

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

2005 Mock Trial Competition Semi-Final Rounds February 1

Finals held February 8

The Tulare County Office of Education's annual Mock Trial competition is in full swing with only four of the original 11 high school teams remaining. The four teams – Redwood, Tulare Western, Tulare Union and Exeter will compete in the semi-final round of the county championship on February 1, at 5:15 p.m. at the Tulare County Courthouse. The two winning teams will earn the right to compete in the Tulare County Finals at El Diamante High School on February 8.

Mock Trial season began earlier this month with 11 teams from Tulare County high schools. Schools participating in the 2005 Mock Trial Competition were: Dinuba High School, El Diamante High School, Exeter High School, Farmersville High School, Golden West High School, Lindsay High School, Monache High School, Redwood High School, Tulare Western High School, Tulare Union High School, and Oroshi High School. The season wraps up with the Mock Trial Awards banquet on February 10 at the Holiday Inn, for students, parents, teachers and attorneys.

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This year's hypothetical case, *People v. Kendall* involves the death of a young woman allegedly involved in a street race. The case features a pretrial argument on the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech and freedom of association. To prepare, students must be familiar with 15 similar cases – some state and some federal. In addition, they will quote two Constitutional Amendments and two statutory regulations in their arguments. Students will also examine the problems of illegal street racing and discuss the serious consequences that could result. In this case, the defendant was charged with three criminal counts: 1) vehicular manslaughter; 2) misdemeanor violation of California Vehicle Code Section 23109; and 3) misdemeanor violation of Chapter 20, the Racing Ordinance of Caneville, California.

The 10-to 20-member mock trial teams are composed of students who take on the roles of lawyers, witnesses, court clerks and bailiffs. All teams must make their presentations based on identical hypothetical case materials. Each team, coached by local attorneys and school personnel, presents the case for both the prosecution and defense. Three attorneys score the teams on the basis of their analysis and debate of the constitutional issues, the law and the facts in the case. As in actual legal proceedings, there are differences in human perceptions, and a subjective quality is present in the scoring of the Mock Trial proceeding.

Tulare County Office of Education would like to thank the many volunteers from the legal community that donate their time and expertise to read the case and offer advice. The Mock Trial Program is sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and co-sponsored by the California Department of

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Education, the State Bar of California, the Young Lawyers' Association and the Daily Journal Corporation. The Tulare County Office of Education coordinates the program locally with assistance from local attorneys and judges, Lisa Strongin, from the Public Defenders' Office, and Cynthia Logan, Deputy Court Executive Officer.

Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak commends participating schools and students: "Mock Trial is an extremely rigorous competition, and the prize goes to all that have the courage and opportunity to compete."

The champions from the final round of the Tulare County Mock Trial Competition will be eligible to compete in the state finals in Riverside, March 18-20, 2005. Charlotte, North Carolina will host the National Mock Trial competition May 5-7, 2005.

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