

For the past 23 years, Normal Community West High School has been active in Mock Trial through the Illinois State Bar Association's Mock Trial program. In that time, we have had some very dedicated teacher sponsors and a local attorney coach (Mr. Robert White) that have helped to raise the bar for what our kids do and get out of the program. In more recent years, we have had the good fortune of the partnership with the McLean County Bar Association in hosting an annual competition in March at the McLean County Law and Justice Center that continues to attract more and more teams from across Illinois.

There are significant hurdles for us to compete at the level that many other teams in the Chicago area do year in and year out. As someone who has been actively coaching for the past fifteen years at Normal West, I am striving to find ways to close these gaps for my students. I recently attended an Illinois Mock Trial coaches meeting in Chicago and found out that most top teams send their kids to camps and other preparatory opportunities before ever receiving a case. This year, I am hoping to send two outstanding senior captains to attend a Mock Trial seminar at Harvard University. These two females were award winning attorneys last year and it is my hope that they can learn strategies, legal knowledge, and courtroom techniques to bring back to our team. Two of the top three mock trial schools in Illinois have already registered their entire teams for this camp. It is my hope to grow this opportunity to include more kids from other area mock trial programs in the future.

We would like to ask for the support of local attorneys in the McLean County area in helping to sponsor these two outstanding students in their efforts to go to the Harvard mock trial seminar. All funds will go to help offset the cost of their flights, hotel, and meal expenses. The estimated cost per student is \$1,100. Checks can be made out to "Normal Community West High School" c/o John Bierbaum and mailed to 501 N. Parkside Road, Normal, IL, 61761. If you would like further information or have questions about donating, please contact: John Bierbaum at bierbauj@unit5.org or call Bob White at (309) 862-1886. Thank you so much.