



News Release

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

2009 High School Mock Trial Invitational

Sixteen teams from several high schools began showing up early this morning, anxious and excited to compete in the 6th Annual Lake County Mock Trial Invitational. The tournament is sponsored by the Lake County Law Related Education Initiative (LRE) in partnership with the Circuit Court of Lake County and the support of the Lake County Bar Association and the Juvenile Officers Association.

The persons responsible for the planning of the annual event include Victoria Rossetti, a Circuit Judge, currently assigned to the felony division; Christen Bishop, an Assistant State's Attorney for Lake County; and teacher Stacey Gorman of Mundelein High School. "Several of the same students here today will be competing at the state level later this month in Springfield and, if they do well, may go on to the national competition," said Rossetti. (The Lake County Mock Trial Invitational is governed by the same rules and procedures that apply to the Illinois State Bar Association mock trial competition.)

Participating high schools this year included Carmel; Chicago Christian; Evanston; Highland Park; Lake Forest; Libertyville; Maine East; Maine West; Morgan Park; Mundelein; St. Charles East; St. Charles North; South Elgin; Wheaton Academy; York; and Zion-Benton.

In honor of the 200th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth, a case tried by Lincoln himself was selected as this year's choice for the mock trial. The case, entitled "People v. William "Duff" Armstrong," was based on what has been called the "Almanac Trial." As attorney for defendant Armstrong, Lincoln used an almanac to discredit the state's witness, and so it has been called the "Almanac Trial." The trial involved a criminal case wherein the defendant was charged with the murder of James Preston Metzker with a slingshot. The victim died three days later.

Several sitting Lake County judges presided over the trials –

Round 1 – 9:00 a.m.

Morgan Park (P) v. Maine West (D)
Mundelein (P) v. St. Charles East (D)
Chicago Christian (P) v. Lake Forest Academy (D)

Presiding Judge

Hon. George Strickland
Hon. Joseph Waldeck
Hon. Helen Rozenberg

Libertyville (P) v. South Elgin (D)
York (P) v. Highland Park (D)
Evanston (P) v. Carmel
Zion-Benton (P) v. Wheaton Academy (D)
St. Charles North (P) v. Maine East (D)

Hon. Christopher Stride
Hon. Thomas Schippers
Hon. Luis Berrones
Hon. Veronica O'Malley
Hon. Michael Betar

Round 2 – 10:45 a.m.

St. Charles East (P) v. Chicago Christian (D)
Maine West (P) v. St. Charles North (D)
Maine East (P) v. Morgan Park (D)
Lake Forest Academy (P) v. Mundelein (D)
South Elgin (P) v. Zion-Benton (D)
Highland Park (P) v. Libertyville (D)
Carmel v. York
Wheaton Academy (P) v. Evanston

Hon. George Strickland
Hon. Joseph Waldeck
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At the end of each round, students were evaluated on their presentation, effectiveness and ability by volunteer assistant state's attorneys and public defenders and private practitioners of Lake County. The evaluators graded the students using the same ISBA form that is used for scoring and critiquing in the state competition and also gave their comments and suggestions regarding the students' performances. Evaluators included Bruce Bernstein, Judy Bethge, Randie Bruno, Kurt Carlson, Dwayne Douglas, David Ganfield, Deborah Goldberg, Matt Hoffman, Geoff Howard, John Kornak, Ric Lesser, Gayle Miller, Liz Rochford, Perry Smith, Kathryn Somers, Jeffrey Thut, Randy Tigges, Timothy Vezeau, Robert Wilson, Norman Werth, LaTonya Burton, Janelle Christensen, MaryKay Foy, Aaron Isaacson, Britta Pepper, and Stella Veytsel.

At the end of Round 2 the students and others returned to the jury assembly room for a lunch break while the scores were being tabulated.

About 1:30 p.m. Judge Rossetti returned to the jury assembly room where she introduced Chief Judge James Booras and said that he would be helping in presenting the awards today. Christy Bishop and Tracey Gorman began the awards ceremony by reading the names of the top student performers for their acting roles as attorneys and witnesses. Those recognized were, for outstanding attorneys, James Brzezinski and Sonya Smith of Carmel; Jorie Kuda and Ross VanHuizen of Chicago Christian; Alex Block of Evanston; Max Ellithorpe and Blake Harwood of Highland Park; Andrea Shen of Lake Forest Academy; Katie Mahoney and Amanda Muskat of Libertyville; Syed Hussain of Maine East; Stella Abbinante of Maine West, Jeff Konecki and Cat Ring of Morgan Park, Yadav Gowda, Adam Sawvell and Elin Shoback of Mundelein; Jeremy Hawkins and Stephanie Slania of South Elgin; Sami Beckman and Kathryn Belanger of St. Charles East; Xiomy Mendez and Robin Wright of St. Charles North; Ashley Pivaronas of Wheaton Academy; Jissy Cyriac and Amanda Kurian of York; and Pamela Silva of Zion-Benton; and for outstanding witnesses, Sarah Stanton and August Winter of Carmel; Liz Wassenaar and Hannah Wierenga of Chicago Christian; Win Lalley and Elizabeth Watson of Evanston; Jessie Faus and Morgan Johnson of Highland Park; Art Azarenko, Ariana Bhatia and Liz Montgomery of Lake Forest Academy; Brooke Baldi and Josh Jochem of Libertyville; Dzana Celjo and Spiros Loukopoulos of Maine East; Brian Conley and Justin Williams of Maine West; Devin Grover of Morgan Park; Jennifer Bautista and Katie Bernardi of Mundelein; Lexie Gnewuch

of South Elgin; Gabby Bielunski, Meghan Smith, and Tassie Sotiropoulos of St. Charles East; Katy Karayannis of St. Charles North; Brandon Butz, Sarah Dede, and Iain Mirrilees of Wheaton Academy; Jimmy Kurian and Steve Tebbe of York; and Samantha Davis of Zion-Benton.

Next came what everyone had been waiting for – the announcement by Judge Rossetti of the names of the third, second, and first place school winning teams. They were: Third Place, Highland Park; Second Place, Evanston; and First Place, Wheaton Academy.

In closing, Judge Booras and Judge Rossetti thanked everyone for their continued support and help in making this program such a success, and wished all of them good luck in the state competition.

The program ended around 2:00 p.m.

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<http://19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us>