



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

19th ANNUAL MOCK TRIAL INVITATIONAL AT LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

After two years of hosting the Lake County Mock Trial Invitational remotely, early this past Saturday morning, the hallways and courtrooms of the Lake County Criminal Court Tower came alive as the 19th Annual event took place. The morning began with a welcome from Chief Judge Mark L. Levitt, and 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 high school teams competing against one another to attain first place in the competition included students from Barrington High School, Carmel Catholic High School, Chicago Christian High School, College Preparatory School of America, De La Salle Institute, Evanston Township High School, Glenbrook South High School, Highland Park High School, Libertyville High School, Maine South High School, Maine West High School, Mundelein High School, South Elgin High School, Southland College Prep High School, St. Charles East High School, Stevenson High School, Timothy Christian School, Wheeling High School, Whitney M. Young Magnet High School, and York Community High School.

By 9:00 a.m., the students made their way to assigned courtrooms to begin their first trial session. The mock trial, selected by the Illinois State Bar Association, was entitled, "*People of the State of Illinois v. Logan Emerson.*" The criminal case involves two 18-year-old students, Rory Hollis, and Logan Emerson, who were both actors in community theatre. During the rehearsal, a loud BOOM came from the stage. Thereafter, 911 was called and the police were told that Hollis was accidentally shot. The teen was pronounced dead at the scene, and defendant Emerson was taken into custody by the Lincoln County Police Department where he gave a statement after waiving his Miranda rights. The State charged Emerson with First Degree Murder and Involuntary Manslaughter. Emerson pleaded not guilty to both charges.

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 Patricia S. Fix, John L. Joanem, Sharmila K. Manak, Reginald C. Mathews, Charles Smith, Luis A. Berrones, Ari P. Fisz, Charles D. Johnson, Jacqueline Melius, Veronica O'Malley, George T. Pappas, James K. Simonian, 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, sponsored by the Law-Related Education Initiative, the Lake County Bar Association, the 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 Judges Bishop, Rossetti, and DeRue. Lake County Bar Association Executive Director Greg Weider 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, Timothy Christian School; Second place, St. Charles East High School; and First place, York Community High School.

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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