

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY WITH THE THIRD
DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
HIGH SCHOOL MOOT COURT COMPETITION**

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This year, the Third District Court of Appeal Historical Society continued the project we began last year: serving as coaching liaisons to the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc.'s ("FLREA") state high school moot court competition. It is a very exciting and rewarding activity. Many of the schools we helped coach this year went on to success in the statewide competition.

The FLREA sponsors a mock trial competition each fall and a moot court competition in the spring. Moot court teams are selected by the high schools and ordinarily are coached by teachers with a lot of enthusiasm but limited legal knowledge. Students submit a brief and those schools with the higher brief scores are selected to orally argue in the District Courts of Appeal where the high schools are located. Winning teams from the DCAs advance to Tallahassee and argue before the First District Court of Appeal. Two teams are then selected to argue before the full Florida Supreme Court. Imagine being a high school student and arguing before the supreme court. In prior years, individual members of our society have co-coached high school teams to state champions.

With the help of students from the University of Miami Moot Court Board, we decided to make this coaching an annual Society project. The FLREA sent us names and teacher-contacts for participating high schools from Miami-Dade County; each school was then assigned an Historical Society member attorney and a law school student to meet with the teams, help them refine their briefs and prepare for oral argument before three judges from the Third District Court of Appeal in Miami.

Of the six Miami-Dade high schools that were selected to argue before the Third District Court of Appeal, five schools were co-coached by our attorney members and students from University of Miami's School of Law. One of those schools was chosen to argue to the First District Court of Appeal in Tallahassee and ultimately received the Best Brief Award for the entire competition.

In all, everyone had fun. The teachers and the students so appreciated our help with the constitutional issues and advocacy tips. The law students loved working with the high schoolers and the chance to work alongside "real" appellate lawyers and the attorneys loved the competitors' enthusiasm and commitment. The video from the final round in this year's competition has not been posted yet

but the Florida Supreme Court round from the 2015 competition is available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAP4oIGM09M>.

Like other Society projects, this program fosters our educational mission. And, as far as we know, we are the *only* historical society or other attorney organization in Florida that devotes the time and effort to such a valuable project. We anticipate hearing from the FLREA in mid-fall 2016 with the names of participating schools for next year at which time the Society will issue a call for volunteers. Please look out for our call and consider volunteering. You will not regret it!