

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

For all Participants in the Georgia Mock Trial Competition and in all GHSMTC Special Projects

The purpose of the Georgia Mock Trial Competition, and all of its Special Projects, is to stimulate and encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of the American legal system. This purpose is accomplished by providing students the opportunity to participate actively in the learning process. The education of young people is the primary goal of the Georgia Mock Trial Competition. Healthy competition helps to achieve this goal. Other important objectives include: improving proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and reasoning skills; promoting effective communication and cooperation between the educational and legal communities; providing an opportunity to compete in an academic setting; and promoting cooperation among young people of diverse interests and abilities. As a means of diligent application of the Georgia Mock Trial Competition's Rules during the competition season and in all Special Projects, the following Code of Ethical Conduct has been adopted for all participants:

§1 **Team members and all student participants in all Special Projects**, including but not limited to the Law Academy and the Craig Harding Memorial Court Artist Contest, promise to compete with the highest standards of deportment. Team members and participants will avoid all tactics they know are wrong or in violation of the Rules, including the use of unfair extrapolations. Members and participants will not willfully violate the Rules of the competition in spirit or in practice.

§2 **Teacher Coaches** agree to focus attention on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition. They shall discourage willful violations of the Rules and/or this Code. Teachers will instruct students as to proper procedure and decorum and will assist their students in understanding and abiding by the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and this Code of Ethical Conduct.

§3 **Attorney Coaches** agree to uphold the highest standards of the legal profession and will zealously encourage fair play. Attorney Coaches are reminded that they are in a position of authority and thus must serve as positive role models for the students. They will promote conduct and decorum among their team members and fellow coaches in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and this Code of Ethical Conduct and will demonstrate the same through their own behavior. They will emphasize the educational value of the experience by requiring that all questions, objections, responses, opening statements and closing arguments be substantially the work product of the team members.

§4 **All participants (including observers)** are bound by all sections of this Code and agree to abide by the provisions. All competitors, coaches and other participants, including observers will show respect for all team members and participants, including their opponents and all judges, evaluators, attorney coaches, teacher coaches and mock trial staff and/or volunteer personnel. All competitors, coaches and participants, including observers, will focus on accepting defeat and success with dignity and restraint. Trials, contests and activities will be conducted honestly, fairly, and with the utmost civility. Teams are responsible for insuring that all observers are aware of the Code. Students, teacher coaches and attorney coaches will be required to sign a copy of this Code. This signature will serve as evidence of knowledge and agreement to the provisions of the Code. Violations of this Code of Ethical Conduct may be grounds for reductions in scores, disqualification from a contest and/or suspension or expulsion from the Law Academy.

§5 **Judging panel volunteers** are asked to observe and score the trials with an objective eye. Interjecting one's own personal style and biases is of no value in the education process. Evaluators are seeking highly skilled advocates, not hostility or pettiness. Judging panel members are asked to use only constructive language if comments are written on the worksheet provided or given verbally during debriefing. Panel members will refrain from personal, derogatory comments about students, coaches or other competition participants, personnel or volunteers and in no instance shall use profanity in any form (including abbreviations), either in writing or verbally, during the competition. Team members have agreed to abide by the Rules and this Code in spirit and in practice; therefore, violations should result in a lowering of the score. All judges and evaluators promise to be prepared and knowledgeable about this Code of Ethical Conduct, the Rules of the Competition, the problem and the procedures. The appearance of impropriety, bias or favoritism shall be avoided. Presiding Judges will conduct trials with objectivity and honesty.