



THE OHIO MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION IS BACK IN PERSON, AND EVERYBODY WINS!

BY ADRIAN D. THOMPSON

Some of my fondest memories from law school revolve around mock trial. This participation laid the groundwork for what ultimately became my practice and helped make me the lawyer I am today. Mock trials are designed to simulate courtroom proceedings, but there's so much more at play than drafting persuasive statements and delivering oral arguments. Competitors learn how to develop an effective trial strategy based on a discrete number of facts. They discover the importance of clear and concise communication and of connecting with an audience. They find out what it means to think on their feet as they work together to deal with setbacks. And they learn the confidence and life skills that will help them become better lawyers, to be sure, but also doctors, bankers, educators, leaders or any other career they decide to pursue.

That's why I was so pleased to hear that after a two-year, COVID-induced hiatus, the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education is returning the Ohio Mock Trial Competition to an in-person format. The competition will bring together the state's best and brightest high-school students for three separate events: Districts, which will take place on Jan. 27, 2023; Regionals, to be held on Feb. 17, 2023; and the State Finals on March 9, 10, and 11, 2023.

Because Northeast Ohio represents Ohio's largest region for the competition, the CMBA will organize both District and Regional finals at the Justice Center and the Old Courthouse. And that's where you come in. It takes more than 150 volunteers — attorneys, judges, and law students — to staff the competition:

- Legal advisors who guide student competitors, teach them the basics of courtroom procedures, trial strategy, and the legal issues at play in their assigned cases, and provide the direction and support that will

- motivate competitors to achieve their best.
- Judicial panelists who score student performances and provide constructive feedback at trial.
- Presiding judges who guide the trial process, rule on objections, ensure a fair trial, handle disputes, and create a positive competition experience.

Volunteers can select the role and commitment that best meets their schedule. Legal advisors will meet with students three or four times before the competition. Judicial panelists and presiding judges can choose the day and time of their service. Volunteering — for any role — requires no trial experience, just an enthusiasm for supporting our local high school mock trial teams.

Please consider giving your time and insight to help us carry on this invaluable tradition.

The Future of Law is Bright

On Nov. 17, 2022, the CMBA and my law firm, Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, co-hosted a networking happy hour for CMBA and the leadership of Ohio's Affinity Bars at our office in downtown Cleveland. It was a great event, where we met with leaders from:

- The Arab American Bar Association of Ohio
- The Asian American Bar Association of Ohio
- The Norman S. Minor Bar Association
- The Ohio Hispanic Bar Association
- The South Asian American Bar Association of Ohio



- Throughout the event, I couldn't help but reflect on the evolution — to the practice of law, to the legal community, to access to justice, and more — that these leaders and their organizations are provoking and on the confidence they inspire for a more inclusive, just and equitable future. Our Affinity Bars are indeed bringing about positive change to the profession, building the next generation of diverse leaders and thus making the next legal leaders as diverse as the world we live in.

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