



Canines and the Constitution Help Students Learn the Appellate Process

❑ Florida high school students learn about the appeals process from the experts.

A hypothetical canine search case became the basis of a new high school appellate competition in Florida this year to help students learn how the appellate process works. Serving as an extension of the popular high school mock trial competition, coordinated annually by the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc the new appellate program was first conceptualized by Supreme Court Chief Justice Barbara Pariente. The program incorporates both a brief writing and oral argument component. The high school mock trial case was authored by Florida attorney Laurie Chane and incorporated an issue on appeal.

“Ultimately, this was my goal for the competition; that is, to have our students learn the difference between the trial courts’ role and the appellate courts’ role...”

-Chief Justice Barbara Pariente

Teams of students throughout Florida submitted briefs which were judged by a panel of attorneys from The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division. The

YLD provided funding and member support for the program. Winning brief writers presented



Students Bruce Bostick (center) and Oscar Bastardo (right) pose with Chief Justice Barbara Pariente (left)

oral arguments before a panel of District Court of Appeal judges in Miami, Daytona Beach, and Tampa. The First DCA in Tallahassee heard preliminary rounds in the state finals held on May 5, 2005 to select the top two teams to present before the Florida Supreme Court. Six of Florida’s seven Supreme Court justices served on the judging panel for the high school oral arguments during Law Week.

"This was the pilot year for the project," stated Annette Boyd Pitts, Executive Director of The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. "We hope to grow the program eventually to reach the size and popularity of the state high school mock trial program." One way the Association has devised to grow the program is through a new Constitutional Law honors course that FLREA developed and submitted to the Florida

Department of Education. "This course has been approved and will provide the appropriate avenue to incorporate the appellate program," Pitts added. The course incorporates a requirement to address a constitutional dilemma through writing an appellate brief. It also requires students to participate in a simulated oral argument.

By participating in the appellate competition, students expand their study of the courts and the Constitution through a program that incorporates both rigor and relevance. A wide range of skills and knowledge are developed. Students use reasoning skills, constitutional analysis, writing, persuasion, and public speaking among other high level skills.



Students from Miami Killian High pose with Chief Justice Pariente (left) and Michael Faehner (right),

DCA level competitions were held the first two weeks in April. Winning teams advanced to the

state finals with preliminary rounds in Tallahassee on May 5 in the First DCA. Judge Philip Padavano and Judge Robert Benton sat on the judging panel along with staff attorney Janeia Daniels who assisted in the design of the program. The final round was held on May 6 at 10 am in the Florida Supreme Court. A reception followed in the rotunda of the Court. The program was broadcast over the Internet and on public television.

"I was very impressed overall with the ability of the students to respond to questions and to be so composed under pressure," stated Chief Justice Barbara Pariente. "The most satisfying aspect for me was speaking to the students, teachers and parents to learn how much knowledge they gained about how our appellate system operates," continued Pariente. "Ultimately, this was my goal for the competition; that is, to have our students learn the difference between the trial courts' role and the appellate courts' role," she concluded.

Michael Faehner, President of the Young Lawyers Division along with YLD members Kelly O'Keefe and Greg Brown were instrumental in developing the program model and recruiting attorneys to assist with evaluating the briefs and oral arguments. Attorney Janeia Daniels of the First DCA assisted with refining

the score sheets and crafting the design of the competition.

Appellate judges at the DCA level volunteered to judge the local competitions. Case materials are available on line at www.flrea.org under moot court. The project is a cooperative effort of the Supreme Court of Florida, the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar, and the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc.

The Florida Law Related



Students from Lake Howell High take a break after a day of intense competition.

Education Association, Inc is a principal grantee of the Florida Bar Foundation. The Foundation and The Florida Bar provide assistance and support to public education initiatives sponsored by the Association. For additional information or to volunteer, contact the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc, 2874 Remington Green Circle, Suite A, Tallahassee, Florida 32308 or

Final Team Results at State Competition

First Place:

Pinellas Park High School
Students: Bruce Bostick, Oscar Bastardo, Jackie Palazzolo, and Erika Jennings
Teacher: Matt Valentine

Second Place:

Miami Killian Senior High School
Students: Andrew Bauta and Amy Mandel
Teacher: Lorraine Silverstein

State Finalists: (in no particular order)

CFCC Career Academy
Students: Savannah Doane and Nikki Sias
Teacher: Douglas H. Oswald

Coral Reef Senior High School
Students: Desireé Blanco, Jessica Bouis, Nicole Crousillat, and Keane Roman
Teacher: Jan Jacobowitz

Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School
Students: David Krevat, Jonathan McNally, Genevieve Napolitano, and Don Sharogorodsky
Teacher: Connie Higgins

Lake Howell High School
Students: Heidi McLaughlin, Stephanie Scherrer, Melissa Theodore, and Diandra Caroballo
Teacher: LaTonya Thomas

call 850-386-8223. You can email Pitts at ABPflreaED@aol.com

We would like to thank the following people for their invaluable help making the district competitions happen:

First DCA:	Chief Judge Altenbernd	Fourth DCA:	Judge Robert Pleus
Judge Philip Padavano	Judge Thomas Stringer	Judge Fred Hazouri	Judge Victor Tropy
Judge Robert Benton	Third DCA:	Fifth DCA:	Judge Earl Peterson
Janeia Daniels	Judge Frank Shephard	Judge Winfred Sharp	
Chief Judge James Wolf	Marie Mosely	Judge Richard Orfinger	
Second DCA:	Judge Linda Ann Wells	Judge William Palmer	
Judge Patricia Kelly	Judge Richard Suarez	Judge David Monaco	