

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2021

**Wilmington Friends School wins the 2021
Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition**

Wilmington Friends School won the 30th annual Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition that was held on February 19-20, 2021, via video teleconferencing.

This is the third time that Wilmington Friends School has won the statewide competition, having previously won in 2016 and 2017. Second place this year went to The Charter School of Wilmington.

Students from Wilmington Friends will now go on to represent Delaware in the National High School Mock Trial Championship, which will also be held remotely, out of Evansville, Indiana on May 13-15, 2021.

Normally the Delaware competition is held at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington but this year it was shifted to the online Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We knew early on last year that it would be impossible to hold the competition in person and maintain social distancing and meet courthouse entry guidelines, so we began planning to move the event online. We benefitted from input from various members of the Delaware judiciary, who were facing the same issue. In addition, several members of the Committee have now had experience with virtual trials and proceedings,” said Mock Trial Co-Chair Daniel Attaway, Esq.

In all, 21 teams from public, private, parochial and charter schools throughout Delaware took part in this year’s two-day mock trial competition that involved more than 200 students, 20 teacher/coaches, and 38 attorney advisors. The annual statewide competition is sponsored by the Delaware Law Related Education Center (DELREC), and more than 130 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 civil case involving the question of whether an insurance company should pay for the injuries suffered by the plaintiff when an employee of the insured client, a nature preserve, flew an unmanned drone into an area close to where the plaintiff (a hunter) was using the property. The insurance company contends that the preserve breached the insurance contract when the preserve modified the drone and that the preserve employee was operating the drone with the intent to harm the plaintiff by spooking his horse.

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 plaintiff, they had to argue the side of the defense during the second round. Final verdicts were not rendered in each round – no one “wins” or “loses” the case in that way – 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.

Following Wilmington Friends and Wilmington Charter, third place went to Salesianum School, followed by Archmere Academy and Cab Calloway School of the Arts rounding out the top five teams in the 2021 competition.

Mount Pleasant High School 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. Tess Wolf of Wilmington Friends and Pratik Jacob of Salesianum both each won three trial “gavel” awards for their outstanding performance throughout the competition.

Chris Griffiths, Esq., the other mock trial co-chair, said the Mock Trial Committee and the competition are indebted to TrialGraphix, which provided online hosting and management for this year’s competition. “We also want to recognize G2 Performance, a local Delaware company who provides marching band uniforms and personal protective equipment, who donated our branded face masks for the competition,” said Griffiths.

Organizers also thanked the Delaware Supreme Court for its support, along with the Delaware Administrative Office of the Courts and other courts’ staff volunteers 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.

**For more information, please contact:
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