



*Citizenship Foundation*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 15 MARCH 2010**

## **EDINBURGH TO HOST THE NATIONAL FINAL OF THE BAR MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION 2009/10**

On Saturday 20 March 2010 students from 16 schools across the UK will compete in the national final of the 2009/10 Bar National Mock Trial Competition, which this year is being held at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. The students have prepared two cases for the national final that have been drafted by practising barristers and cover relevant and topical issues: possession of drugs with intent to supply and criminal damage at an environmental demonstration. By working to present the most compelling cases for the prosecution and defence, the students will demonstrate their argument and reasoning skills.

Commenting ahead of the national final, Tony Breslin, Chief Executive of the Citizenship Foundation, said:

'The law affects every part of our lives, it features in the news we read and underpins society. This competition provides students with an exciting and innovative way to learn about how the law is relevant to them and provides the citizenship skills to help them engage effectively in society as active, informed and responsible citizens.'

Over 2,500 students from 176 schools have participated in this year's competition, taking on the roles of barristers and advocates, witnesses, court staff and jurors in mock trials conducted within the setting of a working courtroom. The competition provides students with an understanding of criminal law and the criminal justice system, and enables them to learn about citizenship and how legal rights and responsibilities operate in practice.

Now in its 19th year, the Bar National Mock Trial Competition is organised by the Citizenship Foundation and is sponsored by the Bar Council, the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, the Bar Council of Northern Ireland, the Inns of Court and the Circuits, and is supported by Her Majesty's Courts Service. It is aimed at students aged 15 to 18 and is open to state secondary schools and Further Education colleges across the UK.

Chairman of the Bar, Nicholas Green QC, said:

'I am delighted that the Bar Council continues to support this excellent competition. It is an integral part of the Bar's work to demystify the profession and provides an invaluable way for young people to gain an understanding of the role of the Bar and to experience at first

hand the excitement of advocacy before a court. All of the participants have worked extremely hard and performed to a very high standard in order to reach the final. We look forward to an exciting day in Edinburgh. I am also very grateful to the very many judges, barristers and court staff who give up their time during the year to help with the competition. It is thanks to their support and dedication – together with the commitment and enthusiasm of the students that take part – that the competition is such a success, year on year.'

Richard Keen QC, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, added:

'I am pleased that members of the Faculty of Advocates continue to support the valuable work of the Citizenship Foundation.

'This is one of the Faculty's most enduring and important sponsorships, and we are delighted to welcome this year's national final to Edinburgh.

'The Mock Trial Competition provides a unique opportunity for young people to gain hands-on experience of how the legal system works and to appreciate its value to society.'

**-Ends-**

### **Media contact**

To attend the final, or for further information about the competition and/or the Bar Council, please contact the Bar Council Press Office on 020 7222 2525.

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About the Citizenship Foundation**

The Citizenship Foundation is an independent education and participation charity (no.801360) that aims to empower individuals to engage in the wider community through education about the law, democracy and society. Founded in 1989, it focuses on developing young people's citizenship skills, knowledge and understanding. Its work includes resources, training, active learning programmes, community projects and research. [www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)

#### **About the Bar Mock Trial Competition**

- 1 The Bar National Mock Trial Competition is aimed at 15 to 18 year olds and seeks to introduce the legal system to young people in an innovative and exciting way, giving them the opportunity to gain hands on experience. The competition is now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year and involves young people from state secondary schools and FE colleges throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Every year over 2,500 students, 200 barristers/advocates and 90 judges are involved. See [www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/bmt](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/bmt) for details.

- 2 The Bar Council is the representative body for barristers in England and Wales ([www.barcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barcouncil.org.uk)). Barristers in England and Wales are regulated by the independent Bar Standards Board ([www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)).
- 3 The Bar Council of Northern Ireland is the regulatory and representative body for barristers in Northern Ireland ([www.barcouncil-ni.org.uk](http://www.barcouncil-ni.org.uk)).
- 4 The Faculty of Advocates is the regulatory and representative body for advocates in Scotland ([www.advocates.org.uk](http://www.advocates.org.uk)).
- 5 The Inns of Court provide educational activities and support for barristers and pupils in England and Wales. The four Inns of Court are Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple and Gray's Inn.
- 6 The Circuits provide important sources of support, advice and representation for barristers in England and Wales. They are the Midland, Northern, North Eastern, South Eastern, Wales & Chester, and Western Circuits.
- 7 Final cases 2010

### **R v Myers**

The defendant, Alex Myers, is charged with possession of cannabis with intent to supply. The drugs, along with an alleged customer list, were found by a police officer who attended the defendant's school to give a talk. Alex Myers has admitted possession of the drugs (and has pleaded guilty to possession on a previous occasion) but denies intending to supply the drugs to anyone else and has pleaded not guilty to that charge.

### **R v Starling**

Jo Starling is alleged to have thrown paint at the window of a fast food restaurant and threatened the manager during the course of an environmental demonstration. Starling claims it is a case of mistaken identity – s/he acted peacefully at all times and someone else threw the paint. The prosecution maintains that the threatening behaviour supports their case that the true culprit has been arrested.

- 8 Below is a list of the schools competing in the national final on 20 March:

<u>Name of school/location</u>	<u>Regional Heat</u>
Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School, Grantham	Birmingham
Aquinas Grammar, Belfast	Belfast
Penyrheol Comprehensive School, Swansea	Cardiff
The Boswells School, Chelmsford	Chelmsford
Lenzie Academy, Glasgow	Glasgow
Greenhead College, Huddersfield	Leeds
Calday Grange Grammar School, Wirral	Liverpool

Ursuline High School, Wimbledon	London
Herne Bay High School, Kent	Maidstone
Urmston Grammar School, Manchester	Manchester
Farlingaye High School, Suffolk	Norwich
Whitley Bay High School, Tyne & Wear	Newcastle
Wootton Upper School, Bedfordshire	Oxford
Orton Longueville School, Peterborough	Nottingham
St Peter's School, Bournemouth	Portsmouth
Queen Elizabeth's Community College, Devon	Plymouth

- 9 Further information about the Competition is available on the website of the Citizenship Foundation. Stay in touch with news, events, new resources and developments at the Citizenship Foundation. [Sign up here to subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin](#). Charity Reg. No. 801360 Company Reg No. 2351363 Registered in England Registered Office as above