

May 15-17, 2006
American Mock Trial Invitational
Chapel Hill, North Carolina



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**NORTH CAROLINA TO HOST FIRST ANNUAL AMERICAN
MOCK TRIAL INVITATIONAL**

Students from across the U.S., South Korea to compete in Chapel Hill

RALEIGH – Students from 10 mock trial teams, including two teams from North Carolina high schools, have qualified to compete in the first annual American Mock Trial Invitational (AMTI). The competition will be held May 15-17 on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

AMTI was created and is cosponsored by the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers and the New Jersey State Bar Foundation as an alternative to the National High School Mock Trial Championship. North Carolina and New Jersey both withdrew from the National High School Mock Trial Championship when its board announced last fall that it would not allow schedule adjustments to accommodate religious observance.

“We are proud to welcome to North Carolina students from across the country, including New Jersey, California, Kentucky, Idaho, Virginia, Washington State, and especially the team traveling all the way from South Korea,” said Academy CEO Dick Taylor. “The AMTI competition was created to embody the values that we want to encourage most in our student competitors, such as sensitivity, fairness, and religious tolerance. I am sure this will be the start of a great mock trial tradition.”

The event has garnered national media attention because of the religious controversy from which it was born. When it served as host of the 2005 National Championship in Charlotte, the Academy adjusted the schedule to allow New Jersey’s state champions, a Jewish Orthodox high school, to compete and still observe the Sabbath from sunset Friday to sundown Saturday. The competition’s national board subsequently decided going forward it would not allow such accommodations again, citing scheduling concerns.

Despite pressure from North Carolina and New Jersey, as well as a resolution introduced in Congress by Rep. Steve Rothman (D-NJ) calling on the national board to change its scheduling policy, the board would not relent. That decision resulted in the withdrawal of North Carolina and New Jersey and the formation of next week’s alternate competition, which promises to accommodate team members’ religious needs.

“Above all else, the Academy of Trial Lawyers stands for the protection of individual rights, and we can not take part in a competition that discriminates against religious differences,” said Taylor. “No student should have to choose between his or her faith and participation in a mock trial competition.”

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation helped fund AMTI and will send its first- and second-place statewide champions to the competition.

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“We are very pleased to join the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers in sponsoring this new event, to be held on weekdays, in which mock trial students throughout the country can compete and interact in a spirit of mutual respect and goodwill,” said foundation president John J. Henschel.

At next week’s invitational, the student teams will argue both sides of the hypothetical case of *State of Amity v. Jamison “Jamie” Anderson*, which involves a high school student charged with committing a “hate crime” against a Muslim exchange student. (Details surrounding the case are available online at www.ncatl.org). Students will be judged based on how well they demonstrate critical thinking skills, public speaking, courtroom demeanor and teamwork.

The first round kicks off on Tuesday, May 16 at 9:30 a.m. at UNC’s School of Government and School of Law. A winner will be determined by Wednesday, May 17 at 4:00 p.m. directly following the final round at the Chapel Hill District Courthouse. (See attached for complete schedule of events). The events are open to the public and the media are invited to attend.

The competition is bringing together some of the best and brightest high school students from across the country and South Korea. Representing North Carolina is the state’s reigning mock trial champions, Greenville’s J.H. Rose High School, and East Chapel Hill High School, which finished second place in the state championship competition in January.

J.H. Rose High School’s mock trial team includes: Pamela Bland, Elizabeth Davis, Kathryn Jackson, Jordan Linscott, Tom Low, Sarah McCormick, Nimal Patel, Clayton Wilson and Nancy York, as well as coaches Liza Knight, Russell Knight, Caroline Lawler and attorney advisor Rob Wadell.

East Chapel Hill High School’s mock trial team includes: Jill Akiyama, Meghan Cullen, Sarah Henke, Marek Jucovic, Gregory Margolis, Shreya Prasad, Patrick Wilson, along with teacher coach Bob Brogden and attorney advisor Bob McClanahan.

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Program Schedule

Monday, May 15

6 - 9 pm Welcome Reception, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill, 206 West Franklin St., Chapel Hill. Team Photos & Pin Exchange

Tuesday, May 16 – Day One of Competition

9:30 - 11:45 am Round I, UNC School of Government
Parking is available at the UNC Visitor parking lot on Highway 54.

12:00 - 1:30 pm Lunch Break, Top of Lenoir Dining Hall, UNC

1:00 - 1:45 pm Orientation for Round II Judges, UNC School of Government

1:00 pm Posting for Round II, UNC Top of Lenoir & School of Government

1:35 pm Team Check-in, UNC School of Government

1:45 - 4:00 pm Round II, UNC School of Government

5:30 - 8 pm Dinner & Performance of Transactors Improv Co., Forest Theater
Rain location: Historic PlayMakers Theatre

5:30 - 7 pm Judge's Reception, Tuscany Room, Siena Hotel

Wednesday, May 17 – Day Two of Competition

9:30 - 11:45 am Round III, UNC School of Government
Parking is available at the UNC Visitor parking lot on Highway 54.

12:00 - 1:20 pm Awards Ceremony Lunch, Top of Lenoir Dining Hall

1:40 - 4:00 pm Final Round, Chapel Hill District Courthouse
Old Post Office building, corner of East Franklin & Henderson Streets