

Blind Brook HS wins Regional Title in Statewide High School Mock Trial Tournament Sponsored by the New York State Bar Association.

Westchester County's Blind Brook HS is now the Lower Hudson Valley Champion after competing against high Schools in Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, Orange and Ulster Counties in a statewide tournament that concludes later this month. To get to the Regional playoffs, each county fielded a team that won locally.

The Westchester finals pitted the plaintiffs of Blind Brook against the defending attorneys of Rye Neck as the 28th annual New York State High School Mock Trial Tournament finished in the Westchester County Courthouse in April. The two high school teams competed before Administrative Judge Alan Scheinkman, Supreme Court Justice Colleen Duffy and Westchester County Bar Association President Donald Sandford, all of whom decided the case—and the winning team.



Blind Brook HS Team from left: "attorneys": Julia Klein, Alex Drechsler, and Nikta Daijavad. **Standing: witnesses**: Ashley Mango, Jason Adler, **Josie Yalovitser**, legal advisor Ke Finder, faculty coach Lisa Pellegrino, and legal advisor Joel Hecker.

It was a split decision. While the merits of the case went to the Rye Neck defense, Blind Brook was the Mock Trial winner, based on preparation, creativity and professionalism.

For the Regionals, Blind Brook had to switch roles and play the defense. They won that round as well.

The high school teams practiced their roles as lawyers and witnesses ever since they received their hypothetical case from the New York State Bar Association. "Pat Parker v Village of Empireville and its Board of Trustees" involves a unilateral decision by that fictitious village to ban previously allowed parking for high school students on public streets surrounding the school. Those who parked their cars there were given tickets. Pat Parker, whose car was ticketed, decided to fight the parking ban by filing suit in Supreme Court. He lost.



Rye Neck HS Team: from left, seated: "attorneys" Ali Begazo, Lya Ferreyra, and Ashley Hong. Standing, faculty coach Kristine Pegno and "witnesses": Hayley Kohn, Grace Sundstrom, and Khloe Lewis

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Blind Brook and Rye Neck teams line up behind Supreme Court Justice Colleen Duffy, Administrative Judge Alan Scheinkman and Westchester County Bar Association President Donald Sandford.



Trophies for the first and second place teams.

Other High Schools that competed in the Region IV championships were: Mahopac HS in Putnam County, Goshen HS in Orange County, Nyack HS in Rockland County, Pine Plains HS in Dutchess County, and Foxhill HS in Ulster County. Judges presiding were Honorables: Steve Hunter, Steven Brockett, Joseph Owen, John Goldsmith, and Mark Fox.

I am pleased to congratulate Blind Brook as the Regional Champion," said 9th JD Administrative Judge Alan Scheinkman. "Appearing before me at the Westchester finals, the students were smart, professional and creative. At the same time, I am proud of each high school team that competed in the Regionals. They were all respectful to the Court and very well prepared. Their sharp critical thinking skills and civility will make them successful in whatever career they choose—hopefully they'll choose the legal profession. I congratulate all of them on an excellent job."

Success is nothing new to Blind Brook; they were the Regional Champions in 2005-2007. Rye Neck won the title in 2009, Scarsdale in 2010 and Nyack HS in 2008. Ramapo, Kingston, Mount Vernon and Sleepy Hollow high schools also held Region IV Titles. None have won the statewide trophy.



Blind Brook parents, teachers, students, coaches and advisors cheer their High School on to victory, the winner's trophy, and what was to become the Regional Title.