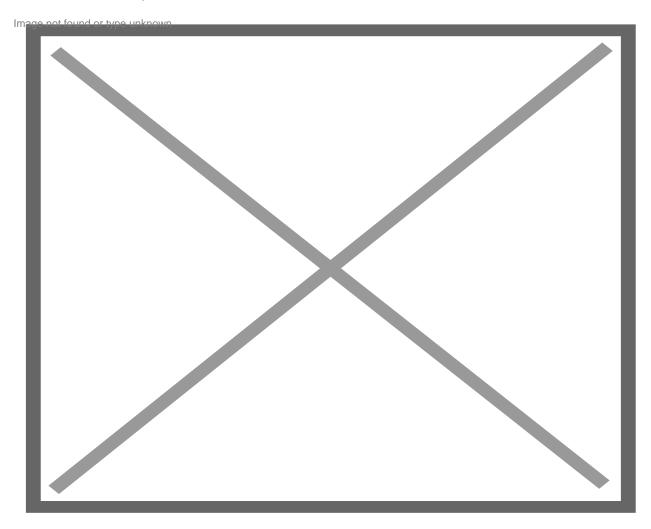# Charlotte Amalie High School Team Wins 30th Annual Moot Court Competition

Shaynèe Cherival and Kemiah Solomon of Charlotte Amalie High School win championship, while Antilles School and the St. Croix Central High School follow in second and third places

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For three decades, the annual Moot Court Competition, sponsored by the Virgin Islands Bar Association, has been helping local high schoolers exercise their clinical thinking abilities. This year, for the 30th annual competition, nineteen squads from nine schools participated in three rounds of lively oral argument on legal matters.

Following the first qualifying rounds on April 9, competitors advanced to the District Rounds on April 16. The five teams on St. Croix all advanced to the finals, while the top five teams in the St. Thomas-St. John rankings went through to the championship round. Scholarships of between $250

and $500 were awarded to the four Best Oralists of each district, and team prizes of $150 to $500 were awarded to the top three teams in each district, to be split evenly among members.

Of the ten squads from across the territory who participated in the championship round on April 18, Shaynèe Cherival and Kemiah Solomon of the Charlotte Amalie High School emerged as champions. The Antilles School team of Angeline Nairns and Priaya Giyanani placed second, followed by Amaya Hamilton and Ameer Norman from the St. Croix Central High School in third place overall. Karen Alvarado, Robert Petersen, and Noah Askew from the Saints Peter & Paul Catholic School finished fourth.

The top four teams were awarded scholarships ranging from $675 up to $1500 to be split evenly between team members.

Meanwhile, Roalie Faulkner from the St. Thomas 7th Day Academy was adjudged Best Oralist, followed by Angeline Nairns from the Antilles School, and Robert Petersen from Saints Peter & Paul Catholic School. They won scholarships of $1,250, $925, and $750 respectively for their stellar oratory skills exhibited during the championship.

While many may see moot court competitions as mere training arenas for future lawyers, Adam Thorp, who represents the Bar Association's moot court planning committee, says that's not necessarily the case. While he admits that the majority of contestants do aspire to a legal career in the future, he estimates that a surprisingly large minority of participants – approximately 40X – do not necessarily want to be lawyers.

Treasurer of the VI Bar Association Board of Governors Adriane Dudley, addressing the St. Thomas-St. John-Water Island District Round on April 16, noted that while many of the participants in this year's exercise may not become lawyers, the skills developed by participating in a moot court competition will serve them for life. "You'll be able to stand in any situation on your feet and be able to react autonomously and correctly, and be able to give a full sum and complete answer to all questions," she predicted.

For the majority who do go on to practice in the field of law, moot court competitions have served as an integral foundational aspect of a solid legal career. Previous competitors include Superior Court Magistrate Ernest Morris and Schneider Regional Medical Center General Counsel Su-layne Walker, who was adjudged Best Oralist in the year she participated. The competitions have also served to attract people to the profession. Rhea Lawrence, an attorney with Lee Rohn & Associates, disclosed that she originally wanted to be a doctor, but changed her mind after participating in a moot court competition. She now frequently makes arguments before the VI Supreme Court on behalf of clients.

According to Governor Albert Bryan Jr, who addressed the competition ahead of the championship round, a moot court competition is a good way to create seasoned, confident public speakers and debaters. "This is something that we need in the Virgin Islands," he declared - healthy, reasoned debate based on a factual foundation.