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### **GUERIN PREP NOLAN SCHOLARS PREPARE FOR MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION**

Nolan Scholar students at Guerin College Preparatory High School will take their case to the Illinois State Bar Association's High School Mock Trial Program when Region I competition begins Jan. 22 at the R.J. Daley Center.

Students will act as attorneys and witnesses in this program, which teaches about the American justice system. The Illinois State Bar Association has sponsored the mock trial program for high school students annually since 1984. This year's mock trial is based on the facts in a hypothetical case Logan Lovell vs. Pat Sainsbury, a civil case involving two teenage drivers involved in an automobile accident.

The 10 Guerin Prep students involved are second year students in the Nolan Scholars Program, a new academic program that began at Guerin Prep last year. The themes for the sophomore Nolan Scholars are the law and medicine.

The mock trial experience includes presenting both sides of the legal question. Volunteer judges and attorneys evaluate students on their arguments and students must also take a written test about the issues of the case.

Teams of seven are fielded to play the roles of the plaintiff, defendant, witnesses (fact and expert) and attorneys representing each side. The attorneys are expected to try the case according to the rules of evidence, including presenting opening statements, examining and cross-examining witnesses, making appropriate objections, presenting closing statements on behalf of the team's fictitious client.

## Guerin Prep Participates in Mock Trial—add one

“This certainly has been an opportunity for our students to learn first-hand about the legal system, and to familiarize students with the law and courtroom procedures,” said Mrs. Karin Calandriello, director of the Nolan Scholars Program.

“They have been a hard-working, dedicated and talented group of students who have spent countless hours, including weekends and after school time, to develop their critical thinking skills, knowledge of the law and team camaraderie,” explained Calandriello. “It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with these scholars, along with their two dedicated lawyer mentors.”

The students have been practicing with Mr. Jaime Santana, the father of a freshman Nolan Scholar and private attorney. He has served as the litigation counsel. Mrs. Sharon McFadden, chairperson of the Guerin Board of Directors, also a private attorney, is the advisory attorney.

The students involved are Sophomores Melissa Cwyrus, Paula Kopec, Iwona Lazarz, Vanessa Negron, Melanie Niepsuj, Margaret Obacz, all of Chicago; and Kim Bianco of Melrose Park, Molly Campbell of River Grove, and Jenna Zacharias of Elmwood Park; and Freshman Jaime Santana, Jr., of Chicago.

“We began with 19 students and simple exercises,” explained McFadden. “We built on the exercises and practiced out loud at every session. As time went on, certain students began molding to the various roles we needed and soon we had the 10 most interested, most willing to work on the competition—these 10 students became a cohesive unit.”

McFadden continued, “At our dress rehearsal, I could hardly believe my eyes. Each of the student “lawyers” not only looked like a newly licensed attorney, but also sounded like one too. The “parties” and the “witnesses” were also grown-up and professional in each of their roles. When our practice trial began—it was like the real thing.”

“No matter what happens in the competition, these students have matured before our eyes. I don't know who learned more—the students, the teacher or the coaches—but, we sure are having a great time,” said McFadden.

The teams who win in their region go onto the finals Jan. 23 at the Dirksen Center.

The regional contact for the mock trial is Kim Anderson [kanderson@illinoislawforyou.com](mailto:kanderson@illinoislawforyou.com). Donna Schechter is the state mock trial coordinator, [dschechter@isba.org](mailto:dschechter@isba.org).

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