inspired by the students’ talents and enthusiasm. We invite you to continue to make a difference by supporting our state program! For more information, contact Program Coordinator Sue Johnson at SueHeathJohnson@gmail.com. Thank you.

NORTH CAROLINA TEAMS EXCEL AT NATIONALS!

By Sue H. Johnson

CCCE Mock Trial Program Coordinator



When the 2015 Nationals case was released at midnight on April 1, our 2015 state champion team (and 2012 champs) Gaston Christian School excitedly began to ready themselves for the competition. The North Carolina-themed case was loosely based on the recovery of our stolen Bill of Rights (recovered in an FBI “sting” in 2003), and it provided both a fun and an educational experience for the competing students. Students would be able to visit the State Capitol Building where the precipitating (fictional) event occurred, meet Revolutionary War reenactors, and even

view the actual Bill of Rights at a special showing during the Friday night team scavenger hunt! The Gaston Christian team looked forward to all the excitement in store.

Yet our steering committee hoped they would not be alone in representing our great state – for as the 2015 host, NC could send a second team if state registrations resulted in an odd number of teams. Sadly, when the April 15 deadline arrived, 46 teams had registered, and it appeared that only our state champion could compete.



But as those in the legal profession know very well, it isn't over until it's over. And on April 23, the Alaskan team withdrew from the event, opening a slot for a second North Carolina team! When our second place team could not attend on such short notice, the Central Carolina Homeschoolers – third in 2015 and state champs in 2013 and 2014 – jumped at this unexpected opportunity. Having only half as much time to prepare as the other teams, they were up for the challenge.

Both teams argued with skill and passion in the four preliminary trials, and both faced strong competition in their quest. Gaston Christian faced teams from Kentucky, Indiana (a perennial nationals contender), California, and Maine, finishing with an overall record of 2 wins (taking 8 out of 12 ballots) and earning 16th place.

The Central Carolina Homeschoolers also faced tough teams, meeting schools from Louisiana, Washington state (the 2014 national champs), the eventual third-place winner from Massachusetts, and Arizona. In the end, they prevailed in three of their trials (taking 9 of 12 ballots) and earning 5th place!

We applaud both teams for their outstanding success and are thrilled to see their effort and dedication pay off. But far more important than any trophy or medal is the lasting impact of mock trial participation on these students' lives.



As Gaston Christian junior Ashley Layne remarked, "Nationals in Raleigh was absolutely a once in a lifetime opportunity. Not only did I get to compete at a level that was challenging, educational, and thrilling, but I got to do it all alongside the most incredible students from all over the country in the state I call my home. It doesn't get any better than that!"

Central Carolina Homeschoolers student Sarah Boyette agrees. "Nationals this year was the best one I've ever been to. Everything from the pin trading to the closing gala was amazing. It was an honor to hear Justice Scalia speak and to have the opportunity to meet him and get a photo. After placing 3rd in NC, when I found out we were given the opportunity to compete at nationals because of a team dropping out, it seemed unreal - I called it a miracle; and to prepare the case with my closest friends in less than three weeks and then place fifth in the nation was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

Congratulations to both teams – and many thanks to the volunteers who made it possible!! Well done.

CALENDAR 2015 – 2016 MOCK TRIAL SEASON

CCCE Summer Mock Trial Camp, Chapel Hill
Regional Competitions

Weds. – Sat., July 29 – Aug. 1, 2015
Saturday, February 6, 2015

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE . . .

Special thanks to our Nationals Advisory Committee: Janet Ward Black; Rebecca J. Britton; Hampton Y. Dellinger; Justice Robert H. Edmunds Jr.; Hon. N. Lorrin Freeman; Rep. Richard B. Glazier; Dean J. Rich Leonard; Justice Paul M. Newby; Judge Mary Ann Tally; Richard M. Taylor; Justice Patricia Timmons-Goodson; M. Gordon Widenhouse, Jr.; Melvin F. Wright Jr.

Many, many thanks to our Nationals Steering Committee: Adrienne Blocker; Rebecca Britton; Lindsey Granados; Frankford Johnson; Sue Johnson; Carlos Mahoney; Rich Manger; Beth Nichols; Chris Nichols; Katy Parker; Christine Scheef; Amy Smith; Mark Sumwalt; Gordon Widenhouse.

*****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, or Rebecca Britton or Gordon Widenhouse, Mock Trial Committee Co-Chairs, at rebecca@brittonlawfirm.com or mgwidenhouse@yahoo.com.***