

Mock Trial Tournament Tests Students' Knowledge of the Law

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PHOENIX, Ariz. (March 12, 2003) - Eighteen high school teams from across the state will take part in a simulated courtroom trial to test their understanding of the legal system at the Arizona High School Mock Trial State Tournament on Saturday, March 22. The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education and the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Arizona are sponsoring the competition.

The 18 teams advanced to the state finals after participating in regional tournaments held throughout the state in early March.

At the state tournament, a predetermined set of facts is distributed to each team prior to the contest for participants to prepare both the prosecution and defense side of the case.

This year's hypothetical case focuses on what sentence should be given to a teenager convicted of aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon. As charged, under Arizona law, the 17-year-old faces a mandatory prison sentence of 5-15 years. Arizona law requires that the teenager be treated as an adult because of the seriousness of the crime committed, even though underage at the time.

Each mock trial team is composed of six to eight students who act out the roles of attorneys and witnesses. Judges determine the winning team based on the merits of the case and performance of the students.

Judges from Arizona's Superior Courts, the Arizona Supreme Court, the Federal Courts, and the city courts will judge the competition.

The all-day mock trial tournament begins at 8 a.m. on March 22, and takes place at the Sandra Day O'Connor Federal Courthouse, 401 W. Washington Street.

The winning state team will represent Arizona at the national competition May 8-10, 2003, in New Orleans.

The following teams will participate in the Arizona High School Mock Trial state tournament on March 22:

- Kofa High School, Yuma
- Desert Mountain High School (Maroon team), Scottsdale
- Chaparral High School (Red team), Scottsdale
- Shadow Mountain High School (Team 1), Paradise Valley
- Prescott High School (Blue team), Prescott
- Northland Prep Academy (Ytterbium), Flagstaff
- Xavier High School (East team), Phoenix
- Xavier High School (North team), Phoenix
- Arizona School for the Arts, (Team 1), Phoenix
- Central High School (Red team), Phoenix

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- Deer Valley High School (Silver team), Glendale
- Mountain Ridge High School (Burgundy team), Glendale
- Miami High School (White team), Miami
- Sahuaro High School (Red team), Tucson
- Sahuaro High School (Silver team), Tucson
- University High School, Tucson
- St. Gregory High School (White team), Tucson
- Cholla Magnet High School, Tucson

About the Foundation

The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education plays a leading role in preparing Arizona students for civic responsibility. The Foundation educates more than 100,000 children by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. It is also the home of www.lawforkids.com, America's first Web site dedicated to teaching students about the law. The Foundation also grants funds to non-profit organizations that provide free legal assistance to the poor so all people in Arizona can have a voice in our justice system.