

MOCK TRIAL NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee July 2009 "Investing in our future, creating tomorrow's leaders"

MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM SAVED!

Faced with the prospect of having to cut the High School Mock Trial Program, Board members and past presidents for NCAJ came to the rescue at April's meeting of the NCAJ Board of Governors, personally pledging almost \$35,000 to help keep the program going. This dedicated group formed the NCAJ Mock Trial Committee and tasked it to make the program happen this year.

Gordon Widenhouse and Becky Britton are chairing the Mock Trial Committee. The Committee has been hard at work fundraising and restructuring the program as well as recruiting the volunteers necessary to help to "make it happen." The restructuring of the program will make it more affordable and more workable since our "staff" will be made up of members and supporters like you - judges, lawyers, paralegals and legal assistants across the state who have committed their time to help us make it happen. The NCAJ Board and the Mock Trial Committee want to be sure that every high school that participated last year, as well as schools who indicated to us last year that they wanted to start a team, would have the opportunity to participate and compete this season.

NCAJ and the Mock Trial Committee will be looking for your support and help in the coming year to keep this vital program going.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

When regional competitions are held in February 2010, we need you to serve as scoring jurors, presiding judges and site volunteers at a region near you!

If you would like to coach a team, let us know and we'll connect you with a high school in your area!

Sponsor a Regional Competition! For \$3,500 your firm can sponsor a regional competition near you!

For more information on the NCAJ High School Mock Trial Program, visit the NCAJ website at <http://ncatl.org/page/15288/>

Special thanks to Mock Trial Committee Members and Regional Coordinators:

Paul Goodson (Charlotte Regional Coordinator), 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), Michael Wimer (Asheville Regional Coordinator), Michelle Robertson, John O'Neal, Chris Nichols, Mark Sumwalt, Elizabeth Kuniholm and Steve Schmidley.

TEACHER'S CORNER

The mock trial program is an incredibly valuable teaching activity for our young adults and has truly been the highlight in my 11 years of teaching high school math and 6 years practicing law. I started the mock trial team at Gray Stone Day School in its first year of operation (2002) and at Charlotte Country Day School in 2004. The students I work with absolutely love it and get so much from it! This past season, for example, marked the fourth year working with a particular group of students from CCDS. I so enjoyed being a part of their development and watching them improve their skills of teamwork, public speaking, and critical thinking. Each year they'd come to my office on the first day of school asking when the case would be published and when practice would start. They LOVED mock trial, and several plan to continue mock trial at college. I just can't say enough about what a great activity mock trial is for developing our young people and giving them a fun and positive outlet.

Thank you so much!
Janet Fort
Charlotte Country Day School

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Brooke Schmidley - Paying it forward!

Brooke Schmidley was a junior in high school when the NC Academy of Trial Lawyers began its work with the Mock Trial competition. As a member of the Salem Academy team, she competed in the state final her junior year.

Her team won the State championship her senior year and competed in Chicago at the National Tournament. Brooke went on to attend UNC Chapel Hill graduating with honors in Peace, War, and Defense (PWAD). She also participated in AFROTC. She received an educational delay of her active duty service commitment to attend law school and graduated cum laude from the University of Houston Law Center in 2000. In law school, Brooke competed on the law school Mock Trial team, winning the regional championship two years in a row and finishing as a quarter-finalist in the National Competition. She and her partner were the first all female lawyer team to ever win the regional competition.

In January 2001 Brooke entered active duty as a judge advocate. She was stationed at Offutt AFB where she was a prosecutor and handled environmental law issues for the base. In 2003 she was transferred to the 70th Intelligence Wing at Fort Meade, Maryland where she administered the military justice program and continued prosecuting courts-martial. In 2005 she was assigned as a defense counsel at Andrews AFB, Maryland where she defended 26 courts-martial, gaining 7 acquittals in her first 7 cases as a defense attorney. In 2007 she left active duty to join her father in his law practice in Asheboro, NC. She practices primarily in civil litigation. However, due to her extensive criminal defense experience and the trial experience she received in the Air Force, Brooke has qualified to serve as second chair for capital murder cases and is involved in defending 3 capital murder cases, currently.

She also coaches the Asheboro High School Mock Trial team with her father and 3 other young attorneys in Asheboro. She remains a reserve judge advocate attached to Pope AFB, NC.

Brooke says the following about Mock Trial: "Participation in the Wade Edwards Mock Trial competition in high school led me to go to law school which has given me a career I enjoy every day. It taught me critical thinking skills, to think on my feet, and to have confidence in my public speaking abilities. This is the reason I enjoy coaching now so much. I believe the students benefit now and will continue to do so in ways they probably can't imagine. And, I benefit from

watching them gain their own confidence and from trying to teach the hearsay rule to 14 year olds."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mock Trial Program Calendar has been set for the coming season.
Please note the following dates!

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

Case Release: 10/9/09

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

Regional Sponsors for 09/10 season:

Charlotte: The Sumwalt Law Firm

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

**we are seeking sponsors for other regional sites including Durham, Wilmington, Asheville and High Point. For information, call or e-mail Rebecca Britton at (910) 864-6888, rebecca.britton@hsbfirm.com.

Individual Pledges: Doug & Peggy Abrams, Mike Anderson, Brad Bannon, Don Beskine, 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.