

NEWS



MASSACHUSETTS
BAR ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 19, 2007

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MOCK TRIAL TEAMS REACH ROAD TO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

**Final competition in vehicular homicide case set for
March 29, Great Hall, Faneuil Hall, Boston.**

BOSTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Bar Association's 2007 High School Mock Trial Competition has reached its final elimination rounds. The statewide competition's final championship will be held at 10 a.m. on March 29 in the Great Hall of Faneuil Hall in Boston. Superior Court Associate Justice Barbara A. Dortch-Okara will preside and will be assisted in the judging by Norfolk County First Juvenile Court Justice Mary M. McCallum and Superior Court Associate Justice Howard J. Whitehead.

The competition places more than 115 high school teams from across the state in simulated courtroom situations where they assume the roles of lawyers, defendants and witnesses in hypothetical cases. After the "Elite Eight" competition during this week, the "Final Four" teams will square off in two separate trials at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesday, March 27, at the Worcester Superior Court in Worcester, Mass. The two winning teams will compete for the state championship at the March 29 finals in Boston.

This year's case involves a trial before a judge (commonly referred to as a "bench trial") in Superior Court on a criminal matter involving a young driver charged with serious driving offenses. After leaving a party late at night while driving home, the defendant hits a pedestrian who is out walking his dog. The pedestrian appears not to be seriously hurt, and the defendant truly believes to have done nothing wrong. However, the matter becomes much more complicated, and a lot more serious, when the pedestrian later dies as the result of his injuries. The evidence seems to indicate that the defendant may have engaged in some activity at the party which, although claimed to be typical and harmless at the time, now gives rise to allegations that support these criminal charges.

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Did the defendant engage in conduct at the party that caused him/her to become "impaired," or not? Was the defendant even aware that such conduct, even if typical and seemingly harmless, could have placed him/her in such serious legal trouble? When you get behind the wheel and something goes wrong, all of your actions come under great scrutiny, and things that may have seemed non-controversial become subject to legal review.

For the ninth consecutive year, the Massachusetts Bar Association's statewide High Mock Trial program is being sponsored by Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels, LLP in Boston. Additional support comes from the Massachusetts Bar Foundation. The purpose of the Massachusetts Bar Association's Mock Trial competition is to further understanding of the law, court procedures, civil liberties and the legal system among high school students.

For more information on the MBA mock trial program or upcoming competitions, visit www.massbar.org/mock, or contact Community and Public Services Director Elizabeth O'Neil at (617) 338-0560 or by e-mail at Oneil@massbar.org.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.