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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

16th ANNUAL MOCK TRIAL INVITATIONAL AT LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Early Saturday morning, the hallways and courtrooms of the new Lake County Criminal Courts Tower came alive as the 16th Annual Mock Trial Invitational took place. The morning began with a welcome from Chief Judge Diane Winter, Circuit Judge Victoria Rossetti, while Associate Judge Stephen DeRue introduced the ten judges presiding over the trials. The attorney evaluators were introduced by Circuit Judge Christen Bishop, who then announced the team pairings. The twenty-two high school teams competing against one another to attain first place in the competition included students from: Bartlett High School, Carmel Catholic High School, Chicago Christian High School, College Preparatory School of America, Evanston Township High School, Highland Park High School, John Hersey High School, Libertyville High School, Maine South High School, Maine West High School, Mundelein High School, Naperville North High School, Niles West High School, South Elgin High School, Southland College Prep High School, St. Charles East High School, St. Charles North High School, Stevenson High School, Timothy Christian School, Whitney M. Young Magnet High School, and York Community High School.

By 9:00 a.m., the students were making their way to assigned courtrooms to begin their first trial session. The mock trial, selected by the Illinois State Bar Association, was entitled, *"Dakota Young vs. Riley Miller."* The civil case involves an automobile accident with a teenage driver, late at night, in Lincoln County, Illinois. The Illinois State Bar Association hopes that this mock trial problem "raises awareness about the dangers of distracted driving" to all of the students, coaches and parents, while highlighting the Illinois laws on texting and driving, underage drinking, and Scott's Law (slow down and move over).

The teams tried the case twice, both as the prosecution and as the defense. Students performed the roles of both attorneys and witnesses to compete for outstanding performances. Lake County Judges Luis Berrones, Trisha Cornell, Stephen DeRue, Ari Fisz, Charles Johnson, Christopher Kennedy, D. Christopher Lombardo, Reginald Mathews, Jacqueline Melius, Veronica O'Malley, and George Strickland presided over the trials, while Assistant State's Attorneys, Assistant Public Defenders, and practicing trial attorneys volunteered to evaluate and score the students on their ability, presentation, and effectiveness.

Judge Rossetti and Judge Bishop brought the ever-popular event to Lake County in 2004. It is sponsored by the Law-Related Education Initiative, the Lake County Bar Association and Lake County Bar Foundation, and the Lake County Juvenile Officers Association.

After lunch, an awards ceremony was held in the Jury Assembly Room. The individuals who had the top scores for their performances as attorneys and witnesses were named and presented with trophies by Judge DeRue. Lake County Bar Foundation Treasurer Perry Smith awarded the first, second, and third place winners with a check to help defray some of the expenses associated with the mock trial programs and state competition.

The winning school teams were: Third Place, York; Second Place, St. Charles North (Black); and a tie for First Place, Highland Park and Niles West.

In closing, Judge Bishop thanked everyone for their participation and wished the teams good luck as they now prepare for the state competition in March.

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