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Wilmington Friends School wins the 2022 Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition

For the second year in a row the Delaware High School Mock Trial competition was held remotely via video teleconferencing and for the second year in a row, Wilmington Friends School emerged as the winner.

After four rounds of competition held over March 4 and 5, 2022, Wilmington Friends School narrowly defeated Archmere Academy in the fifth and final round of the 31st Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition. Delaware Supreme Court Justice Tamika Montgomery-Reeves presided over the championship round while Delaware U.S. Attorney David Weiss and State Sen. Kyle Evans Gay acted as scoring judges.

In a first for the competition this year, a second fifth round match was held, where Charter School of Wilmington took third place by prevailing over St. Elizabeth School. Delaware Superior Court Judge Francis “Pete” Jones presided over this round while Delaware State Bar Association President Kathleen Miller and State Solicitor Aaron Goldstein acted as scoring judges. Fifth place went to Delaware Valley Classical School.

Students from Wilmington Friends School will now go on to represent Delaware in the National High School Mock Trial Championship, which will also be held remotely, out of Kalamazoo, Mich. on May 5-6, 2022.

Traditionally the Delaware State competition is held at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington but this year the competition was once again shifted to the online Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “When we were planning this year’s competition, we decided to err on the side of safety and once again hold the competition remotely, which also mirrors what will be done in the national competition this year,” said Mock Trial Co-Chair Daniel Attaway, Esq. “We are hopeful that we will be able to return to the courthouse next year and resume an in-person competition.”

“We want to congratulate Wilmington Friends School and all the participants for a great competition this year, particularly given the difficulties of appearing via Zoom,” said Mock Trial Co-Chair N. Christopher Griffiths.

In all, 17 teams from public, private, parochial and charter schools throughout Delaware took part in this year’s two-day event that involved more than 150 students, 17 teacher/coaches, and 35 attorney advisors. The annual statewide competition is sponsored by the Delaware Law Related Education Center (DELREC), and more than 125 members of Delaware’s legal community – including attorneys, paralegals, judges, and court staff – donated their time as judges, bailiffs, and volunteers for the competition.

Students on each team spent two days arguing a simulated criminal case that involved allegations that a doctor was running their practice as an illegal “pill mill” and that the doctor administered opioid pain medication to a patient that resulted in that patient’s death.

Student teams took turns arguing each side of the case during the competition. For example, if on the first round, the students argued the side of the prosecution, they had to argue the side of the defense during the second round. Final verdicts are not rendered in each round – there was no ruling of “guilty” or “not guilty” – instead each team was judged based on their presentation of the case and knowledge of the law.

Student teams presented opening statements, closing arguments, and questioned other students who played witnesses or experts in the case.

At the conclusion of the competition Newark Charter won the Delaware Way Award. This award is given by the teams themselves and is given to the team that the competing students believe best exemplify the ideals of mock trial – civility, justice, and fair play. Student competitors Helen Qi and Peter Chapman were named best attorneys and students Greer Marvel and Caroline Dooley were named best witnesses.

And finally, the Mock Trial Committee recognized Francis J. O’Malley with the Pete Jones Award for his years of commitment to the competition and his work in founding the Delaware competition in 1991.

The Mock Trial Committee thanked the Delaware Supreme Court for its support, along with the Delaware Administrative Office of the Courts for providing assistance during the two-day event. Organizers also expressed their deep appreciation to the Delaware Bench and Bar, and the Delaware Paralegal Association, for providing many of the volunteers that helped organize and operate the competition.

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