

Coxsackie-Athens Declared Greene County Mock Trial Champions

Defending Greene County Mock Trial Champions Coxsackie-Athens defeated Cairo-Durham on Tuesday night to advance to the Regional level of the New York State Bar Association Mock Trial Competition. This is the fourth consecutive year that the talented Coxsackie-Athens team has been awarded this coveted title. The team, comprised of C-A's best and brightest, was coached by local attorneys Charles M. Tailleux, Joan P. Tailleux, Denise Hartman and Eugenia Brennan.

"It really came down to the end" said Matthew B. Tully, founding partner of Tully, Rinckey and Associates, PLLC., and the County's Bar Association Coordinator for the 2005 Mock Trial Competition. Indeed, the teams were nearly tied right through to closing arguments. "Both teams did extremely well and should be very proud of their efforts" Tully said. Tully still remembers his days of being involved in High School Mock Trial competitions which inspired him to become a lawyer and hopes that this friendly competition will inspire other young high school students to do the same. Tully's firm sponsored the competition and provided dinner following the trial for the students involved.

Greene County District Attorney Terry Wilhelm judged the finals at the County Courthouse and was very impressed with the level of commitment, dedication and talent of both teams and their coaches. Wilhelm applauded the level of work that both teams put into the trial. "It was like real litigation," exclaimed Wilhelm to the near capacity crowd.

The Coxsackie-Athens team took on the role of the defendants in the fictitious case of child singing sensation Macca McLaughlin in a civil lawsuit against her parents Robbie and Lee McLaughlin. Coxsackie's winning team was comprised of three lawyers, played by Chris DeFrancesco, Erika Hauser and Donald Gori; three witnesses, played by Marisa Multari, Erica Wolfe and Wesley Kirby; and two alternates Courtney Mentzner and Eugene Carey. The team had successfully tried this case representing the plaintiff in the semi-final round against Catskill.

After closing arguments and a brief recess, Judge Wilhelm came back with a verdict in the amount of \$750,000 in favor of the plaintiff, played by the Cairo-Durham Mock Trial team and coached by Brad Chamberlain. The lawyers representing Macca McLaughlin had successfully demonstrated sufficient evidence that her parents violated the prudent investment act when they recklessly lost all of their daughter's money in a single stock that ultimately failed. However, this victory was short lived when Wilhelm announced that there was a lack of evidence to demonstrate a breach of contract in the second, larger judgment of the civil suit. Since neither team won the entire case, the winner was determined by performance points awarded on how well each team did opening arguments, questioned witnesses, cross examined witnesses, made final arguments, and asserted objections. In the end, Coxsackie-Athens won by a mere three points. The standstill crowd broke into cheers after the defense team was declared the Greene County Mock Trial Champions.

Coxsackie-Athens will now compete in the Division 3 single elimination round of regional

competition in St. Lawrence County on April 30. They hope to be one of six teams that will advance to the State Finals held in Albany in May.

The mock trial competition is part of a program administered by the New York State Bar Association that promotes citizenship and law-related education in schools throughout New York State.

The mock trial competition assists educators in creating opportunities for students to become effective citizens, able to participate fully in a democratic society.

The annual Statewide High School Mock Trial Tournament, the nation's largest, provides students with hands-on opportunities to further their understanding of the law, court procedures, and the legal system, while honing their speaking, listening, reading and reasoning skills.

Tully Rinckey PLLC actively practices in the following areas of law: real estate

, labor relations/employment law

, bankruptcy and debtor/creditor rights

, trusts and estates

, elder law

, family

and criminal law

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