Mock Trial Teams Excel

TOP ROW: Competitor -Ramon Crego, Coach- Kimberly Kanoff, Faculty Advisor - The Honorable Judge David M. Gersten, Coach - Michael Mayer, Competitor - Christine Louissaint, Coach- Tara Kawass, Competitor - Vladimir Larios, Competitor - Thomas Mirigliano.

BOTTOM ROW (The First Place Team): Defense Advocate - Bryan Paschal, Defense Advocate- Lincoln Atten, Plaintiff Advocate- Joey McCall, Star Witness - Jennifer Pena, Plaintiff Advocate - William McHugh.

In January 2011, St. Thomas Law's trial team traveled to Orlando and won first place at the annual Chester Bedell Memorial Mock Trial Competition hosted by the Trial Lawyers' Section of the Florida Bar. Ten different Florida law schools, each with two teams, participated in the competition, which centered on a wrongful death action.

In October 2010, the trial team made it to the semi-finals of the Michigan State University College of Law National Trial Advocacy Competition. More than 26 teams from across the nation took part in the competition involving a first-degree murder case, and St. Thomas Law's team defeated teams from schools including Baylor, Loyola and Fordham (the previous year's winner).

Capping the victories at the Michigan State and Bedell competitions, respectively, were the outstanding performances of two students, Courtney Deblis '11 and Joey McCall '11. Ms. Deblis earned top honors at Michigan State for conducting the "Best Cross Examination" – quite a feat as more than 300 cross-examinations were performed at the competition. Mr. McCall, the mock trial president named "Best Advocate" at the Bedell competition, summed up the team's success: "This victory is truly a reflection of the hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence that St. Thomas Law is all about."

The students' coaches are Judge David M. Gersten, faculty advisor and judge on the Third District Court of Appeal, Judge Rosa C. Figarola of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, as well as Tara Kawass, Esq., and Michael Mayer '07, Esq., both of whom are assistant public defenders at the Office of the Public Defender in Miami's Appellate Division.

The trial team's next challenge takes the students to John Marshall Law School in Chicago, where they will compete in the American Bar Association's National Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition in late March. Because of the trial team students' recent success, St. Thomas Law is among the 22 teams invited to this prestigious competition.

View Newsletter

ST.THOMAS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW