

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Future Legal Minds Converge in 29th Virgin Islands High School Moot Court Competition

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For the first time in several years, a school from St. John will participate in the annual Virgin Islands high school Moot Court Competition set to take place this week. On Tuesday, April 18th, students from Giff Hill School will join four schools from St. Croix and four schools from St. Thomas for the 29th edition of the competition hosted by the Moot Court Planning Committee of the Virgin Islands Bar Association.

Each year the committee develops a hypothetical case which is argued in a mock judicial proceeding as an academic exercise. Participating students are equipped with a library of legal sources which their coaches use to help them understand the law and apply it to the chosen case to guide their analysis and craft their arguments. This provides a platform

for students to learn and apply the skills of legal analysis and argument while building their confidence.

As the program aims to help students gain new experiences, diversity is an important consideration in the recruiting process undertaken by the faculty coach assigned by each school invited to compete. Consequently, while exceptional academic performance is not a necessary criteria for selection, students must display an aptitude for analysis and debate.

Competition is expected to be rigorous as each round is judged by a panel of three moot justices who may be sitting judges of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, Superior Court or District Court, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The panel may also include senior judges from those courts or practicing attorneys experienced in the area of law presented in the case. Students will be scored against a fact sheet which evaluates their argument, logic and advocacy skills.

Attractive prizes are at stake, and in each of the two district rounds, students will be awarded based upon their average scores. A \$1,250 prize will be awarded to the student who captures the coveted Best Oralist title, and the first runner up will receive \$925. The second and third runners up will receive \$750 and \$250 respectively, while a fourth and fifth runner up will each receive \$100. Meanwhile, the team which emerges victorious will walk away with \$1500 to be divided among its members and the second place team will receive \$1050. The third and fourth place teams will receive \$900 and \$675, respectively.

The two district rounds will be held in person on Tuesday, with as many as 60 students participating throughout the territory. Each school has been given the option to enter up to 4 squads consisting of two primary and one alternate. Students from the St. Croix District will compete at Golden Rock in the District Court, while on St. Thomas, the competition will be at the Supreme Court's courthouse in Crown Bay. The championships will subsequently be held virtually on April 20th via the Virgin Islands Judiciary's live streaming platform.

Members of the public are encouraged to view the proceedings from 9am each day via the live stream option which will be available under the Media Services tab at www.vicourts.org. The moot court program also appreciates public support in the form of donations at <https://www.usvibar.org/donations/>.