



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Post Office Box 120128 • San Diego, CA 92112-0128

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Contact: Karen Dalton
Phone: (619) 844-2353

High School Students Face Current Issues in Annual Mock Trial Competition *Students Learn the Rule of Law Through Annual Event*

The imaginary case of the political extremist's murder which includes an issue of government gathering of personal electronic data sets the stage for more than 600 San Diego County high school students getting hands-on experience in the rule of law. Twenty-Nine San Diego County High Schools have fielded 30 teams for the 12th Annual San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition; the highest participation rate of any previous competition. The four-day competition, sponsored by the San Diego Superior Court, the San Diego County Bar Association and Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF), is held at the downtown Hall of Justice and takes place on February 15th, 20th, 22nd and 24th with the local winner going on to represent San Diego County in the Statewide Mock Trial competition next month.

The Mock Trial program places high school students in real courtroom settings before actual state and federal judges. In those courtrooms, the students assume the roles of lawyers and witnesses facing off on a hypothetical case.

This year's criminal case, *People v. Davidson*, contains issues one could find before the US Supreme Court: free speech, social media, electronic surveillance. This year's fictional case involves the trial of Casey Davidson, a resident of the town of Acorn, California. Davidson faces a

felony count of first degree murder for the death of Alex Thompson, another young resident of Acorn and member of an extremist group. The pretrial issue in *People v. Davidson* focuses on whether it is a search under the Fourth Amendment for the government to obtain routinely collected GPS location data from a third-party GPS provider. Law enforcement used such GPS information to gather evidence on Davidson.

“Our State Superior Court and the Federal Court along with the San Diego County Bar Association look forward to this annual event. It is phenomenal to watch high school students not only tackle complicated social issues but become excellent advocates of the law in addressing these issues. They are learning what we all should know that the Judicial Branch is an extremely important part of a democracy’s foundation. We’re confident that these students will be better participants in our democracy because of this experience,” says Judge Laura Birkmeyer one of the Chairs of the Mock Trial Competition.

Judicial officers volunteer their time to oversee the bench trials, San Diego County lawyers also volunteer to serve as team coaches and competition scorers

“The Mock Trial competition gives students an opportunity to learn about our justice system and our laws first-hand in a dynamic and engaging way,” said 2018 San Diego County Bar Association President Kristin Rizzo. “Every year, our judges have been impressed with how astute and prepared every team is coming into this competition, and this year is no exception. I wish all of the teams the best of luck in the finals this weekend, and I hope to see some of these talented students become talented lawyers one day.”

The mock trials are not open to the public. For background information on the program visit the website at www.sdmocktrial.org.

MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION DATES – TIMES

Round 1	Thursday, February 15, 2018, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Round 2	Tuesday, February 20, 2018, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Round 3	Thursday, February 22, 2018, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Round 4	Saturday, February 24, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Award Ceremony	Saturday, February 24th, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Championship Round	Saturday, February 24th, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2018 Participating Schools

Academy of Our Lady of Peace

Bonita Vista High School

Canyon Crest Academy

Carlsbad High School

Cathedral Catholic High School

Coastal Academy High School

Coronado High School

Crawford High School

Del Norte High School

Escondido Charter High School

Francis Parker

Grossmont High School

King Chavez High School

La Jolla Country Day School

La Jolla High School

Major General Raymond Murray High School

Mountain Empire High School

Otay Ranch High School

Patrick Henry High School

Rancho Bernardo High School

School for Entrepreneurship & Technology

Saint Augustine High School

Scripps Ranch High School

Steele Canyon High School

The Bishop's School

Torrey Pines High School

University City High School

Vista High School

Waldorf High School

Westview High School

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