



**THE NORTH CAROLINA ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE
HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION**

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee

DECEMBER 2009

“Investing in our future, creating tomorrow’s leaders”

NATIONAL BOARD VOTES TO ACCOMMODATE

In November, the National High School Mock Trial Championship Board of Directors voted and approved a “Policy on Competition Schedule Accommodation for Religious Reasons.”

“[T]he Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship (Board) has determined to adopt a formal Policy providing for a possible modification of the competition schedule due to religious beliefs and practices held by a team’s student members. However, after consultation with the State Mock Trial Coordinators, the Board has decided to maintain the Friday/Saturday competition schedule. The National Board has implemented, effective beginning with the 2010 competition, a Policy that provides a procedure for a team to request an accommodation to modify the National Championship competition schedule for religious reasons. In the event that the firmly held religious beliefs and practices of any of the members of a registered team’s official competition roster conflict with the traditional Friday/Saturday competition schedule such that the team lacks sufficient team members to compete in the Friday/Saturday schedule, an accommodation may be requested pursuant to this Policy. The Policy and the required form to request an accommodation are posted on the NHSMTTC web site, and reference thereto shall be included in the registration materials for the National Championship.”

To review the full Policy as adopted, copy and paste the following into your browser:

[http://www.ncaj.com/file_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/9208/folder/88864/NHSMT+Policy+OnAccommodation+Nov242009+\(2\).pdf](http://www.ncaj.com/file_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/9208/folder/88864/NHSMT+Policy+OnAccommodation+Nov242009+(2).pdf)

This new policy comes due to a multiyear effort of many people across the country. While the issue had been brewing for some time before NCATL hosted Nationals in Charlotte in 2005, it most certainly came to a head at that time when the Torah Academy of Bergen County, an Orthodox Jewish High School won the New Jersey State Championship and asked for a schedule accommodation which would allow them to fully compete and exercise their religious observances from sunset on Friday through darkness on Saturday.

At that time, the NHSMTC Board refused to accommodate this request and NCATL put its foot down and forced the accommodation as host of the 2005 National High School Mock Trial Championship. Following that accommodation, the National Board voted to never make any such accommodation again. As a result, North Carolina and New Jersey withdrew their participation in NHSMTC. This year, an Orthodox Jewish High School from Massachusetts faced the same challenge. The Maimonides School fought in Georgia for their accommodation and won, with the involvement of the Civil Rights Division of the United States Justice Department.

Jeff Kosowsky, a parent of one of the Maimonides School team members, wrote an article for our August newsletter. He recently wrote regarding the new NHMTC Policy:

To me this is even sweeter than the initial news that our kids were accommodated back in May since the Board has now officially and publicly accepted (and even welcomed) the principle of religious accommodation even at the risk that it "may impact to some degree the accuracy of the final rankings." The new policy seems to be both reasonable and fair and at least implicitly removes the stain on the organization created by their outrageous NHSMTC Board policy reaction to the 2005 saga.

Hopefully, this policy will also go a long way to making it possible for NC and NJ to rejoin the national competition either as a complement to or in place of the AMTI event that NC and NJ have been sponsoring in large part to address such religious accommodation.

The Carolina Center for Civic Education Board as well as the NCAJ Board of Governors will discuss participation at NHSMTC at their January 2010 meetings. More news will follow.

In 2005, when explaining to student participants in NC that we were withdrawing from the NHSMTC and why, we told them that sometimes doing what is right means taking a more difficult road. Now they can see the result of that decision and the hard work and commitment of many people dedicated to making a difference.

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation." Robert Kennedy.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Click [here](#) to complete and fax in or email our volunteer form to Rebecca Britton.

FAX: (910) 884-3926, E-MAIL: Rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com

Or contact a coordinator at a site near you to volunteer your time on February 20, 2010, as a judge, scoring juror, or site volunteer!

Judges/scoring jurors

Site volunteers

Wilmington:

Ken Campbell krcampbell@att.net

Debi Welsh debi@lawyeraseast.com

Fayetteville:

Becky Britton Rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com

Diane Long dll@beaverholt.com

Durham:

Russell Johnson rjohnson@hsfh.com

Patti Clapper patti@levineandstewart.com

High Point

Rich Manger ram@mangerlaw.com

Karen Parrish kwparrish@bellsouth.net

Charlotte

Paul Goodson pgoodson@pgoodsonlaw.com

Beverly King bev@tissuelaw.com

Asheville

Mark Melrose Melrose@mountainverdict.com

Cindy Bryson Bryson@mountainverdict.com

Would you like to coach a team? Contact Rebecca Britton at

Rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com or at (910) 864-6888, or one of the regional coordinators listed above.

*****We currently have teams in Wake Forest, Fayetteville, Camden, and Apex that need an attorney advisor!***

How about co-sponsoring our Asheville Regional Competition! The 28th Judicial District Bar has stepped up to contribute. Full sponsorship for the Asheville Regional Competition is \$3,500. We are looking for firms to join in the effort to fully sponsor Asheville. Sponsorship covers most costs of operating the regional competition and sponsors are noted and recognized at the regional event and in our newsletter, brochures and programs.

For more information on the NCAJ High School Mock Trial Program, visit the NCAJ website at www.ncaj.com, click on "Public Information" and "Mock Trial".

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators: Paul Goodson and Jackie Smith (Charlotte Regional Coordinators), 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. Committee Co-Chairs: Gordon Widenhouse (State Finals Coordinator) and Rebecca Britton (Fayetteville Regional Coordinator)

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

Asheville: Debbie Dante, Susan Gaddis, and Cindy Bryson, **Charlotte:** Beverly King, **Durham:** Patti Clapper, **Fayetteville:** Diane Long, Beth Owens, Faith Adams **High Point:** Karen Parrish, **Wilmington:** Debi Welsh

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mock Trial 2009/2010 Calendar:

Case Release: 10/9/09

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

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

THANK YOU TO THE 28TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT BAR FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ASHEVILLE REGIONAL COMPETITION!!!

Regional Sponsors for 09/10 season:

Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm

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

High Point: Crumley Roberts, LLP

Durham: Glenn, Mills, Fisher & Mahoney, P.A.

Wilmington: Shipman & Wright, LLP

State Finals: Rudolf, Widenhouse & Fialko

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 Whitely, Elise Whitley, James Williams, Tricia and Tacker LeCarpentier.

Thomas, Ferguson & Mullins, LLP, Durham, NC: Sponsors of our teacher training workshops held in Raleigh and Greensboro

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 teacher training workshop and Championship round at State Finals.

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - partnering with the North Carolina Advocates for Justice and the Carolina Center for Civic Education to host our state final competition!