

Mock Trial Matters



NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Calendar

- January 8, 2007—Submit preliminary interest form to Judy Yarbro, Dallas Host Director
- January 15—Deadline for Letter of Intent to host in 2010
- February—National Tournament registration information available online from Dallas Host Committee
- February 1—Golden Gavel Award nomination letters due
- March 15—Submit nomination letters for Board candidacy
- March 15—deadline to submit news items for spring newsletter to Stacy Rieke
- April 1—National case release date
- April 1—2010 Bid proposal deadline
- May 10-12, 2007—National Tournament in Dallas, TX!

Round 'Em Up and Move 'Em Out... to Texas in 2007

More than 40 high schools teams each representing their home state will make their way to Dallas, Texas in May to celebrate and participate in the 24th Annual National High School Mock Trial Championship. Plans are being made for a boat-load of fun, with activities that will reflect the ambiance and culture of Texas and, of course, serious mock trial competition.

As expected, there will be four vigorous rounds of competition for all competitors in the newly restored and expanded George Allen courts building in downtown Dallas. The Final Round will take place in the historic Old Red Courthouse.

On Thursday evening, there will be a Pin Exchange at Union Station (Dallas' historic train station), so remember to bring lots of pins from your state to give away. There seems to be a contest as to who will collect the most pins. Might it be you?

No trip to Texas would be complete without having barbeque and going to a rodeo. That's what's planned for Friday night. Bring your boots and a big appetite, *pard'ner*.

The culminating activity for the weekend's tournament is the Awards Banquet. The host committee is working hard planning a fun event in association with the banquet. You've just got to be here.

Registration information will be available to State Coordinators and championship teams on



the Texas website in February. State Coordinators will be notified when the website goes live. Be watching for that.

Be sure your state has returned the Response Form indicating that YOU want your state at Nationals in Dallas. You may contact Judy Yarbro at jyarbro@dallasbar.org if you have not received the brochure.

National Board members who are serving on the Texas Host Committee for the tournament are **Steve Miller**, Secretary of the National Board, and **Judy Yarbro**, Host Director for the National tournament. Both of them say, "Whatever you have to do, get to Texas in May 2007—it'll be a blast!"

Tournament Host Wanted: 2010

The national tournament will be held in Dallas, Texas this year, in Wilmington, Delaware in 2008 and in Atlanta, Georgia in 2009. All three will be exceptional educational experiences (and a lot of fun) for the teams participating in the tournament and all three will offer our students the opportunity to experience the culture and hospitality of three very distinct regions of our great nation.



Hosting the national tournament is admittedly a large undertaking, both logistically and financially. Making the decision to host a tournament as large as the National High School Mock Trial Championship can be daunting and questions must be answered regarding court space, hotel space, social activities and fundraising. But hosting the national tournament can be one of the most rewarding experiences in mock trial. To see students from varied cultural, socio-economic and geographic backgrounds come together to learn about our legal system in a hands-on way, is unlike any other. We have a great 24-year tradition of giving students the opportunity to meet and compete against their peers in an academic activity that is more unique and more challenging than almost any other activity available to them at the high school level. You can be a part of that very exciting experience.

Help us continue the tradition of our superior national mock trial tournament. We are currently in need of states willing to step up to the plate and bid to host the tournament in 2010 and beyond. The Board has streamlined the process in recent years and there is Site Selection Committee that oversees the process and assists potential hosts in preparing a bid to host the tournament. No state program, courthouse or hotel is too large or too small to be considered a possible host. Take the challenge. Host the national tournament. You'll be glad you did.

Contact John Wheeler for more details on the bid process.

Board Elections

There are two positions up for election on the national board in May 2007. Carolyn Ferber resigned her position on the Board in October, citing her departure from the Colorado Mock Trial Program and increased responsibilities in her new position, and Justice Carley's term expires in May, as well. Both terms will be a three year commitment, ending in May 2010. Board members are expected to attend the October pre-tournament board meeting held in the host city each year and to attend the national tournament in May, in addition to the required work on at least two board committees. Letters of nomination are due to John Wheeler by March 15th. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the state coordinators meeting in May.

Get Involved!

Do you have good ideas? Do you want to make a difference in the lives of students nationwide? Do you want to help create an unique educational experience? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need to be INVOLVED in the national organization! "INVOLVED" means more than attending the state coordinator's meeting. It means volunteering to serve on Committees. It means considering hosting the national tournament. Jump in! The water is warm and it's a great time to show your devotion to law-related education through active participation in the National High School Mock Trial Championship. Operators are standing by, so don't delay—volunteer today!



A Word From Our Chair

It's beginning to feel a lot like ... Mock Trial Each and every day!

It's hard to believe that Oklahoma City was more than 6 months ago and that Dallas is less than 6 months away! I'm looking forward to catching up with you and finding out what's been going on with your state programs.

In addition to the normal competition logistics, planning and meetings, the NHSMTC has two new curriculum projects underway that I want to let you know about.

With any luck, the first project will be unveiled at the Dallas Championship this May. We have been working with a Canadian publishing company to put together an American version of a very popular and effective textbook that features mock trial, moot court, and other educational strategies. I'll have more news prior to the 2007 Championship about previews, ordering info and the like.

The second project is brand new – and needs your input. We're working with a computer-based technology company to put together a package of interactive activities for students to learn about and hone their skills in mock trial. This project is still in the early development stage. I'd like to invite anyone interested to share thoughts about what types of content and skills might be highlighted through this curriculum package. I would love to get more people involved in the development end of this as well. This is definitely not a situation where there can be too many cooks! Please do let me know if you're interested.

All my best wishes to you and yours for the New Year. May it be filled with peace and prosperity. See you in Dallas!

Happy Trials!

Rules Changes

During the October 2006 pre-tournament Board Meeting, the Board of Directors voted to amend language in the following Rules of the Competition: **1.4, 3.2, 3.5, 4.13, 4.20** and **4.6**. All of these changes will be implemented during the 2007 national tournament in Dallas. The NHSMTC Rules of the Competition and NHSMTC Rules of Evidence may be found on the NHSMTC website under the Rules of the Competition link. A detailed explanation of all of the rules/procedural changes for the upcoming tournament will be sent to all state coordinators from the Rules Committee Chair, Pete Jones, either by online posting or email. A detailed set of instructions for timekeepers (implementing the rules changes noted above) will be available from the Dallas host committee online when the case materials are released in April.



John Wheeler has served as Chair of the National Board of Directors since 2005. He is the Director of the Iowa Center for Law and Civic Education in Des Moines



"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."
—Woodrow Wilson

News from Around the Nation

Georgia: The mock trial program in Georgia is off to a great start this season. In August, the mock trial office added **Peggy Caldwell**, a retired educator and veteran mock trial coach, to the office staff as the new assistant coordinator for the program. In early November, we held our 9th annual Law Academy, an intense clinic-style weekend training for mock trial team leaders, at the University of Georgia's School of Law in Athens. We had 40 outstanding student participants and many veteran mock trial committee members who served as faculty during the three day event. The 2007 Georgia civil case, a new and original fact pattern highlighting the dangers of drunk driving, was released to teams on December 1st and we're looking forward to 16 regional competitions in late February. On February 3rd, we'll hold our first fundraising event for the 2009 national tournament during an Atlanta Thrashers hockey game. Our state finals competition will be held the 2nd weekend in March and we're in the process of re-vamping our website to reflect our dynamic new printed materials created by the Communications Department at the State Bar of Georgia. All-in-all, we're in the midst of a wonderful and busy 19th season of mock trial in Georgia! (**Stacy Rieke, State Coordinator**)

Indiana: This year, the Indiana High School Mock Trial Association launched its inaugural Middle School Division. The competition was held on December 2, 2006, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Ten teams participated in the inaugural competition. The students enjoyed the competition and look forward to participating next year. Many thanks to **John Wheeler** of Iowa for all of the help he gave us in developing this program (Translation: He graciously answered all of our pesky questions and allowed us to "borrow" his materials.) We hope to build our program over the coming years so that the Middle School Division will be as strong as the High School program. (**Ann Marie Waldron, Middle School Mock Trial Coordinator**)

Iowa: We just completed our 23rd annual middle school competition! 210 teams from 120 schools competed in regionals throughout Iowa in late October and early November. The top 32 met in Des Moines right before Thanksgiving for the State Tournament. For me, the results are inconsequential (though try telling that to the top 10!). This is a fantastic celebration of what middle school students can accomplish when given a challenge! I am still interested in pursuing some sort of national showcase event at the middle school level. Anyone interested in talking about this can contact me either by phone or email. Perhaps we can get together in Dallas. We are preparing for a grand celebration this Spring as Iowa Mock Trial turns 25! The Iowa State Bar Association is planning events around both the State Tournament (March) and its annual meeting (June) to promote the program. The Iowa Bar knows that the mock trial program is absolutely the best public relations program they have! (**John Wheeler, State Coordinator**)

Pennsylvania: What will be the most important legal battle to be decided in 2007? To many, it may be any number of issues pending before the Pennsylvania or United States Supreme Court, but to over 2,500 students from 260 schools throughout Pennsylvania, it is the case of Anderson v. Williams. As you read this, high school students all over Pennsylvania are scrutinizing, analyzing, and dissecting the case materials in preparation for the 2007 Statewide High School Mock Trial Competition.

This year's Mock Trial problem centers around a series of threatening remarks that appeared on a high school run internet chat room. The 2007 mock trial case was initially drafted by the Illinois State Bar Association as a criminal case, but it was substantially re-written for the Pennsylvania competition by **Jonathan A. Grode**, a third year evening student at Temple University James Beasley School of Law. **Jane Meyer**, Esq., a prior Mock Trial Committee Chairperson and current member of the National Mock Trial High School Championship Board of Directors, completed the final version of the problem in collaboration with Mr. Grode. Regional and District Competitions will begin in February and continue through March. The top twelve (12) teams in Pennsylvania will then advance to the State Finals which will be held in Harrisburg on March 30-31, 2007.

Last year, Pennsylvania's State Champion, Greensburg Salem-High School, under the direction of Teacher/Advisor **Judith Washburn** and Attorney/Advisor Westmoreland County Common Pleas **Judge Richard McCormick**, proudly represented our great Commonwealth at the National Mock Trial Championship in Oklahoma City, by finishing fourth in the Nation, with one of our students, High School Junior **Danielle Waugh**, earning individual honors as one of only four student attorneys in the nation receiving the 2006 Outstanding Advocate Award. Undoubtedly, Greensburg-Salem High School intends to defend their State Title and return to the National Finals, but with over 250 teams poised to challenge them, it will be no easy task. (**Bill Higgins and Jennifer Clark are Co-Chairs of the Pennsylvania Mock Trial Program**)

To submit news and notes from your state's mock trial program for the next newsletter, contact Stacy Rieke.

National High School Mock Trial Championship, Inc.

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We're on the Web!
www.nationalmocktrial.org

Mock Trial Matters Newsletter
To submit items contact
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For a complete list of Committee assignments, visit our website. To volunteer for Committee service, contact John Wheeler.



The National High School Mock Trial Championship is committed to the study, understanding and appreciation of the American justice system. The mock trial format presents a hypothetical legal case to teams of students who play the roles of witnesses and attorneys. Students participating in mock trials gain an understanding of our society's approach to dispute resolution and justice in general with a hands-on experiential approach. Critical thinking, formulation of ideas and opinions, oral presentation, effective advocacy and even value definition are all required skills to successfully argue a case.

Judging Panel Volunteers Needed for the 2007 National Tournament in Dallas!

Contact Judy Yarbro, Dallas Host Director,
jyarbro@dallasbar.org or (214) 220-7409
for more information or to request a volunteer form

May It Please the Court DVD and Print Guide

The *May It Please the Court* DVD and print guide is available for purchase from the Georgia mock trial office for \$25. An order form may be printed from the national website. This popular resource includes many helpful hints on establishing, organizing and running a mock trial team, as well as practical aides for putting together a cohesive mock trial presentation or incorporating mock trials into a classroom setting.



Have a Wonderful and Safe Winter Semester!