

New Castle County Courthouse hosts 25th annual Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition

Over 250 students from twenty-five public, private, parochial and charter schools throughout Delaware competed this past weekend in the 25th annual Delaware High School Mock Trial competition. The event, sponsored by the Delaware Law Related Education Center (DELREC), took place in the courtrooms of New Castle County Courthouse in Wilmington on Feb. 26 and 27.

Students in each school spent two days arguing both sides of a simulated criminal case involving an alleged murder, presenting opening statements, closing arguments and questioning “witnesses.” Two finalists emerged after four rounds of competition.

Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. of the Delaware Supreme Court presided over the finals, which pitted Wilmington Friends School against Sussex Central High School, marking the first time that a Sussex County school has made it to the final round. Wilmington Friends ultimately took home top honors in the closely contested competition. Wilmington Friends will now represent Delaware in the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Boise, Idaho on May 12-14.

Wilmington Charter, Wilmington Christian and Tower Hill schools earned third through fifth place respectively. Eight students also received ceremonial gavels for exemplary performance as the “best witness” or “best attorney.” To mark the competition’s 25th year in Delaware, Anthony Iannini provided medals commemorating the 25th anniversary to each student participant.

At the banquet following the competition, DELREC presented its Pete Jones Award for outstanding service to the mock trial program to Jason C. Jowers, the Chair of Mock Trial Committee and a partner at Morris James LLP, and its Award for Excellence as a Classroom LRE Educator to M. Dwayne Caldwell of Brandywine High School. Finally, River Shannon, a student at Newark High School, received a scholarship award of \$500 provided by GE for winning the Mock Trial Competition Essay Contest.

Organizers also thanked the Delaware Supreme Court for their support, along with the Administrative Office of the Courts, Capitol Police, bailiffs and security officers for providing assistance during the two-day event and the Delaware Bench and Bar, as well as the Delaware Paralegal Association, for providing many of the volunteers that helped organize and operate the competition.