



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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2016 HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

A bright sunny morning with temperatures expected to reach around 50 degrees greeted high school students today as they prepare to compete against each other in Lake County's 2016 Mock Trial Invitational. Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz together with Circuit Judge Victoria Rossetti and Circuit Judge Christen Bishop were on hand to welcome all the teams as they ushered into the jury assembly room, some as early as 7:15 a.m. At approximately 8:30 a.m., Judge Ortiz stepped up to the microphone to welcome all the competing teams and to wish them all the best in their upcoming trial performances.

Sixteen schools from Lake, Cook, DuPage and Kane Counties are scheduled to participate in this year's 12th Annual Mock Trial Invitational. They include Bartlett; Carmel Catholic; Chicago Christian; College Prep of America; Evanston; Highland Park; Hinsdale South; Libertyville; Maine South; Mundelein; Niles West; St. Charles East; St Charles North (2 teams); Timothy Christian; and York. The students, predominantly coached by practicing attorneys, are given the opportunity to play out roles as attorneys and witnesses who compete to be recognized as top performers eventually at the awards ceremony, which takes place after the finish of the two trial and scoring sessions.

Students participating in the invitational must be currently enrolled in grades 9-12 at the time of the competition. Each school may enter one team consisting of seven student

participants. Teams may also bring up to three alternates who may substitute if one of the official team members is unable to participate.

The judges of the 19th Judicial Circuit who will preside in both rounds of the tournament include Circuit Judge Mitchell Hoffman, Circuit Judge Christopher Stride, Judge Luis Berrones, Judge Michael Fusz, Judge Christopher Lombardo, Judge Elizabeth Rochford, Judge Joseph Salvi, and Judge James Simonian. Although the presiding judges will not score the team matches, they will offer their feedback to the students. The evaluators who score the performances consist of Lake County assistant state's attorneys, assistant public defenders, and private attorneys. The score sheets are the same as used by the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) State Mock Trial Competition. Teams will be ranked according to the total points they receive from all evaluators in both rounds. The top three teams and the outstanding attorneys and witnesses will be announced at the awards ceremony.

The mock trial case selected by the ISBA this year is entitled "*Pat Dunn v. Chris Davies.*" The case involves a dispute between two semi-professional hockey players arising out of a hockey game. The Plaintiff, Pat Dunn, and Defendant, Chris Davies, engaged in a fight during the game. Dunn has now filed suit against Davies based upon theories of negligence and battery; specifically, Dunn alleges that Davies struck Dunn in the head with a hockey stick. Davies has denied the allegations and has raised several affirmative defenses. (This is a civil jury trial and Plaintiff is seeking to recover money damages from the Defendant.)

The awards ceremony, hosted by Judge Rossetti and Judge Bishop, took place after the lunch break in the jury assembly room. The top scoring individuals were recognized for their performances as attorneys and witnesses and were presented with trophies. Lake County Bar Association members Mark Peavey and Joann Fratianni made a special presentation on behalf of the Lake County Bar Foundation. Checks in the amounts of \$500.00, \$250.00, and \$100.00 were awarded to the first, second and third place team winners to help defray expenses associated with the schools' mock trial programs. In conclusion, the names of the third, second, and first place school winning teams were announced. They were: Third Place, Timothy Christian; Second Place, Highland Park; and First Place, St. Charles North "B" Team.

In closing, Judge Rossetti and Judge Bishop thanked all the teams for their continued support and participation and wished the best to the teams that planned to compete in the state competition. Hosted by the University of Illinois College of Law, in Champaign-Urbana, the state competition will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3, 2016.

The mock trial event, held annually and usually in the month of February at the courthouse, is a collaborative effort between the Lake County Law-Related Education Initiative, the Lake County Juvenile Officers Association, and the Lake County Bar Foundation. Created twelve years ago, this very popular annual high school event was spearheaded by current sitting Lake County circuit judges, Judge Victoria Rossetti and Judge Christen Bishop.

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