



Mock Trial Lawyers' Principles of Professionalism

The High School and Middle School Mock Trial Competitions organized by the Connecticut Bar Association ("CBA") are, first and foremost, an educational program intended to encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of the American legal system. By providing students with an opportunity to participate actively in the legal process, mock trials help students appreciate the rule of law and courtroom procedure.

We thank the teachers, coaches, advisors, and judges, many of whom volunteer many hours of their time for the mock trial program, not only for the skills that they teach, but for the professionalism and good sportsmanship that they model for the students throughout the tournament. We are grateful to the students from around Connecticut who devote many hours of their time and energy to preparing for this tournament, while balancing other priorities including academics, athletics, the performing arts, and of course, their family obligations. Every year, we are amazed at the level of skill and talent that these students bring to the courtroom.

Beyond the ability to develop their knowledge of the legal system and their advocacy skills, we believe that that participation in mock trial will teach the students professionalism. Students learn ethics, civility, and how to be zealous, but courteous, advocates for their clients. Good sportsmanship and respect for all participants are central to the success of the competition.

We have adapted the CBA's extensive [Lawyers' Principles of Professionalism](#) to serve as Mock Trial Lawyers' Principles of Professionalism to provide guidance for our mock trial lawyers, and by association, all who participate in the mock trials as students, coaches, or supporters. We expect that adherence to these core principles of Civility, Honesty, Competency, Mentoring, Responsibility, and Honor will enhance everyone's experience with the adversary system, in which one party wins and the other loses, and therefore, all participants need to be prepared to accept defeat and success with dignity and restraint.

Civility

I recognize that civility and courtesy are the hallmarks of professionalism.

Honesty

I recognize that honesty and truthfulness are critical to the integrity of the legal profession—they are core values that must be observed at all times given my obligations as an officer of the court.

Competency

I recognize that having the necessary ability, knowledge, and skill to effectively advise and advocate for a client's interests is critical to the lawyer's function in their community.

Mentoring

I owe a duty to counsel less experienced students in the mock trial program and to seek mentoring myself in order to improve my own abilities.

Responsibility

I recognize that my client's interests and the administration of justice in general are best served when I work responsibly, effectively, and cooperatively with those with whom I interact.

Honor

I recognize the honor of the legal profession and will always act in a manner consistent with the respect, courtesy, and weight that it deserves.

Given these core principles of professionalism, I understand that have the following specific obligations as a participant in the CBA Mock Trial Programs:

- I will be a vigorous and zealous advocate on behalf of my client, but I recognize that, as an officer of the court, excessive zeal may be detrimental to the interests of both a properly functioning system of justice and my client.
- I will be courteous, polite, respectful, and civil in all of my communications during the mock trial program, whether to judges, witnesses, opposing counsel, court personnel, or program organizers.
- Although I may ask forceful questions, I will not question witnesses in a harassing or demeaning way.
- I recognize that my adversary and I each have a client to represent. The dispute in the mock trial case is between our clients, and not us personally.
- I will avoid making frivolous, groundless, or harassing objections or arguments during the trial itself.
- I will cooperate with my opposing counsel by agreeing to reasonable requests and to waive procedural rules if doing so will not affect the legitimate interests of my client.

- I will not knowingly make untrue statements of fact or of law to my client, adversary or the court.
- I will not make or conceal changes to the case documents.
- I will be knowledgeable of the legal principles set forth in the mock trial materials, the Mock Trial Rules of Evidence, and the Competition Rules.
- I will be knowledgeable of the relevant affidavits, exhibits, and stipulations contained in the mock trial materials.
- I will devote enough practice time to ensure that I am prepared to handle my witness examinations and opening or closing arguments.
- I will seek and welcome mentoring and guidance from coaches, senior members of my team, or judges to ensure that I act with diligence and competency. I will provide mentoring and guidance to less experienced members of my team.
- I will be punctual in attending mock trial practices and competitions.
- I will support and advocate for fair and equal treatment under the law for all persons, regardless of race, color, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, status as a veteran, age, gender identity, gender expression or marital status, sexual orientation, or creed and will always conduct myself in such a way as to promote equality and justice for all.
- I understand that the volunteer attorneys and judges who participate in this program are doing so without compensation as part of their professional obligation to engage in public service and improve the administration of justice and the rule of law. I will treat them courteously and respectfully at all times, even if I may disagree with their decision on a matter.