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Miramonte Wins Mock Trial Competition

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Miramonte's team won the Mock Trial competition.

and received guidance on courtroom procedures from their schoolteachers and volunteer attorneys and judges, to acquire a working knowledge of the judicial system.

For the past four weeks (seven evenings), the Miramonte High School team and 14 other Contra Costa County high school Mock Trial teams have been battling it out with each other inside the superior courthouse courtrooms of Martinez. Miramonte will now represent Contra Costa County at the California State Mock Trial competition, held in Sacramento, March 18-20. California's state finalist team will then compete in the National Mock Trial Competition, held in Boise, Idaho, May 12-14.

The top four teams finished in this order: First was Miramonte, followed by Acalanes, then Heritage High and California High at fourth.

GJEL Accident Attorneys underwrote this year's Mock Trial program. The law firm also funded The CCCOE Mock Trial Scholarship Program. Lucy Portnoff of Miramonte High School was one of three recipients of a \$1,000 scholarship that can be applied to college tuition, books, room and board, travel to and from school, or other expenses related to higher education.

This year, 102 Bay Area practicing and retired attorneys, senior law students, and sworn judges volunteered their time to serve as Mock Trial Attorney Scorers and Judges. These volunteers represented judges from Bay Area Superior Courts, the California Bankruptcy Court, the California Supreme Court, and the California Appellate Court. Attorney Scorers included Bay Area attorneys from county District Attorney and Public Defender offices, the State Attorney General's Office; and the California Department of Justice. Also assisting were nonprofit, public, private, and corporate attorneys. In addition, senior students from five Bay Area law schools lent a hand in scoring.

After a number of speeches made by the coaches and individual awards presented to exceptional performing students, the 35th Annual Contra Costa County High School Mock Trials Awards Ceremony concluded with the naming of this year's championship team: Miramonte High School. Acalanes High School was awarded second place.

Mock Trial is an academic event for high school students coordinated by the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Most of the teams begin their Mock Trial training when they commence the new school year, which makes Mock Trials one of the longest seasons of all the participating schools sports and academic activities. The purpose of this program is to teach students about the law and the workings of the legal system. To prepare, the students conducted legal research



The Acalanes Mock Trial team placed second in the competition. Photos Diane Morrell, CCCOE

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