



## 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

### 14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MOCK TRIAL INVITATIONAL AT LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Early Saturday morning, the hallways and courtrooms of the Lake County Courthouse came alive as the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Mock Trial Invitational took place. The morning began with a welcome from Chief Judge Jay Ukena, followed by a briefing of the day to come by Circuit Judges Victoria Rossetti and Christen Bishop. The eighteen 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, Lakes Community High School, Libertyville High School, Maine South High School, Maine West High School, Mundelein High School, Niles West High School, Normal Community High School, St. Charles East High School, St. Charles North 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, "*Addison Grant vs. Sam Smith*." The case involves a lawsuit filed by the Plaintiff, alleging that Officer Sam Smith used excessive force in falsely arresting her. Grant was a homeless, twenty-year-old, sitting on a park bench, when Officer Smith approached. Smith contended that he had reason to believe that Grant had committed a crime and might be armed. Grant, who has suffered from a seizure disorder since she was three years old, alleged that she intended to cooperate with Officer Smith, but began having a seizure, at which point Smith began striking her.

The teams tried the case twice, first as the plaintiff and then as the defense. Students performed the roles of both attorneys and witnesses to compete for outstanding performances. Lake County Judges Michael Fusz, Veronica O'Malley, Elizabeth Rochford, Joseph Salvi, Stacey Seneczko, James Simonian, Charles Smith, George Strickland, and Christopher Stride 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 Bar Foundation, and the Lake County Juvenile Officers Association.

After lunch, an awards ceremony was held in the Courthouse atrium. The individuals who had the top scores for their performances as attorneys and witnesses were named and presented with trophies. Lake County Bar Foundation President Jeff Berman, and board members Mark Peavey and Joann Fratianni 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, St. Charles North; Second Place, Chicago Christian, and First Place, Bartlett. Checks were presented in the amounts of \$100.00, \$250.00 and \$500.00 respectively.

In closing, Judge Rossetti and 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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