Mock Trial Offers a One-of-a-Kind Experience for Volunteers

The 30th Annual Ohio Mock Trial Competition is just around the corner, and the CMBA is pleased to again host the largest District and Regional competitions in the state in February. Each year, hundreds of high school students from across Northeast Ohio meet in Cleveland to present their finest legal arguments in a hypothetical trial over a citizen's constitutional rights. Each year, dozens of volunteers from our legal community spend an afternoon in the courtrooms serving as judicial panelists to score the trials and offer these bright young minds their advice and encouragement. This year, will you join them?

The words of volunteers who return to the competition every year express best why they find such enjoyment and value in helping with the Ohio Mock Trial, so we’ll let them share their experience.

Judge Mary Jane Boyle, Eighth District Court of Appeals: I have been a volunteer participant in the Ohio Mock Trial Competition for over 15 years. It is an amazing program that gives Ohio’s high school students an excellent introduction to the justice system. I wish that such a program was available to me as a high school student. The pride, enthusiasm, and preparedness that these students demonstrate, along with the collaboration of attorneys, judges, and teachers, inspires me to participate each year. I have no doubt that these students will become some of the finest members of our profession, and I am honored to have had some influence on them.

Neal E. Shapero, Shapero & Roloff Co., L.P.A.: I have been involved with the Ohio Mock Trial Competition for over ten years, and each year I look forward to participating. I am always amazed by the efforts of the students, from their understanding of the facts of the case and the legal issues involved, to their actual trial performance and overall enthusiasm for the process. I am inspired each year by the students and I see attributes performance and overall enthusiasm for the process. I have participated as a legal advisor for teams, a judicial panelist on all levels of the competition, and was instrumental in starting the current program at St. Edwards High School. I have been involved for the last 10 years or more.

Why do I keep coming back? The amount of dedication, work and commitment that it takes for students to prepare themselves is daunting! The young men and women who participate are always well prepared. They come to the Courtrooms raring to go! The intensity is awesome! The students become the roles they play as if they are truly that person. They have a desire to succeed and to do that they have to work as a team. The Ohio Mock Trial Competition prepares the students for the reality of team work, success and failure that they will inevitably face sometime in their lives. These young men and women, with this experience, are much more prepared for challenges they will have to face in the future.

Judge John J. Russo, Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas: I truly love being involved with the Ohio Mock Trial program! My involvement has been from all facets of the competition. I have participated as a legal advisor for teams, a judicial panelist on all levels of the competition and was instrumental in starting the current program at St. Edwards High School. I have been involved for the last 10 years or more.

Given my time with the program, I have watched students grow from timid freshmen to strong and bold upperclassman, all the while exuding an excitement for the law that sometimes fades in practicing attorneys. While the students greatly appreciate the attorneys who serve as coaches and judges, I believe it is the attorney volunteers who truly benefit from the program. Sharing time with aspiring attorneys and watching them present a case provides each of us an opportunity to reflect on why we dedicate ourselves to the law and reminds us that we are part of a community that needs our attention to thrive. I invite each of you to join me in a fulfilling activity and participate in the Ohio Mock Trial Competition — the students deserve our commitment.

CONCLUSION

Volunteers are needed to judge at two afternoon trials for the District Cuyahoga Competition at the Justice Center on Friday, February 1, 2013 or for advancing teams at the Regional Cuyahoga Competition at the Lakeside Courthouse on Friday, February 22, 2013. There will be a training for new and returning volunteers on Wednesday, January 23 at the CMBA offices at noon. Please see page 4 of this month’s Bar Journal for an official signup sheet, volunteer online at www.clemetrobar.org/OhioMockTrial, or email Competition Coordinator Jessica Paine at jpaine@clemetrobar.org.

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