

Law Students Shine in Court Competition

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A team of Tulane University Law School students scored big during the recent National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition at Pace University in White Plains, N.Y.

Third-year law students Thadeus Culley and Joseph Briggett, and second-year student Thomas Sharp, coached by third-year student Colleen Booth, made up the team that competed against 84 law schools to land a spot among nine universities in the semifinals. Culley, a third-year student, was named best oralist in two of the three preliminary rounds.

Moot court competitions simulate courtroom procedures and provide students with an opportunity to deliver oral arguments before an audience.

The competition called for each team to write an appellant brief and prepare oral arguments based on hypothetical cases seething with environmental infractions. Participants were required to prepare legal arguments for all parties involved as the persons they represented would alternate each round.

"The students were prepped to the nines having four and five moot sessions per week over many weeks," says Tulane law professor, Oliver Houck, who observed the students as they prepared in the months prior to the competition. "The Tulane team was the highest-placed student-coached team, by a wide margin."

Students are not allowed any coaching in writing their appellate briefs. At Tulane Law School, faculty members do not coach the teams in preparing their oral arguments. Booth, a veteran of last year's competition, filled that role.

"It was my job to listen to the team's arguments, guide them and push them hard by questioning their logic and facts to make sure their arguments were the best," says Booth.

Tulane was the only Louisiana law school to reach the semifinal level before being defeated.

The 15th annual [Mardi Gras Invitational Moot Court Competition](#), sponsored by Tulane Law School, also took place in February.