



Students Participate in Cohen & Cohen Mock Trial

BY SARAH MARTIN
Staff Writer

The team of Dawna Anderson and Michael Williams won the 5th Annual Cohen & Cohen Mock Trial Competition on Nov. 7 at GW Law School.

The winning team represented the plaintiff, while the team of Patrick DeKlotz and Ryan Sanders argued for the defense.

Judge James Robertson presided over the mock trial in the Jacob Burns Moot Court Room.

This year's competition began in September, when 44 2L and 3L students combined to form 22 teams. Each team was required to submit written motions and supporting memoranda, as well as prepare both sides of the case.

The first round was held at D.C. Superior Court on Oct. 20. Eight teams advanced to the quarterfinal round held at GW Law School on the morning of Oct. 28.

The teams were Anderson and Williams, Kelly Breakey and Christine Lamberti, Lauren Briggerman and Krishnakshi Das, William DuFour and Wasim Rahman, Jason Clark and Matthew Orlins, DeKlotz and Sanders, Maureen

McGough and Patrick McGuire, and Utibe Ikpe and Elizabeth Newton.

Four teams then advanced to the semifinal round, also held at the school later that afternoon. The teams were Anderson and Williams, DeKlotz and Sanders, McGough and McGuire, and Ikpe and Newton.

Each and every round of this year's competition ran very professionally and smoothly, said Jan Lawson, president of the Mock Trial Board. I attribute this to the hard work of my Executive Board, as well as to the willing participation of local attorneys who serve as our practitioner-judges.

This year's case problem was a personal injury action brought by Pat O'Callahan, an employee of a television studio who was injured while working on the set.

The plaintiff asserted a negligence cause of action against the owners and operators of the television set, National Television Network Studio, Inc.

Throughout the competition, each team argued before panels of practicing attorneys.

All of the competitors who advanced to the quarterfinal round were later selected for membership on the Mock Trial Board.

The Cohen & Cohen Mock Trial is sponsored by Cohen & Cohen, P.C., a boutique personal injury firm in D.C.

Wayne Cohen, manager of the firm, is also a lecturer of law at GW Law School, as well as a past president of the Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, D.C., the local branch of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

Cohen & Cohen, P.C. was recently named one of the top firms in the district by Washingtonian magazine.

Before the mock trial began, Cohen talked about the importance of trial experience while in law school.

He told the audience that as a young lawyer, while representing a pro bono client, a judge told him in chambers that he was awful. This experience was part of the reason Cohen wanted to create the Cohen & Cohen Mock Trial.

Cohen & Cohen is one of two competitions a year put on by the mock trial board.

Paul Kerlin, secretary of the Mock Trial Board, said that the array of competitors this year was very impressive, being both well-prepared and extremely enthusiastic.

Senior Assistant Dean for Student Affairs David Johnson introduced the two teams that made it to the

final event, stating that Anderson had done work for the D.C. Legal Corps, Williams was a Backstreet Boy in Law Revue, and DeKlotz had an uncle in attendance at the mock trial. Johnson also relayed to the audience that Sanders sleeps with his eyes open.

Cohen introduced the judge, the Honorable James Robertson. Robertson, who has served as a United States District Judge for the District of Columbia since 1994, graduated from GW Law School in 1965.

Larson noted, During the final round, each of the competitors displayed a commendable amount of preparation and confidence.

After the winners were announced, Cohen auctioned off a 5-day, 4-night stay at a condominium at The Canyons Grand Summit in Park City, Utah. This raffle is sponsored by Capital Reporting Company, a Washington, D.C. court reporting company. The winner of this year's raffle was Jason Clark.

Every law student should consider participating in a mock trial competition such as Cohen & Cohen, Larson said. It provides an excellent opportunity to develop practical legal skills, such as public speaking, working on a team, and thinking on your feet.