

# MBA NEWS



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## **Maimonides School of Brookline wins Massachusetts Bar Association's 2009 Mock Trial State Championship**

BOSTON, Mass.— For the first time, Maimonides School of Brookline was today named State Champion of the Massachusetts Bar Association's Mock Trial Program. The finals were held at Faneuil Hall in Boston.

Maimonides School advances to the National High School Mock Trial competition in Atlanta, Ga., in May. A portion of the trip will be funded by a donation from the MBA's philanthropic partner, the Massachusetts Bar Foundation. This was the first time Maimonides School made it to the finals. The school was a Sweet 16 regional winner in 2006.

"I couldn't be happier," said Harry Chiel, one of Maimonides School's team captains. Chiel said the support of the school's tight-knit community helped the team prepare for the championship.

Sharon High School and Maimonides School of Brookline competed during a more than two-hour mock trial in Faneuil Hall's Great Hall. Maimonides School represented the defendant, an Iraq War veteran charged with first-degree murder in connection with the July Fourth shooting death of his former high school enemy. Maimonides School raised Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as an insanity defense. Sharon High School prosecuted the case.

Superior Court Associate Justice Howard J. Whitehead presided over the mock trial and was assisted by Superior Court Justice Peter W. Agnes Jr. and Essex Probate and Family Court Associate Justice John D. Casey.

Whitehead said deciding the winner was difficult because both teams were so strong. "This is the best pair of performances I've seen; really the best we've had," he said.

In the end, Sharon High School as the prosecution secured a guilty verdict against the defendant, Sazer Larson. However, Maimonides School won the championship because it received a higher score from the judges, who based their calculations on a number of factors including presentation and knowledge of both the case and law.

"It would be an honor and a privilege for me to have any of the participants here today to appear before me," said Agnes, who has been a trial judge for 18 years. "All of you should feel very proud of your

performances here today... It was evident that you were extremely skillful.”

The Mock Trial Program began its 24th year in January. The competition places high school teams from 16 regions across the state in simulated courtroom situations where they assume the roles of lawyers, defendants and witnesses in hypothetical cases. More than 120 teams competed in this year’s competition.

“I hope you have found this competition a rewarding opportunity so far – something that has brought about a greater appreciation of yourselves; your classmates; the law, court proceedings and the American judicial system,” said MBA Vice President Robert L. Holloway Jr.

“I’m confident that this experience will serve you well as you continue to gain self confidence along your paths to college and adulthood.”

The Mock Trial Program is administered by the MBA, and made possible by the international law firm of Brown, Rudnick, Berlack, Israels LLP through its Center for the Public Interest in Boston, which has contributed \$25,000 per year to the program since 1998.

For more information on the MBA Mock Trial Program, visit [www.massbar.org/mock](http://www.massbar.org/mock),

*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.*