

Northern Illinois University College of Law

Friends of Moot Court

Celebrating 25 Years

Newsletter dedicated to those alumni who have participated in the NIU Law Moot Court Society

Summer 2007

Moot Court Celebrates 25 Years



Final Bench and Finalists

This year marked the 25th Anniversary of NIU Law's Annual Prize Moot Court Competition. Final arguments were held on March 24 as second-year students argued the prosecution's use of a defendant's pre-arrest silence and sentencing issues in this year's competition.

Judging the final round of competition were (seated, from left): Hon. Anne Burke, Illinois Supreme Court; Hon. John W. Darrah, United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, who served as Chief Justice; and Julie Angus ('97), Judicial Clerk for Justice Tom M. Lytton, Illinois Appellate Court, 3rd District. Standing (from left) are finalists Lauren Dwyer and Sheila Amiry, and the first place team of Kelly Varsho and Andrew Lothson.

NIU Law 25th Annual Prize Moot Court Competition Results

First Place:

Kelly Varsho
Andrew Lothson

Finalists:

Lauren Dwyer
Sheila Amiry

Semi-Finalists:

Matthew Duco
Seth Ellis
Laura Mruk
Deborah Hilst

Best Petitioner's Brief:

Seth Ellis
Matt Duco

Best Respondent's Brief:

Victoria Johnson
Jeffrey Hanes

Best Oralist

Preliminary Rounds:
Laura Mruk

Best Oralist, First Runner-Up

Preliminary Rounds:
Seth Ellis

Best Oralist - Final Round:

Andrew Lothson

Moot Court Winner Follows in Grandfather's Footsteps 25 Years Later



Moot Court marked this milestone in historic fashion. Moot Court champion Andrew Lothson ('08, far right) is congratulated by his father Gary Lothson ('86, left) and his grandfather Jim Davidson ('84). After all, Jim had been there himself 25 years earlier as winner of the first NIU Law Prize Moot Court competition with his teammate, the late Carl W. Cicero. This trio also has the distinction of being NIU Law's first 3rd generation family.



Dean's Corner

Moot Court XXV! It may be easy for the rest of you to think about this milestone, but for me, the 25th Annual Prize Moot Court Competition made me feel, well, 25 years older than the first! Yes, it's true, our moot court program celebrated its 25th year this past February and March. And the final day, March 24, 2007, certainly provided us with a journey through time of memorable events.

Our judges for the final argument included the Honorable John M. Darrah from the U.S. District Court, Justice Anne M. Burke of the Illinois Supreme Court, and our own Julie Madison Angus ('97), law clerk for Third District Appellate Court Justice Thomas Lytton. We had a terrific argument presented by our finalists, Sheila Amiry and Lauren Dwyer and the eventual winners, Kelly Varsho and Andrew Lothson, who received the Cicero Award. I was once again reminded of what makes moot court special when it was revealed that Andy Lothson was the grandson of Jim Davidson, who was on the winning team of our 1st Prize Moot Court Competition in 1983!

A special thanks goes to Professor Dan Reynolds, who was our featured speaker at the banquet. Dan has supported moot court every year for 25 years and has been to every final argument and banquet since its inception. A number of alums sent in vignettes describing their moot court experience and current employment. The vignettes were collected in a program and some of the comments are reprinted throughout this newsletter. It is a collection I will treasure forever.

Yes, March 24, 2007, was a day to remember and to celebrate the hundreds of students who have participated in our Moot Court program. As I look to the future, I see a bright picture ahead for our program. Student participation and enthusiasm remain high. Our students continue to compete well in external competitions. Our alumni continue to return to the competition to judge, reconnect with old friends, and make new friends. And, as always, I invite you and encourage you to come back and judge, visit, and share in our continued commitment to excellence.

Lenny Mandell,
Associate Dean for Student Services



On behalf of the Honorable Susan Fayette Hutchinson of the Second District Appellate Court, Law Clerk Kim Shefts ('03) presents Associate Dean Mandell with a plaque recognizing his "dedication to the many students who have participated in the program."

Moot court has given me greater confidence as an oral advocate, improved my ability to write persuasively, and a better appreciation for how to effectively present a case on appeal.

— Austin W. Bartlett, '00
Attorney, Murphy & McQuillen LLP

NIU Law's moot court program, along with the appellate advocacy course, honed my desire to foster a career in the appellate arena. Moot court was definitely a study in contrasts – a daunting and challenging experience, yet ultimately a positive, rewarding, learning experience.

— Stacey Mandell, '96
Law Clerk, Justice Susan Fayette Hutchinson,
Appellate Court of Illinois, 2nd District

2007-08 Moot Court Society Board



Moot Court welcomes incoming Board members (seated from left): Joint-Chief Justices Victoria Johnson and Kelly Varsho; (standing, from left) Associate Justices Sheila Amiry, Jeffrey Hanes, Ann Pieper Coffman, and Omolara Johnson.

2006- 07 External Competitions



2006 ABA Law Student Tax Challenge

Jody Beilke and Martha Krohe placed 3rd in the nation at the Law Student Tax Challenge, sponsored by the Young Lawyers Forum on the American Bar Association Section of Taxation. Prof. Dan Schneider coached the team.



2006 National Moot Court Competition

Justin Bauer and Nick Alexander, pictured with Dean Pernell, were regional semi-finalists and received the regional 2nd Best Brief distinction. Professor David Taylor coached the team.

My Moot Court experiences were some of the best experiences I had while in law school. As both an internal and external participant, Moot Court 'pushed' me to break out of my comfort zone and opened up the world of appellate law to me. Now, as an alumna, Moot Court provides an opportunity for me to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, and it also provides me the continued opportunity to 'give back' to the school by offering my time and experience to future lawyers.

— Kimberly Shefts, '03
Law Clerk, Justice Susan Fayette Hutchinson, Appellate Court of Illinois, 2nd District

Participating in moot court was an exciting experience, and one that taught me how to effectively advocate for a client, both orally and in a written brief. This skill has been invaluable to my legal career. In my present position, I continue to rely on the advocacy skills I began developing while a student participant in the NIU moot court program. This program is truly an asset to the law school.

— Kari A. Vanderzyl, '95
In-House Counsel,
Portillo Restaurant Group

2007- 08 External Moot Court Teams and Coaches

Kelly Varsho and Andrew Lothson will represent NIU Law at the 26th Annual International Moot Court Competition in Information Technology and Privacy Law held in October. Associate Dean Lenny Mandell will coach the team.

Sheila Amiry, Erica Mynarich, and Nathan Reyes will represent NIU Law at the 2007 Appellate Lawyers Association Fall Moot Court Competition. Legal Writing Instructors Jeanna Hunter, Elsa Miller, and Meredith Stange will coach the team.



2006- 07 Moot Court Society Board

A special thanks goes to the 2006-07 Moot Court Society Board. From left: Kevin McHugh, Nick Partipilo, Nate Himert, Chief Justice Julie Neubauer, Jeff Meyer, and Judy Miller.

Preliminary, Semi-Final Round and Brief Judges

The NIU Law Moot Court Society expresses its deepest gratitude to the following NIU Law staff, alumni, and friends for their time and service to Moot Court. We also are grateful to those who continue to support the students so they may participate in these invaluable competitions.

Thomas Arado ('01)
Kory Atkinson ('04)
Austin Bartlett ('00)
Hon. Robert Carter
Hon. Alan Cargerman
Emily Chen ('01)
Mike Cortina ('98)
James Dvorak ('99)
John Gibbons ('04)
Keith Grant ('87)
Ron Haskell ('00)
Lori Hoadley ('99)
Tim Hoppa ('03)
Joel Houtari ('06)
Prof. Jeanna Hunter
Tim Jagielski ('96)
Erie Johnson ('02)
Heather Johnson ('01)
Hon. Kathleen Kauffman ('90)
Tom Kelly ('05)
Patti Koch ('05)
Stacey Mandell ('96)
Hon. Robert J. Mangan
Frank Martinez ('83)
James Mertes ('93)
Kim Meyers ('05)
Prof. Elsa Miller ('91)
Lisa Munch ('99)
Dave Neuman ('05)
Brian O'Connor ('04)
Ali Oliver ('06)
Hon. Stephen Pemberton
Hon. Eric Pistorius
Julie Proscia ('03)
Carisa Rainey ('06)
Earl Reyes ('99)
Ronald Richards ('04)
Kim Shefts ('03)
Prof. Meredith Stange
Kari Vanderzyl ('95)
Kadi Weck ('04)
Kevin Wendorf ('05)
Jerrod Williams ('02)
Andrea Zenker ('05)

Moot Court Society Wish List

The number of competitions available to Moot Court Society members continues to grow. While this increase in competitions brings many benefits, including a heightened awareness of NIU Law and its students, there is also the unfortunate reality of a rise in the costs of participation.

Because NIU Law cannot cover all of the expenses of the Moot Court Society, there are opportunities for *Friends of Moot Court Society* members to make possible the continued participation of the Moot Court Society in competitions.

Donations can be made to help defray costs, such as the following:

- 1) Prize Moot Court Competitions, Awards Banquet, and receptions;
- 2) Entry fees and competition expenses such as food and hotel for external competitions.

If you are interested in making a donation or a gift-in-kind for one of these or another expense, please contact **Greg Anderson**, Director of Career Opportunities & Development, at 815.753.9604 or ganderson@niu.edu.

Join Friends of Moot Court Society

The cost of a two-year membership is \$75. All funds raised will be used to defray the Society's expenses. Membership includes receiving all *issues* of Friends of Moot Court Newsletter.

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Make check payable to NIU College of Law and mail to:

**NIU College of Law
Friends of Moot Court Society
Swen Parson Hall 280
DeKalb, IL 60115**



Moot Court Welcomes Former Participants

Several “legends” of our Moot Court program joined us at the final argument and at the banquet. Our deepest appreciation goes out to this group, many whom have served the moot court program with distinction year after year, having presided as an alumni judge over the final argument in prior years. Pictured in the front row (from left): Jim Davidson ('84), Kim Shefts ('03), Julie Madison Angus ('97), Heather Johnson ('01), L. Anita Richardson ('85), Stacey Mandell ('96), Kari Vanderzyl ('95). Second row (from left): Erie Johnson ('02), Emily Chen ('00), Austin Bartlett ('00), Julia Donnelly ('90), and Dan Donnelly ('90).

Although Julie (Rich) and I graduated from NIU Law in 1990, any discussion of the impact of moot court on our lives and careers must begin on October 19, 1991 – our wedding day. That day might never have come to pass but for Dean Mandell’s fateful decision to put the two of us (along with Jessica Breitbarth) on the NIU team to participate in the 1988 Benton Moot Court Competition held by The John Marshall Law School. While my memory of how we fared in that long-ago competition has faded (although I have a vague recollection of reaching the semi-finals), the “team” is still going strong after 15 years of marriage and two kids.

— Dan Donnelly, '90
Vice President and Senior Claims
Counsel, Attorneys' Liability
Assurance Society, Inc.

Moot Court Through the Years

A look back at Moot Court’s Winners:

- 1983 Jim Davidson and Carl Cicero
- 1984 Anita Richardson and Gary Kula
- 1985 Robert Arnold and Allyson Misevich
- 1986 Melissa Arndt and Cheryl Welsh
- 1987 Mary Beth Burns and Peggy Gerkin
- 1988 Ann Downey and Diann Marsalek
- 1989 Dan Donnelly and Daniel Hawkins
- 1990 Todd Syverson and Valerie Sewell
- 1991 Jay Wiegman and Elizabeth Duffy
- 1992 Michael O'Brien and Abraham Kassis
- 1993 Melissa Zickuhr and Jenifer Johnson
- 1994 Kari Vanderzyl and Michelle Buckwalter
- 1995 Denis Gravel and Gary Foley
- 1996 Gerald Huston and Darin Doak
- 1997 Keith Edeus and Aaron Peacock
- 1998 James Dvorak and Jennifer Wilke
- 1999 Austin Bartlett and Nick Zimmerman
- 2000 Doressia Hutton and Heather Johnson
- 2001 Erie Johnson and Jaime Ganschow
- 2002 Jana Fischer and Nicole Rodriguez
- 2003 Meaghan Ring Alexander and C. Scott Brinkman
- 2004 Andrea Donaldson and Laura Anderson
- 2005 Abena Richards and Maren Ronan
- 2006 Nick Alexander and Clay Kawski
- 2007 Andrew Lothson and Kelly Varsho

2007- 08 Competition Schedule

October 2007

- 25-27 26th Annual International Moot Court Competition in Information Technology and Privacy Law, Chicago
- 26 & 27 Appellate Lawyer's Association Fall Moot Court Competition

January 2008

- 15 & 16 NIU Law Moot Court Competition Registration

February 2008

- 8 NIU Law Prize Moot Court Briefs Due
- 16 NIU Law Prize Moot Court First-Round Preliminary Arguments
- 23 NIU Law Prize Moot Court Second-Round Preliminary Arguments

March 2008

- 1 NIU Law Prize Moot Court Semi-Finals
- 22 NIU Law Prize Moot Court Finals and Awards Banquet

Please check the NIU Law website at <http://law.niu.edu> for updated information and specific dates as they become available.

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