

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY'S 17TH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL MOCK TRIAL TOURNAMENT

Dates: Friday through Sunday, November 2-4, 2018

Location: McLean County Law & Justice Center – Bloomington, Illinois

INVITATION TO MOCK TRIAL JUDGES/EVALUATORS

Greetings from the Illinois State University Mock Trial Program!

Each year, the American Mock Trial Association publishes a case file that undergraduate students from about 650 teams from over 350 colleges and universities across the country use to conduct mock trials in intercollegiate competitions. This year's ISU mock trial coaches are Josh Rinker, Brad Rigdon, and Tom McClure. On behalf of ISU's mock trial program, and in conjunction with the McLean County Bar Association, I write in my capacity as the volunteer tournament judging coordinator to inform you that **we need your expertise and assistance as a mock trial tournament judge/evaluator**. The balance of this document summarizes the particulars of our invitation to you.

Mock Trial Competition—Dates and Location

The ISU Mock Trial Program is sponsoring its 17th annual Illinois State University Mock Trial Invitational Tournament **on the weekend of November 2-4, 2018**. The tournament will take place at the McLean County Law & Justice Center. We will have about 30 teams (each consisting of 6-8 students) from several different states traveling to Bloomington-Normal to compete in our very popular tournament. There will be as many as 15 mock trials happening simultaneously in the Law & Justice Center. It is quite an event, and we want you to be a part of it.

This Year's Case

This year's mock trial problem is a civil case entitled Midlands Television Studios, Inc. v. Danny Kosack. In June 2017, Midlands Television Studios, Inc., a TV studio that used to produce and air a late-night television show in the fictional U.S. state of "Midlands," had booked Danny Kosack, a celebrity animal handler, to appear on the show with a trained chimpanzee named Elias. During a closed pre-show rehearsal, the defendant's chimpanzee became agitated and unruly, and it attacked people in the room. Unfortunately, one of the plaintiff's TV writers was killed in the attack. Due to negative publicity from this incident, the studio's popular television show was canceled, and a number of Mr. Kosack's subsequent scheduled entertainment appearances were canceled. Both parties lost considerable sums of money as a result of what occurred.

The plaintiff-studio filed suit against the defendant animal handler for negligence as a result of the latter's alleged failure to take reasonable steps to ensure his chimpanzee was trained for the TV appearance and would not pose a danger to anyone present. The defendant denied that he owed any such duty and any breach of such a duty, and he counterclaimed against the TV studio on negligence grounds, claiming that the studio, despite being advised of the potential risks involved in having the chimpanzee on the show, failed to follow his instructions and take reasonable steps to prevent the harm that resulted.

The competitive collegiate teams will prepare and present both sides of this case based upon a packet of detailed case materials (including pleadings, witness affidavits, deposition transcripts, expert witness reports, diagrams, photographic and other documentary exhibits, caselaw summaries, etc.) totaling nearly 150 pages. As a tournament judge/evaluator, however, you do not need to review any materials ahead of time. All of the information you will need to evaluate the competitors at the tournament will be covered during a brief orientation prior to each competitive trial round.

Tournament Judges Needed

When schools host an invitational tournament, they rely heavily upon local judges and attorneys, university alumni, and friends of their mock trial programs to serve as mock trial judges/evaluators for the students. Serving as a mock trial judge/evaluator is a wonderful experience. You would be assigned to act either as a presiding judge who oversees the trial and rule on objections, or as a scoring judge who observes the students' performances and assigns scores to them. During the trial, judges/evaluators provide written critiques of the students' performances. After each round

concludes, each judge/evaluator will have the opportunity to provide oral feedback in the form of a brief constructive critique to the students.

We need you to help by sharing your expertise in the practice of law with these young people. I know you will be quite impressed with the trial skills displayed by the college students.

Schedule of Tournament Rounds/Trials

This year's tournament consists of four rounds, and each round lasts about three hours (including breaks). During each round, teams from different schools will square off against one another to try the case to a panel of judges/evaluators.

Each round will be preceded by a brief orientation for judges/evaluators. We will provide food and drink to our volunteers. The four rounds of this year's tournament are scheduled to occur as follows:

Round 1: 6:00 P.M. on Friday, November 2, 2018 (with the judges' orientation at 5:15 P.M.)

Round 2: 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, November 3, 2018 (with the judges' orientation at 8:15 A.M.)

Round 3: 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, November 3, 2018 (with the judges' orientation at 1:15 P.M.)

Round 4: 9:00 A.M. on Sunday, November 4, 2018 (with the judges' orientation at 8:15 A.M.)

Please Join Us!

Would you please consider volunteering to serve as a mock trial judge/evaluator at our competition? We would love to have you share a little of your time and expertise by judging one or more rounds. We routinely have attorneys/evaluators who wish to judge two or three rounds, and we would love to have you join us for all four rounds if your schedule permits. If you are able to help for any rounds, therefore, then we would be most appreciative.

If you can volunteer, then I would be grateful if you would please e-mail me (SKording@MeyerCapel.com) and indicate the specific rounds for which you are volunteering. We then will send you additional details about the schedule for your round(s), how to enter the courthouse for the tournament, and related information. (We also will send reminder e-mails as the tournament date draws nearer.)

Thank You!

We cannot pull off such a successful tournament each year without the volunteer service of dedicated members of the Bar Association. On behalf of the Illinois State University Mock Trial Program and the McLean County Bar Association, thank you for your consideration.

If you have any questions, or if you require any additional information, then I would welcome your call (309-829-9486) or e-mail (SKording@MeyerCapel.com).

Respectfully yours,
S. Kording

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