



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY VERNON "GENE" LEVERTY, ESQ., PRESIDENT, STATE BAR OF NEVADA

## BELIEVE YOU'RE NEEDED

### **The theme for the 2018 National High School Mock Trial Championship, coming up on May 10-12 in Reno, is "BELIEVE."**

The theme was inspired by a sculpture in Reno City plaza with the fitting quote: "Imagine with all your Mind. Believe with all your Heart. Achieve with all your Might."

Not only is the "believe" theme appropriate for the championship, but it also applies to the members of the Nevada bar. We believe our membership will step up and volunteer to make the competition outstandingly successful. We want the 35<sup>th</sup> championship to be the best in 35 years. The championship started in 1984 in Des Moines, Iowa, and has been held in these states: Nebraska, Arizona, Washington, D.C., Texas, Kentucky, Oregon, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Georgia, Illinois, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, New Mexico, Missouri, South Carolina, Minnesota, Florida, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Delaware, Indiana, Idaho and Connecticut.

### **The Nevada Bar Foundation and the State Bar of Nevada are the joint sponsors of the 2018 championship. It is Nevada's turn to host, and we need you to volunteer.**

These competitive mock trial events assist our young, our community and our state. Don Christensen and Bob Eisenberg have devoted years to high school mock trials. I asked them to contact former members of their high school mock trial teams to describe how

participating in mock trial affected them.

Raga Siddharthan wrote, "Mock trial was a great experience for me. ... I was very shy and reserved in high school. ... The skills I learned in mock trial have allowed me to excel and become a surgeon."

Stephanie Baez wrote, "First, mock trial is the reason I went to law school. The program provided a glimpse into what it's really like to be a lawyer, to strategize about a case and to prepare for court. The program was a great way to test-drive a career before making the big decision about whether to go to law school. Plus, the practical pointers I learned in mock trial are tips that I still remember and use as a practicing lawyer today."

There are many stories about how high school mock trial competitions were positive life-changing events for the students. The stated goal of the championship program is to promote an understanding and appreciation of the American judicial system through academic competitions. The effective goal is to help our young reach their full potential and be assets to our community. Although it is interesting that more than 30 percent of participating students go on to law school, I believe what is most interesting is the other 70 percent who don't go to law school still have their lives changed—coupled with a full understanding of how our legal system works. It isn't a bad thing to have a surgeon understand a lawyer's perspective.

We anticipate needing at least 300 attorneys to serve as judges for the competition; by the date of writing this article, we have secured 89 members, counting myself, to serve.

### **So, we only need 211 more attorneys to volunteer.**

We absolutely need attorneys to volunteer for the competition and to participate in this very important event for our bar, our legal community and for our state. We also need another 75 volunteers to serve as courtroom liaisons, registration helpers and "human arrows" to help direct students to competition and event venues. Take a minute and sign up to volunteer, then recruit others in your office, home or community to help the championship competition succeed.

You can volunteer by going to [www.nvmocktrial.com](http://www.nvmocktrial.com). The website provides all the information about the event, so please register online to be a presiding judge or scoring juror. It takes only seconds to register through the excellent website.

Because I volunteered to judge or score at the National High School Mock Trial Championship, I was also encouraged to sign up to judge or be a scoring judge for the Nevada High School Mock Trial competitions in Las Vegas (Saturday, February 10) and Reno (February 16), or the Nevada state competition (March 2 and 3 in Las Vegas). Volunteer shifts take about four hours per round, which includes a brief orientation before the round begins. You still have time to jump in and become a judge or scoring judge for the state competitions, which will prepare you to judge at the national championship. However, one need not have previously participated to judge for the 2018 National High School Mock Trial Championship.

This competition is the biggest event the State Bar of Nevada has hosted in its long history. We want every attorney to step up and assist us to make it successful. We want to demonstrate

to students, coaches and their families that Nevada's legal community can put on the most successful championship to date.

**Thank you for going the extra mile by registering to be a volunteer.**

There is no better feeling than giving back, so make your day by stopping right now to register to judge the 2018 National High School Mock Trial Championship on May 10-12, 2018.

**BELIEVE WE REALLY NEED YOU. WE DO!**

## ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT:

### Judge HOWARD D. MCKIBBEN



Each month, I call attention to the contributions made by lawyers who have played an important role in the Rule of

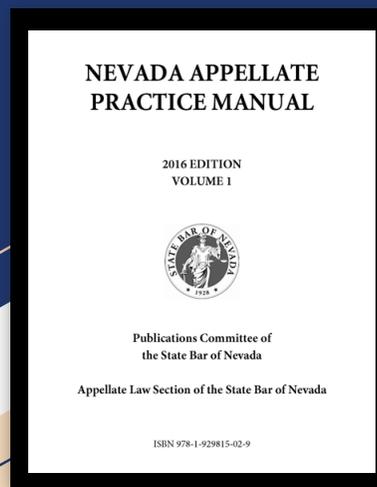
Law. In January, I highlight Senior Judge Howard D. McKibben for being an outstanding example of the highest attributes of our profession and the rule of law in Nevada.

McKibben practiced for several years in rural Nevada, and he was elected as district attorney for Douglas County in 1970, where he served until 1977, when he was appointed to Nevada's Ninth Judicial District Court until 1984.

Then, he was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada by President Ronald Reagan. He assumed senior judge status in 2005. He has held numerous leadership roles throughout his career, including serving as president of the Nevada District Judges Association, helping found the Bruce R. Thompson Inn of Court, and serving for several years as a faculty member of the National Judicial College. In 2010, McKibben was honored with the American Inns of Court's Professionalism Award for the Ninth Circuit. **NL**



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