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SAN DIEGO LAWYER

**Mock
Trial:**

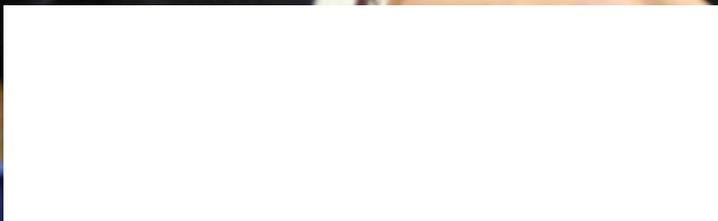
**An Inside Look
at Justice**

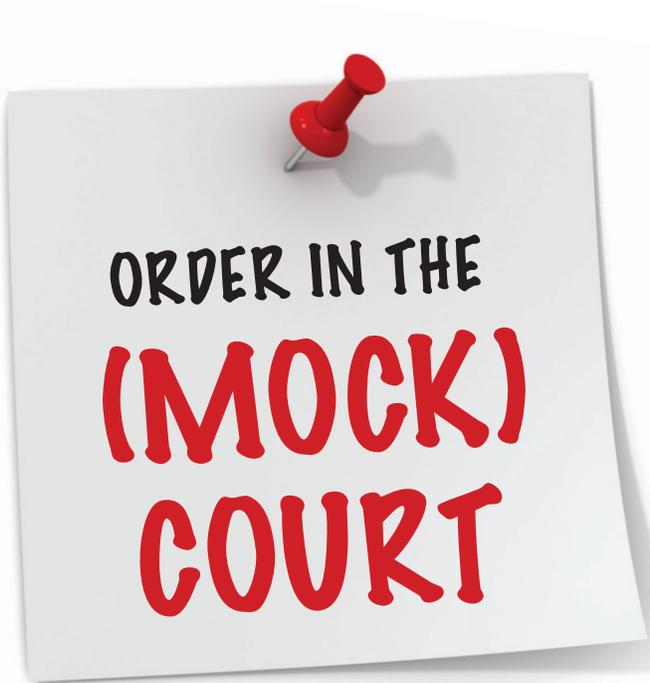


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2012: A Year in Review

A History of San Diego
County's City Attorneys





ORDER IN THE (MOCK) COURT

BY ELISABETH DONOVAN
Photographs by Steve Silva



San Diego County high school students from Escondido to Chula Vista will be coming together to participate in The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) annual Mock Trial Competition Program from February 26 through March 2.

The program, which is coordinated by the San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA) and San Diego Superior Court, began seven years ago, and is funded by donations made to the San Diego Justice Foundation.

Former Deputy District Attorney Kim-Thoa Hoang originally spearheaded the competition, and during her five years as co-chair, the program evolved to include high schools from around the county. Judge Linda B. Quinn (Ret.) and Judge Yvonne E. Campos are serving as co-chairs for the 2013 competition.

"It's great to see how far high school students can go in this opportunity before them," Quinn says. "This experience covers so many development areas. Even if the students don't plan on becoming attorneys, it is worth it because they get so much out of it."

Students can benefit from the array of skills that they will polish by participating

in the program, which include teamwork, problem solving, public speaking and the need to think on their feet.

The teams begin preparing months ahead of time for the competition, and learn many aspects of the trial process, including how to make pre-trial motions, objections, opening and closing statements, and how to effectively examine witnesses on direct and cross examination. The students will play a role as either a prosecutor, defense attorney, witness, bailiff or court clerk.

The teams are given a hypothetical criminal case that involves a societal issue that teenagers face in today's world. Attorney coaches are assigned to each team, and help the students develop foundational knowledge about the trial process while preparing strategies and arguments. The team who wins will represent San Diego at the state competition, and if successful at the state level, may advance to the nationwide competition.

Local judicial officers volunteer to preside over each mock courtroom. Attorneys who volunteer serve as either a scorer or coach. Law students and pre-law students also volunteer as courtroom monitors who provide assistance to each

courtroom. Support staff from the SDCBA and the court will also play a crucial role in ensuring the competition runs smoothly by handling check-in, administration and compilation of the teams' scores.

"Everyone is working toward the common goal of bettering our democratic society," Campos says. "It's heartwarming to see how many people have stepped up to the plate. The attorneys and judges who participate know how important this is; it's a win-win for everyone. The high school students and their parents are a great audience to learn about the courts, understand why they're important and why it's important to be up on our civics."

"Attorney volunteers reap a tremendous reward when they participate in the competition," Quinn says. "They get to see the excitement and thrill on the faces of students because so many of them give it 150 percent. I sat in courtrooms for years and it's great to see how excited high school students are and what they can accomplish with attorneys who help them achieve great heights."

The program has grown immensely since its inception from four to 21 as more high schools opt to participate in it. This year, federal entities have become involved



Attorney Participants

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Federal Defenders Office

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Attorney at Law

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Law Offices of
Martin Buchanan

Jill Burkhardt
U.S. Attorney's Office

Shereen Charlick
Federal Defenders Office

Lisa Hurd Chung
Duane Morris

Christina Coates
Jones Day

William Cole
U.S. Attorney's Office

Lauren Cusick
Federal Defenders Office

Gina Darvas
San Diego District
Attorney's Office

Karin Dougan Vogel
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter
& Hampton LLP

James Eischen Jr.
Eischen Law Group APLC

Lea Fields-Bernard
City of San Diego

David Finn
U.S. Attorney's Office

Karen Frostrom
Thornes Bartolotta
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District Attorney's Office

Patty Herian
District Attorney's Office

Mandy Hexom
Buchanan, Ingersoll &
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Danielle Hickman
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Amy Hoffman
Public Defenders

Lucinda Jacobs
Selman Breitman LLP

Elliott Kanter
Attorney at Law

Jennifer Kaplan
District Attorney's Office

Lisa Missett
District Attorney's Office

Danielle Mor Dychter
In House Counsel,
LRS LLC and BNC LLC

Peter Murray
Bureau of Medi-Cal
Fraud and Elder Abuse

Juan Ordaz Jr.
Ordaz Law

Ed Orendain
Law Office of Edward
Orendain

Thomas Palme
Public Defenders

John Parnley
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Anne Perry
U.S. Attorney's Office

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Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP

Keith Rutman
Attorney at Law

Brandon Saxon
Gordon & Rees LLP

Samira Seidu
District Attorney's Office

Khodadad Sharif
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Mejkan Tague
Superior Court of CA

Chris Tenorio
U.S. Attorney's Office

Christopher Todd
Wingert Grebing
Brubaker & Goodwin LLP

Victor Torres
Law Office of V.M. Torres

John Diego Velasquez
Law Offices of
Diego John Velasquez

Lorelei Westin
Wilson Sonsini
Goodrich & Rosati

Alanna Whittington
Attorney at Law

to ensure that the larger competition continues to be a success. U.S. District Judges and U.S. Magistrate Judges, as well as attorneys from the U.S. Attorney's Office and Federal Defenders of San Diego, are joining deputies from the Public Defender and Office of the District Attorney to volunteer for the 2013 competition. Magistrate Judge David H. Bartick is serving as Lead Scorer this year and will train attorneys to ensure greater consistency in scoring outcomes.

"We are enhancing the program for the students this year by having more federal trial practitioners involved, since they spend a lot of time in court and really know what they are doing," Campos says. "Magistrate Judge David H. Bartick will serve as a great lead scorer because he is well-respected by lawyers and takes this seriously. He served as an attorney scorer last year and jumped in to judge the competition for a judge who took ill. He will have a great way of ensuring that the scoring aspect will be run as well as possible."

While students will leave the competition with an understanding and appreciation of the court system, some students will walk away with more: a career path. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Cole,

Chief of the Criminal Division, who is volunteering as a coach this year, is one of the many attorneys who were inspired to go to law school after participating in the CRF trial competition.

"There have been quite a few success stories since I have been involved with mock trial," says Michelle Chavez, San Diego County Mock Trial Coordinator and the SDCBA's Lawyer Referral & Information Service Director. "Many teachers have told me that this competition has inspired their students to enter a career in the legal field. A few students changed their college majors and are now attending law school or participating in their school mock trial teams."

Chavez and Julie Myres, Student Outreach and Education Program Manager for the San Diego Superior Court, oversee all support staff for the program. The San Diego County Bar Association is still in need of volunteer attorneys to score the trials for the Mock Trial Competition Program. If you are interested in participating, please contact Michelle Chavez at mchavez@sdcb.org.

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