

Mock Trial Championships Headed To Reno *Help Your Legal Community Shine as a National Event Puts the Spotlight on Nevada*



Hundreds of the best and brightest students from across the country will be converging on Reno next May. To make their visit a success, the Nevada Bar Foundation is looking for your help.

The National High School Mock Trial Championships (NHSMT) will take place in Reno from Thursday, May 10 through Saturday, May 12, 2018. While the more than 600 competitors, along with their parents and coaches, will be busy preparing for the competition in the months ahead, the Nevada Bar Foundation and State Bar of Nevada are also gearing up to make this competition an incredible showcase for Nevada's legal community.

"It's an amazing opportunity for the state and for our kids," NHSMT Steering Committee Co-Chair Connie Akridge said. "Actually having the event here is a real feather in the state's cap. It's going to bring a lot of people to the state, so it'll be good economically for the Reno area, and I think it gives our state some needed recognition, in terms of law-related education."

Akridge said she's gotten very positive feedback thus far from the members of the legal community aware of the event. "They think it's long overdue," she said.

Fellow co-chair Paul Matteoni noted that students have been competing in the national championships for more than 30 years. Next year also marks the 20th anniversary of Nevada's first participation, and this will be the state's first time hosting the event.

"The mock trial experience is intended to provide an understanding and appreciation of the American justice system," Matteoni said. "Through the competition, students really learn that."

Don Christensen, who serves as chair of the State Bar of Nevada's High School Mock Trial Committee, also serves on the NHSMT board, and serves as coach for Reno High School's mock trial team. He stressed that the competition itself will require plenty of help from

the legal community, as more than 1,000 people are expected to attend.

"There'll be approximately 23 trials going on in four different time slots (morning and afternoon sessions on Friday and Saturday)," Christensen explained. "That's going to require about a hundred lawyers and judges for each round."

Each round includes a presiding judge and three scoring judges. Each trial lasts two to three hours. The format is similar to a criminal trial, with each side presenting three witnesses. Each side presents opening and closing statements, and has the opportunity to directly examine and cross-examine their own and the other side's witnesses. The scoring judges then evaluate the performance of both teams; the team with the higher score wins. Teams are progressively power-matched, based on previous round scoring, until the final two face off in a championship trial.

In addition to presiding and scoring judges, volunteers will be needed to direct participants around the city, help register teams and assist with team events, such as the opening night pin exchange, daily social events and a closing awards gala.

Fundraising for the event is ongoing, with a fundraising goal of \$200,000. Attorneys and firms who choose to donate will receive acknowledgement in event materials and can choose from a variety of sponsorship levels.

Current sponsors for the event include the E.L. Cord Foundation, the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation, the Nevada Bar Foundation and NV Energy. Other sponsors supporting specific events include the National Judicial College (sponsoring the Judge's Reception), UNLV Boyd School of Law (sponsoring the Awards Ceremony and Gala) and the Nevada Chapter of the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association (sponsoring volunteer meals).

VOLUNTEER OR DONATE!

To make this event a true showcase for the state of Nevada, the bar and bar foundation need your help. Whether it's volunteering your time at the events themselves or making a donation, all forms of contribution will go toward providing the nation with a great look at all Nevada's legal community has to offer. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lend your support to both the next generation of attorneys and your own legal community.

Find out how you can get involved at: www.nvmocktrial.com.