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FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge  
19th Judicial Circuit  
Lake County  
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

Date of Release: February 11, 2019  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Waukegan, Illinois

## **HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL INVITATIONAL AT THE LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

The 15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Lake County High School Mock Trial Invitational will be held at the Lake County Courthouse on Saturday, February 23, 2019. High school students from Lake and neighboring counties have been practicing their role assignments in anticipation of Lake County's popular annual event, often referred to as a dress rehearsal for the State's mock trial competition in March. The twenty teams contending for first place in Lake County's Invitational this year include: Bartlett, Carmel Catholic, Chicago Christian, College Prep of America, Evanston, Highland Park, Lakes, Libertyville, Maine South, Maine West, Mundelein, Naperville North, Niles West, St. Charles East, St. Charles North, South Elgin, Stevenson, Timothy Christian, Whitney Young, and York.

The program, spearheaded by Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Judges Victoria A. Rossetti and Christen L. Bishop, is in collaboration with the Lake County Law-Related Education Initiative, the Lake County Juvenile Officers Association, and the Lake County Bar Foundation.

The mock trial, selected by the Illinois State Bar Association, is entitled "*People of the State of Illinois vs. Alex Buckley*." The criminal case is set at Prairie Lake Preparatory Academy, where a tragic arson occurs in one of the dormitories on campus. Carly Walsh, the projected valedictorian of the senior class, is the target of the fire and is killed in the blaze. The defendant is charged with first degree murder and aggravated arson, and the People allege the motive is fierce academic competition, resulting in the loss of a college scholarship.

The teams try the case twice (at 9:00 a.m. and again at 10:45 a.m.), presenting each side of the case in a different trial. Students play the roles of attorneys and witnesses, while competing for outstanding and individual recognition. Teams are evaluated and scored by volunteers that consist of assistant state's attorneys, assistant public defenders, and practicing trial attorneys who

appear in the Lake County courts. Several sitting Lake County judges preside over the cases as presented by the teams. After the scores are tallied, an awards ceremony is held. Trophies are given to individual students for their performances, along with teams for first, second, and third place.

The State competition will be held at the Public Affairs Center at the University of Illinois Springfield, Illinois on Saturday and Sunday, March 9-10, 2019.

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