

# Mock Trial Matters



## NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

### Calendar

- Pennsylvania tournament website [www.2010nationalmocktrial.com](http://www.2010nationalmocktrial.com)
- **December 15**—Tournament registration information available online
- **January 8, 2010**—Preliminary Interest forms due to David Trevaskis
- **February 1**—Golden Gavel Nominations due to Justice George Carley
- **March 15**—Deadline to submit letters for Board candidacy (May Elections)
- **March 15**—Deadline to submit items for spring newsletter to Stacy Rieke
- **April 1**—National Case release date
- **April 5**—Hotel reservation deadline
- **April 9**—Team registration deadline
- **April 15**—deadline to request tournament schedule adjustment
- **May 5-9**—National Tournament in Philadelphia, PA!



National High School  
Mock Trial Championship  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2010

birthplace of American freedom, Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love (and Sisterly Affection). The Pennsylvania Bar Foundation is the fundraising partner for the program.

The 2010 Nationals will be centered at the fabulous downtown Marriott Hotel which is just diagonally across the street from the Criminal Justice Center, site of the four rounds of competition. The final round will be held less than a block away in Philadelphia's majestic City Hall in the courtroom famously featured in the great trial movie *Philadelphia*. Rumors of a **Denzel Washington** appearance to watch great advocates in action have been heard, though the Philadelphians on the host committee are hoping for an appearance by homeboy **Will Smith**. Maybe watching the mock trials in action will give him an idea for a new movie!

Third Circuit Court of Appeals Judge and PA **First Lady Marjorie "Midge" Rendell** is the head of the Honorary Advisory Board for the 2010 Nationals and she is looking forward to seeing the top mock trial teams from around the nation and the world compete in Philadelphia. A champion of civic education, **Judge Rendell's** PennCORD (Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy) initiative has designated Mock Trial, from elementary fairy tales to the National Championship, a Keystone Civics Project.

Many teams will arrive before Thursday to take advantage of the historic sight-seeing and more that you can find in and around Philadelphia and the host committee, under the direction of Philadelphia lawyer **Andrew Susko**, will be sharing ideas for enjoying the city and its surrounding area for those teams that arrive early or stay after the championships conclude. Spring in Philadelphia means wonderful weather for walking through **William Penn's** city, with high temperatures averaging in the low 70s (okay, we did once have a high of 97 and a low of 28, but those are record temperatures, and it does rain lightly about a third of the time). There is great entertainment from home Phillies games to Broadway touring shows, incredible history to explore firsthand, and food, glorious food. Just down the block from the competition hotel is the renowned Reading Terminal Market, the oldest and one of the best public... (cont. on page 2)

### Unite or Die:

**Pennsylvania in 2010** by **David Trevaskis**—Pennsylvania is looking forward to Mother's Day weekend next spring and hosting the fast approaching National High School Mock Trial Championship May 5-9, 2010. The Pennsylvania Bar Association is proud to host the 2010 national tournament in historic Philadelphia with PBA Statewide Mock Trial partner and national mock trial lead sponsor Drexel University joining the PBA in welcoming the 27<sup>th</sup> Nationals to the

## Unite or Die: Pennsylvania in 2010, cont.

farmers markets in America, with scores of vendors serving every type of delicious food imaginable.

The first formal event will be Thursday night's pin exchange at the host hotel. This "Champions of the Commonwealth" event will feature a sports theme hosted by local CBS sports director and former Eagles player **Via Sihakema** with appearances by the **Phillie Phanatic** and the **Eagles Pep Band**. Pennsylvanians do not like to brag about our sports success, with the Steelers looking for a 7<sup>th</sup> Super Bowl ring, the Phillies having won the 2008 World Series and back-to-back National League Championships and the Penguins being the defending Stanley Cup Champions, but it is hard to ignore the reality that the championship mock trial teams are coming to a state that knows champions! There are rumors—again, only rumors at this time—that some current professional athletes will show up for the pin exchange to honor the students from their home states.

Philadelphia **Mayor Michael Nutter**, currently gracing the movie screens with his cameo in *Law Abiding Citizen* (an action thriller that powerfully shows off the Philadelphia City Hall area where the competition activities will be centered), will formally welcome everyone to the city at the pin exchange. He may stay around to listen to the top three entries in the new Mock Trial Song Contest that the host committee is running (more on that will be available this December on the competition website—[www.2010nationalmocktrial.com](http://www.2010nationalmocktrial.com)), but he has promised that he will not dance even if the DJ plays his favorite songs.

The national logo captures the history of the host state which is embedded in the competition problem. That history will be enjoyed by the competition participants at the Friday night National Constitution Center event, along with games, music and local cuisine (Cheesesteaks and Tastycakes, but no scrapple, oh my!). The National Constitution Center in historic Philadelphia is America's most interactive history museum. Located just two blocks from the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, it is the only museum devoted to the U.S. Constitution and the story of *We, the People*. Check out the NCC's website at [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org) to learn more about this national treasure.

There will be also be a special reception Friday night at City Hall to thank all of the judges, scorers and other adults who make the competition such a great annual event. Philadelphia's City Hall is the largest masonry building in the world. City Hall was the tallest occupied building in the world when it was completed after 31 years in 1901 and it remained the tallest building in Philadelphia under an agreement of local developers that the statue of William Penn on the top of City Hall would always be visible until One Liberty Place was started in 1984. Many local residents believe the 25 year sports championship drought from 1983 with the Sixers until 2008 with the Phillies was because this agreement was broken, leading to tales of the "Curse of Billy Penn". Coincidence or not, but a small statue of Pennsylvania's founder was placed atop the current tallest building in the city, the Comcast Center, when it opened in June of 2008 and the victory drought ended soon afterwards!

The final event will be the Awards Banquet at the Marriott. National, state and local dignitaries will join the competition participants for a fun filled evening of celebration with awards given to participants in the name of great Pennsylvania lawyers. From **Andrew Hamilton** to **Clifford Scott Green**, from **Sadie Alexander** to **Ida Chen**, Pennsylvania has been the home to many incredible advocates. The top performers of the 2010 championships will share in honoring this heritage while being recognized as the stars of the future.

The Pennsylvania Bar Association has 2010 lined up for hosting a tremendous National High School Mock Trial Competition in Philadelphia, having hosted back in 1996 on the other end of the Commonwealth in Pittsburgh! Be sure to bring your sneakers for the Rocky Run up the stairs of the Philadelphia Art Museum and for the ghost tour of historic haunts (you'll need the exercise after feasting on the local cuisine). Everyone involved in the program—and there are over 200 volunteers already committed to the event—is excited about welcoming the cream of mock trial to Pennsylvania next May!

Plans for 2010 are to keep things as green as possible and make all communications electronic unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. States are asked to complete and return the 2010 NHSMTCC (Pennsylvania) **Preliminary Interest Form** found on the site by **Friday, January 8, 2010** to guarantee being listed on the 2010 mailing list and thereby receiving all notices and registration materials. All information will be available on the [www.2010nationalmocktrial.com](http://www.2010nationalmocktrial.com) website; please bookmark the site and get in the habit of checking things out! If there are any questions, please contact **David Trevaskis** at [david.trevaskis@pabar.org](mailto:david.trevaskis@pabar.org).

## 2011 Tournament: Phoenix, Arizona



The **Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education** is excited to host the 2011 National Championship in downtown Phoenix. The downtown area has experienced a recent boom with the opening of **Arizona State University's** new downtown campus and several new restaurants, and with the addition of the light rail system. The light rail is a convenient and cost-effective alternative for teams and guests to make the short trip from **Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport** to the **Hyatt Regency Hotel** in downtown Phoenix. Teams and their guests should find plenty of things to keep them busy in the downtown area.

The Foundation and its many volunteers are busy fundraising and making preparations for what promises to be a grand event in the **Grand Canyon State**. We will kick off with the traditional pin exchange for the teams—Cinco de Mayo style—on Thursday, May 5. Arrangements are in the works for a fun Friday night event for the teams and their guests. The

four rounds of competition will be held on Friday and Saturday in the **Maricopa County Superior Courthouse**—a short walking distance from the Hyatt. The championship round will be held in the Special Proceedings Courtroom in the **Sandra Day O'Connor United States District Courthouse**, just a few blocks away from the Superior Court. The weekend will be capped off with the Saturday evening awards banquet followed by entertainment for the teams.

The Foundation is pleased that **Phoenix School of Law** has agreed to partner with the Foundation as a sponsor for the 2011 National Competition. The Foundation looks forward to providing a rewarding, educational experience while giving participants a little taste of Arizona life. We look forward to seeing everyone in Phoenix in May 2011!

## 2012 and Beyond: After Phoenix, Where Will We Go?



By **Emily Reilly**, *State Coordinator, Minnesota NHSMTTC Board Member and Chair of the NHSMTTC Long Range Planning Committee*

Greetings Fellow State Coordinators:

This year, I am working with the other members of the NHSMTTC Long-Range Planning Committee to come up with a long-range plan for our organization. One specific problem we are tasked with investigating is: 1) the lack of host cities; 2) whether or not the NHSMTTC Board and State Coordinators could/will need to host the championship itself. As of right now, the NHSMTTC has no host city for 2012, although thankfully New Mexico has expressed a potential interest in that year. However, we have nothing officially scheduled beyond the 2011 tournament in Phoenix.

***So the question is, after Phoenix, where will we go?*** We need your help! If you are even thinking about hosting in the future, please contact **Dee Runaas** ([runaas@crfc.org](mailto:runaas@crfc.org)), Chair, Site Selection Committee or **John Wheeler** ([jwheeler@iowabar.org](mailto:jwheeler@iowabar.org)), Chair, NHSMTTC board or me. The NHSMTTC Board is willing to work with potential host states to remove hurdles that stand in the way of hosting the championship. What is your long-term vision for the NHSMTTC? Do you envision a permanent host site in a convenient mid-America city? Let's work together to ensure that this fine tournament continues in its current format for America's youth for another 25 years and beyond!

Please send your comments to me at: [ereilly@mnbar.org](mailto:ereilly@mnbar.org).

## A Word From Our Chair

It's the season of Thanksgiving. I feel especially blessed and especially grateful. I'm blessed by the many friends that I've made in my own 20+ year journey in mock trial and by the students and families that I come across in this adventure. I'm grateful for the tremendous time, energy, enthusiasm and expertise that my colleagues in this endeavor bring to their work.

Let me share some of my blessings with you:

In June I received an email from a veteran teacher with whom I had worked on mock trial in Iowa more than a dozen years ago. She had left the state in search of new challenges and adventures in teaching. In the years since leaving Iowa, she has taught overseas in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa. She's now teaching in Bahrain and got in touch with me to see how she might gain access to the NHSMTTC case library. She told me that she has always used mock trials in her classrooms worldwide with great result. She maintains (and I agree) that there is no better project-based activity to impart critical thinking, preparation and presentation skills to student – and the added bonus is that students learn a great deal about law and the judicial process. Through our email and phone conversations, she devised a plan to use mock trial as the basis for a conference presentation to educators in the Arab Emirates. Her hope, and mine, is that her passion will ignite interest throughout the region in mock trial, will encourage others to use the strategy in their classrooms, and, in so doing, in a very small way foster the idea of peaceful resolution of conflicts, an understanding and appreciation for those of different viewpoints, and the education and practice of global citizenship skills.

In August I received an email from a teacher who had taken a new job in western Iowa working with middle school students. He had heard about mock trial (and the fact that we have a middle school program in the state). He was a little wary of the amount of work required and the short amount of preparation time that the groups of students would have in their first year involved. He was willing to give it a try though and set out to work with 20 eager kids. A few weeks later, he contacted me with a problem. He had a student with a disability who seemed to be very interested in joining the mock trial teams. She had been diagnosed with Selective Mutism, a disorder in which a child appears passive and withdrawn, rarely speaks and almost never speaks above a whisper. Those affected seldom make eye contact with others. In this instance, the coach indicated that the child in question had never spoken in class – neither to a teacher nor to another student. And yet she wanted to try mock trial so that she might improve her speaking and overcome her disability. The coach requested a microphone so that when this young woman took the witness stand, she might be heard. And so that no undue attention be brought to her situation, that all witnesses in that particular trial be instructed to use the sound system as well. With the help of the regional coordinator, we were easily able to honor this small request. Two weeks ago I attended the regional competition and had the fortune to serve as a judge in a round of competition featuring this team. While the team struggled as a whole trying to master the complexities, peculiarities and nuances of mock trial, the witnesses were uniformly good. None ended up using the provided sound system, none indicated even the slightest hesitancy in performing their roles (except for the normal extreme terror that all middle schoolers have the first time they do mock trial!). After the competition concluded, I was approached by the coach. I told him that I was so sorry that it hadn't worked out with his student, but that he should try again next year and that maybe she would follow through; that mock trial did have a lot to offer in terms of skill development, but that I completely understood why she may have backed out. He just beamed and waved one of his team members over. He said, "I'd like you to meet my daughter. You gave her an outstanding witness nomination. She's my pride and joy ... and she's the student with the disability. Mock trial works."



**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**

## A Word From Our Chair, continued

Finally, last week I had the pleasure to coordinate the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Iowa Middle School Mock Trial State Tournament. We collected the top 32 teams from around the state for a real celebration of the potential of young people when they set their minds to meet a challenge. Among the hundreds of kids involved, the dozens of teacher and attorney coaches, the many proud parents and relatives, and the ever growing number of past participants who are siblings or who help coach a team or (gulp!) are parents themselves of mock trialers, I saw a lot of familiar faces. In the championship round, the front row of spectator seating in the Iowa Supreme Court chamber was filled with a family I have come to know quite well over the years. After the trial as their daughter celebrated with her teammates, the parents came over to me and told me that it was the end of an era - this was their last year involved in the middle school program - each of their children had participated in mock trial, each of their children had now won a state championship. After 7 children involved and 16 consecutive years, they were now done! They told me that without a doubt, the mock trial experience was the greatest that any of their children had in middle school and beyond. It gave them so much confidence and poise and made them more analytical and persuasive. These parents credited at least a little of their children's success to mock trial.



**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**

As I am writing this, I just received a thank you email from a parent whose daughter I remember as being among my personal list of all-stars. If memory serves, her team qualified for the state competition in middle school and high school 5 out of her 6 years in mock trial. She was named an Outstanding attorney 4 of those years. The brief email included a link to a news article describing their daughter's plans during her Rhodes Scholarship! Another mock trial success story!

So I am indeed blessed by all that mock trial has done for students and for me. I am also extremely grateful for the work that each of you do to further the magic of mock trial. I know that each of you have your own stories to share - and you should with anyone and everyone who will listen! We who coordinate and coach mock trial know that students step up to high expectations. We know that through a relatively simple process, students learn and practice so much. We know that students come away from mock trial with a better grasp of the rule of law and an appreciation for the work of legal professionals. We also all know that mock trial is so much more than preparation for the courtroom, it is truly preparation for life.

Count your blessings as I count mine in this season of Thanksgiving.

Happy Trials!



## Special Committee on Religious Accommodation

In May of this year, the NHSMTC Board of Directors formed a special committee to review the issue of adjusting the national tournament schedule, and that adjustment's subsequent impact on the scoring for the tournament, as a result of a requested religious accommodation. After facing the issue in 2005 and again in 2009, the Board felt that a thorough review would be in the best interest of the continued viability of the tournament. The **Honorable Richard Sievers** of the Nebraska Court of Appeals was appointed to chair the NHSMTC Special Committee on Religious Accommodation. Additional members serving on the Committee included **David Berlin** (New Mexico), **Hon. George Carley** (Georgia), **Dewain Fox** (Arizona), **Michelle Giger** (State Coordinator—New Mexico), **Doris Huffman** (State Coordinator—Nebraska), **Bob Noel** (Louisiana), **Dee Runaas** (Illinois) and **David Trevaskis** (Pennsylvania). The Special Committee circulated a draft policy to state coordinators in early September and received feedback on the draft. When the full Board met for its pre-tournament meeting in Philadelphia in mid-October, the recommendations of the Special Committee, as well as the feedback from state coordinators were reviewed. A policy to address this issue was unanimously adopted by the Board in mid November and a copy of that policy is attached to the end of this newsletter. Any questions regarding the policy may be directed to NHSMTC Board chair, **John Wheeler**.

## Rules Changes for 2010 Tournament

At its recent pre-tournament meeting in Philadelphia, the Board adopted changes to **Rule 3.1** (Team Eligibility). In addition, you will recall that the Board approved changes to the Rules of Evidence during its October 2008 meeting in Atlanta. **These changes to the Rules of Evidence will be in effect for the 2010 competition in Philadelphia in May.** The essence of those changes is to adopt most of the changes that were adopted to the Federal Rules of Evidence a few years ago in order to get our rules closer to real life.

All changes will be reflected in the copy of the rules posted on the NHSMTC website ([www.nationalmocktrial.org](http://www.nationalmocktrial.org)) by the case release date. Rules questions should be directed to **Pete Jones** (NHSMTC Rules Committee Chair) until the case release date (April 1). After April 1 and until the tournament weekend is complete, all rules questions should be directed to Pennsylvania Host Director **David Trevaskis**.

## Spring Board Elections

A scheduled election will be held during the State Coordinators' meeting in Philadelphia in May 2010. There are **four at-large** Board positions up for election this year. The at-large positions expiring in May 2010 are currently held by **Justice George Carley** (Georgia), **Emily Reilly** (Minnesota), **Susan Roberts** (Indiana) and **Judge Richard Sievers** (Nebraska). **Pete Jones'** (Delaware) position as 2008 Host Director expires in May 2010. This position will be filled with the Host Director for the 2012 tournament, however the identity of that person is still to be determined. The archivist position, currently held by **Dee Runaas**, is an appointed position that the Board reviews and renews on a yearly basis. Board members are required to attend (in person) the two regularly scheduled board meetings in October and May each year.

According to the by-laws, interested candidates must submit their letter of intent to run to the Board Chair (**John Wheeler**; [jwheeler@iowabar.org](mailto:jwheeler@iowabar.org)) no later than **March 15, 2010**. If this deadline is missed, but a person still wishes to be nominated for one of the Board positions, that individual must communicate this intention to the Board Chair by the end of the May Coordinators' meeting. This communication must be accompanied by a nominating petition signed by at least three State Coordinators. Additionally, nominations may be made from the floor during the State Coordinators' meeting in May. (See *NHSMTC, Inc. By-Laws Article IV, Section 2*)

## Mock Trial News and Notes



**Delaware** (Pat Quann, *coordinator*) - **Francis J. Jones, Jr., Esquire** – or, as most people know him, Pete – was honored by the Delaware Law Related Education Center on Thursday, October 22, 2009 for his more than 18 years of volunteer service. Over 125 members of the Delaware bench, bar, and education communities attended the event, held at the Delaware Center for Horticulture in Wilmington. Speakers included **Pat Quann** and the **Honorable M. Jane Brady**, who spoke of Pete’s dedication to the Center and in particular the Mock Trial program. **Anthony Iannini**, president of the Delaware Paralegal Association, spoke of Pete’s influence on the legal community, and **Eileen Wilkinson**, an

educator, and **Paul Kaufman**, Esquire, a former student participant who was coached by Pete, spoke of Pete’s influence on the students of the State of Delaware. Judge Brady presented Pete with a gift on behalf of the Center, and unveiled the first **Pete Jones Award**, an award to be made in the future to those who, like Pete, contribute their time and talents to the students of the State of Delaware.



Pete Jones and Judge M. Jane Brady during Delaware LRE service recognition event in October.



Members of the Union County HS (Georgia) Mock Trial team with the members of the Georgia Supreme Court, including Presiding Justice George Carley, in Dahlonega, GA in November.

**Georgia** (Stacy Rieke, *coordinator*) - We held our 12th annual mock trial Law Academy at the University of Georgia’s School of Law for 31 student team leaders in October. During this intense, weekend long clinic-style training session, student team leaders learned the basics about the mock trial competition and how to prepare a mock trial case for trial. They were also able to view real-life trial proceedings in the Western Judicial Circuit Superior Court courtroom of **Judge Steve Jones**. Also this fall, the mock trial teams from **Lumpkin County High School** (Dahlonega) and **Union County High School** (Blairsville) were able to attend oral arguments before the **Georgia Supreme Court** as the Court held session in Dahlonega at the historic Lumpkin County courthouse. After the session, the team members from both schools attended a luncheon with the justices at the Smith House. The Georgia criminal case was released on November 16th, with regionals scheduled for early February

and state for March 13 & 14. We’ll continue our **Craig Harding Memorial Court Artist Contest** again this year and we are looking forward to an outstanding mock trial season in 2010.

**Indiana** (Susan Roberts, *coordinator*) - In the Indiana high school mock trial case this year, the defendant is charged with poisoning a fellow student for revenge after a hazing incident. The case is full of twists and turns to give the students plenty to chew on. In the meantime, the middle school students are busily preparing for their mock trial competition in December. The middle school students are taking a look back into history to study the Lincoln conspiracy trials, and are specifically preparing to prosecute or defend the case against Dr. Mudd, who set John Wilkes Booth’s broken leg. This past summer, we began working on a DVD project to help new schools or young teams with understanding the basics of an American trial. We’re hoping the DVD will be ready for production and distribution in 2010. Indiana is immensely grateful to the State Bar of Georgia for all of their support and assistance in helping us develop the “How-To” DVD. The networking and support among the State Coordinators, as well as continuing communication such as this newsletter, has been a fountain of resources for Indiana and enables each State to improve their programs.

## Mock Trial News and Notes, Cont.



**Nebraska** (Doris Huffman, *coordinator*) - The **Nebraska Bar Foundation's** Mock Trial Case Committee has a new, original mock trial problem ready for this season of competition. It is a civil case involving a foreign citizen in a removal proceeding, who is seeking asylum on that basis that s/he will be persecuted upon return to his/her country of origin. The process for this asylum seeker is complicated by evidence that s/he was an actor in persecution him/herself under the now deposed government of his/her country. The twists and turns in both sides of the case make it one that should be exciting and challenging for this year's mock trial teams. The Foundation has posted the 2009 mock trial case on its website, [www.nebarfnd.org](http://www.nebarfnd.org).

The regional competitions will be completed by November 25. They will be followed by the State Championship, which will take place in Omaha on December 8 and 9 at the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Courthouse. The team that wins the state championship will represent Nebraska at the national competition in Philadelphia in May 2010. The **Nebraska Council of School Attorneys** regularly contributes \$1,000 to defer travel expenses for the Nebraska team representing the state at nationals.

**Nevada** (Kathleen Dickinson, *coordinator*) - (Article submitted by BGHS student team member Brendan Flynn) - Our Mock trial team's experience in Atlanta in May of 2009 was incredible, but our journey started long before that. The year before we made it to Wilmington, Delaware, but we lost most of our team so we knew from the beginning we would have a tough time getting back to Nationals. We started in mid-October when we got our state case and our team immediately began bonding. By the time we had won state, it was time for the Nationals preparation. After a month of hard work, we flew to Atlanta, and finally made our first ride on the Marta. The city itself was incredible, and coming from Las Vegas, we were surprised to see actual trees. The week was a whirlwind, long practices, long nights with the roommates studying our objections, and squeezing in time for sleep. By the time Friday rolled around, we were ready. By Friday night, we were just ready for the amazing Aquarium. The fish there were amazing and so was the food! When we got through our trials on Saturday we were excited that we finally had finished and our hard work had paid off. When we got to the awards ceremony, we were just relaxing and celebrating and having a good time with our friends. We were shocked to hear our name called in Fifth Place! We spent the whole night celebrating, most of us by staying up until around 5. It was an unforgettable experience that brought us all closer together and we hope to win State this year, so we can do it again in Philadelphia next year!



The 2009 mock trial team from Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, NV

**Ohio** (Addie Natalie, *coordinator*) - For each of the last 27 years the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education has organized a case committee of volunteer attorneys who write a legally authentic case involving a constitutional issue that is relevant to students' own personal experiences; and 2010 is no exception! This year's case analyzes the proper limitations upon students' First Amendment rights in the digital world. A high school student enrolled in an advanced placement history class is suspended for violating a school disciplinary code after posting comments critical of the teacher on his/her personal blog. The student has filed a lawsuit against the school district alleging that the school impermissibly abridged off-campus speech.

## Golden Gavel Nominations

The Golden Gavel Award recognizes any adult individual who has demonstrated exemplary dedication and commitment to the goals and ideals of the national high school mock trial program. To nominate someone for this prestigious award, describe in 500 words or less why the nominee should be considered for the award. The nomination should include the nominee's qualifications such as length of service/participation in the national mock trial championships; the extent of that participation; the importance or significance of the nominee's contributions; and how these qualifications help to further the goals and mission of the NHSMTA. Nominations are due each year by **February 1st** to the Chair of the Awards Committee. In 2010, nominations should be sent to **Justice George Carley** by fax at 404/657-7576 or by mail to 536 State Judicial Building; 40 Capitol Square SW; Atlanta, GA 30334. (The nomination form is online.)



## Great River Technologies: Web Resource Available



The **National Mock Trial Practicum** web site provides an exceptional opportunity for coaches to supplement the mock trial resources available to teams participating in mock trial programs throughout the nation. It is a general information, interactive website whose purpose is to enhance the Mock Trial experience for students, teachers, coaches, and judges, to provide an interactive area that will help students better understand how to give a statement, ask questions, control a difficult witness, and make timely objections. It also allows coaches to run a strong Mock Trial program even if they are new to the activity, don't have access to an attorney coach, or would just like to better understand the process and involvement.

The National High School Mock Trial Championship Board of Directors fully supports this site and recommends its use to individual teams and statewide mock trial programs, alike. The Board is looking for ways to improve content and to include items of interest to mock trial students, teachers and coaches. Along with Great River Technologies, we are putting together a **National Board of Advisors** for this web-based project. Contact **John Wheeler** if you or a member of your state mock trial committee are interested in serving on this advisory board.

The 2010 Pennsylvania Tournament Website  
is:

[www. 2010nationalmocktrial.com](http://www.2010nationalmocktrial.com)

Bookmark It!

**National High School Mock Trial  
Championship, Inc.**

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Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: (515) 243-3179

E-mail: [jwheeler@iowabar.org](mailto:jwheeler@iowabar.org)

**We're on the Web!**

[www.nationalmocktrial.org](http://www.nationalmocktrial.org)

**Mock Trial Matters Newsletter**

To submit items for the spring issue  
contact: **Stacy Rieke**

(404) 527-8779 or [stacyr@gabar.org](mailto:stacyr@gabar.org)

**2010 Board of Directors**

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Bob Noel (Louisiana)  
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**2010 Non-Board  
Committee Members**

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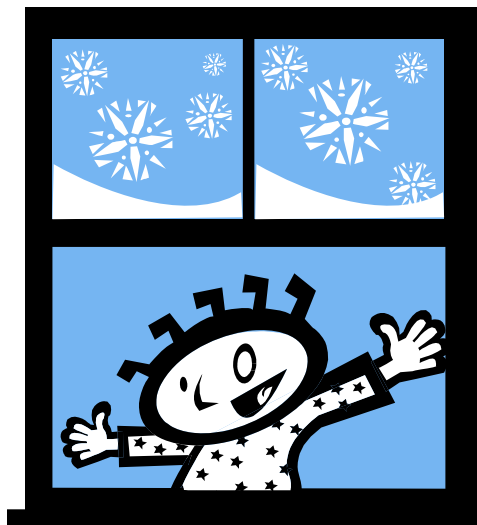
For a complete list of Committee assignments, visit  
our website. To volunteer for Committee service,  
contact John Wheeler.

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 2010 National Tournament  
in Philadelphia!**

The volunteer form will be available online at  
[www.2010nationalmocktrial.com](http://www.2010nationalmocktrial.com)

For more information on judging panel service, contact  
**Maria Engles** at [maria.engles@pabar.org](mailto:maria.engles@pabar.org) or  
(800) 932-0311, ext. 2223  
Fax: (717) 238-7128



**Have a  
Wonderful,  
Safe and  
Healthy  
Winter  
Semester!**



## **Policy on Competition Schedule Accommodation for Religious Reasons**

### **Introduction**

Certain religious beliefs and practices of students who are eligible to compete in the National High School Mock Trial Championship (“NHSMTC”) may conflict with the traditional competition schedule of two rounds on Friday, two rounds on Saturday, followed by a championship round on Saturday beginning at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Therefore, the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship (Board) has determined to adopt a formal Policy providing for a possible modification of the competition schedule due to religious beliefs and practices held by a team’s student members. However, after consultation with the State Mock Trial Coordinators, the Board has decided to maintain the Friday/Saturday competition schedule. The National Board has implemented, effective beginning with the 2010 competition, a Policy that provides a procedure for a team to request an accommodation to modify the National Championship competition schedule for religious reasons. In the event that the firmly held religious beliefs and practices of any of the members of a registered team’s official competition roster conflict with the traditional Friday/Saturday competition schedule such that the team lacks sufficient team members to compete in the Friday/Saturday schedule, an accommodation may be requested pursuant to this Policy. The Policy and the required form to request an accommodation are posted on the NHSMTC web site, and reference thereto shall be included in the registration materials for the National Championship.

## **The Policy**

1. A modification to the regular championship schedule (two rounds on Friday, three rounds on Saturday), hereafter referenced as “modified schedule,” shall be granted to a team that makes a request for such in accordance with the terms of this Policy, provided that the requested modification, in the judgment of the Board which shall be final, is (1) reasonable, based on the firmly held religious beliefs and practices of the team’s members and (2) does not create a substantial adverse impact on the competition as a whole.
2. A schedule modification may impact the scoring and ranking of competing teams, but such shall not be deemed a “substantial adverse impact.” All competing teams should be aware that “modified schedule rounds” may impact to some degree the accuracy of the final rankings of teams participating in the competition.
3. Potential modifications to the schedule that are necessitated by granting a request for schedule accommodation under this Policy shall be determined by the National Board in consultation with the Host Director, and such changes shall be made known to all competing teams as expeditiously as is possible, and to the affected teams as hereinafter provided.
4. The Board anticipates that the first round for an accommodated team(s) would be held on Thursday, no earlier than 5:00 pm, and thus all teams must be checked in by the official start of the competition which shall be 3:00 pm. Thursday. All registered teams shall be subject to being required to compete in one or more modified schedule rounds.

For the first modified schedule round, the opponent(s) for the accommodated team(s) shall be chosen by random selection by the Host Director, or a person designated by the Board, in conjunction with the scoring team. Because any team seeking an accommodation must do so no later than April 15, the selection of an opponent(s) shall take place as soon as the Board has determined that an accommodation(s) shall be

granted, but no later than April 23. The Host Director or a designee from the NHSMTC Board shall notify the team(s) that will compete in the first modified schedule round within 48 hours after the selection of the opponent(s) for the accommodated team(s) has been made. Teams not notified by April 25 that they have been selected to compete in the first modified schedule round will not be competing in that round. Determination of the teams required to compete in subsequent modified schedule rounds required by the granting of a request(s) for religious accommodation shall be made by the scoring team using the power matching system where applicable.

5. The official team registration form shall inform teams that the only acceptable form, entitled Request for NHSMTC Competition Schedule Accommodation for Religious Reasons (“Accommodation Request”) by which a team may request a schedule accommodation is found on the NHSMTC website, and such form must be used.
6. As soon as possible but in no case later than April 15, State Coordinators for a team(s) seeking an accommodation under this Policy are required to complete and submit the Accommodation Request form. On the Accommodation Request form the requesting team shall be required to provide the following information, which shall be considered by the National Board.
  - (a) An explanation of the nature of the religious belief and practices that supports the need for the requested schedule modification.
  - (b) The dates and times a team is unavailable to compete due to religious practices.
  - (c) The number of team members from the team’s official competition roster whose religious practices necessitates the accommodation.
7. The Accommodation Request form shall require the signature of that team’s State Coordinator and his or her signature thereupon, which shall act as certification that the information contained in the request is true and correct, to the best of their belief and knowledge. The National Board reserves the right in its sole discretion to request

additional information from the Coordinator or the team's coach(s), teacher(s), or school administrators before acting on the request.

8. If the National Board determines that all requirements for a requested schedule accommodation have been met, the National Board shall grant a request provided that the requested schedule modification can be made, without undue disruption of the Friday/Saturday schedule of competition.