



THE JUDICIARY • COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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PRESS RELEASE

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20th Annual CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition Next Week

On February 15 and 16, eight teams from Rota, Tinian, and Saipan will compete in the 20th Annual CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition at the Guma' Hustisia. This year's case, *United States v. Lou Perez*, is a fictitious criminal case involving a military veteran charged with assault on a federal officer. Students will be presenting the prosecution and defense sides in front of judges and jurors. Members of the bench and attorneys serve as presiding judges, jurors, and attorney coaches.

The competition gives student hands-on experience in presenting arguments and witness testimonies, practicing courtroom procedures, learning the judicial system and the law, and developing important skills such as leadership, public speaking, and teamwork. The students will be judged based on their knowledge of the evidence and ability to present a logical and persuasive case as attorneys and witnesses.

Each high school team will compete in four preliminary rounds over the two-day period. The top two teams will go head-to-head in a championship round to be held on Friday, February 16, at 3 p.m. in the Supreme Court courtroom before Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona of the U.S. District Court. The public is welcome to attend the championship and witness outstanding students compete for the chance to represent the CNMI at the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Reno, Nevada in May.

To assist the students in their preparation for the competition, the Judiciary conducted the 4th Mock Trial Academy last December by introducing them to the legal system with lectures on the Rules of Evidence, witness portrayal, and trial presentation.

The Judiciary, Public School System, and CNMI Bar Association—sponsors of the competition—extend their appreciation to the executive and legislative branches and various community sponsors and businesses for their continued support of the Mock Trial Program.

For further information, please contact Mock Trial Coordinator Deanna M. Ogo at the Supreme Court at 236-9718.