

Congratulations to Stetson University College of Law, winner of AAJ's 2009 National Student Trial Advocacy Competition!

West Palm Beach, FL -- Law students (L-R) Nelson Baez, Aaron Watson, Derrick Connell, and Sara Mieczkowski, beat 13 other teams to take home the first prize award. Judge David A. Demers, Adjunct Professor Susan Demers and Professor Roberta Flowers coached the winning team.



Hosted by Stacey Mullins of Lavalle Brown Ronan & Mullins based in Boca Raton, FL, AAJ's STAC, the premier

civil trial competition in the country, welcomed 13 teams to West Palm Beach during the weekend of April 2-5 for the national finals.

With tremendous assistance from AAJ members, the competition began with 248 teams from 147 law schools competing in 14 regional competitions. During the regional competitions, each team must compete in three qualifying rounds. Four teams are chosen to advance to a single elimination semi-final round based on the following criteria: (1) win/loss record, (2) number of winning votes, and (3) number of total points. The winners from each region received an invitation to compete in the national finals.

The competing teams were judged on their trial advocacy skills including opening statements, use of the facts, and the examination of witnesses and closing arguments. On each team of four students, two act as advocates and two as witnesses. Since each team must be prepared to represent both the plaintiff and the defendant, the roles within a team may switch from trial to trial. AAJ members, as well as attorneys and distinguished members of the bench served as judges and jury. After the qualifying and quarter-final rounds, four teams were chosen to compete in the semi-final round. At the completion of the semi-final round, a winner was chosen from one of two teams advancing to the final round.

Thanks to all the teams for a fantastic weekend of competitions!