

## **UH Law Center Blakely Advocacy Institute Takes National Stage**

*Welcomes the nation's top law students for moot court championship and sends its own student advocacy teams to compete in moot court, negotiation, and arbitration finals.*

**Jan. 24, 2012** -- The Blakely Advocacy Institute at the University of Houston Law Center is in high gear as it hosts one national championship tournament and sends students to three others in addition to co-hosting a symposium on enforcement of environmental laws.

The nation's top law school moot court teams will compete in Houston this week when the Blakely Advocacy Institute hosts the 2012 Andrews Kurth Moot Court National Championship. The teams earned their way to the championship competition by achieving outstanding results in major moot court tournaments. These "best of the best" teams will vie for the uncontested national crown Wednesday, Jan. 25, through Saturday, Jan. 28. Previous winners are the University of Detroit – Mercy, John Marshall Law School, and Mississippi College School of Law.

"In a short time, the Andrews Kurth Championship has developed into one of the most prestigious moot court competitions in the nation," said Blakely Advocacy Institute Director Jim Lawrence who devised the competition and the point system used to determine the nation's best teams.

This year's problem involves criminal charges of negligence and jury tampering stemming from an industrial accident in which toxic chemicals were spilled into a river in violation of the Clean Water Act. The tournament will be held at the Bob Casey Federal Courthouse, 515 Rusk in downtown Houston. Federal judges, state judges, and members of the Houston Bar will serve as guest judges for the competition.

For the first time in the Law Center's history, Blakely teams qualified for three national championship tournaments in three different disciplines in the same year. Teams earned their right to compete in competitions in Chicago, New York and New Orleans by their showings in regional moot court, arbitration, and negotiation tournaments.

"This success shows the quality of our programs, and the skills and dedication of our students and coaches," said UH Law Center Dean **Raymond T. Nimmer**. "It's also a strong indicator of where the Law Center stands in terms of having built an exceptional and broad-based advocacy center."

The school showed its support for the “Blakely Advocacy Trifecta” with a “Go National” pep rally last week at the Law Center.

Associate Dean **Richard Alderman** praised the student advocates and their volunteer coaches, most of whom are Law Center alums, for their hard work in helping to bring national recognition to the law school.

Team members are: ABA Arbitration (Chicago): **Frank Carroll, Emiliano Fragoso, Casey Jordan, Susan Sweeney,** and **Whitney Wester.** ABA Negotiation (New Orleans): **Cara Henley Johnson** and **David Nguyen.** National Moot Court Competition (New York): **Cory Fox, Kelsey Heaton,** and **Casey Holder.**

In conjunction with the national championship tournament, the Law Center also is sponsoring a symposium - “Criminal Enforcement of Environmental Laws: What is the Current Climate?” - with a panel of distinguished environmental attorneys.

The symposium will be moderated by UH Law Center **Professor Tracy Hester,** director of the Environment, Energy & Natural Resource Center. Panelists are **Charles A. De Monaco** of Fox Rothschild LLP in Pittsburg, Pa., **Joseph G. Block** of Venable LLP in Washington, D.C., and **George O. Wilkinson, Jr.,** of Vinson & Elkins LLP in Houston.

The symposium will be held on Thursday, Jan. 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel, 400 Dallas in downtown Houston. Attendance is free. Four hours of CLE credit is available for a \$75 registration fee.

The National Championship tournament and symposium are hosted by the Blakely Advocacy Institute and the Law Center’s Environment, Energy & Natural Resource Center. The tournament is sponsored by Andrews Kurth LLP.

For more information about the Andrews Kurth Moot Court National Championship and to register for the CLE symposium, please go to [www.law.uh.edu/blakely/mcnc/2012championship.html](http://www.law.uh.edu/blakely/mcnc/2012championship.html) or contact the Blakely Advocacy Institute, 713-743-2065.

Click [here](#) for the Moot Court Symposium Flyer.

Media Contacts: Carrie Anna Criado, 713-743-2184, [cacriado@central.uh.edu](mailto:cacriado@central.uh.edu); or John T. Kling, 713-743-

8298, [jtkling@central.uh.edu](mailto:jtkling@central.uh.edu).

### **About the University of Houston Law Center**

The University of Houston Law Center is the leading law school in the nation's fifth-largest legal market. Founded in 1947, it is a top-tier institution awarding [Doctor of Jurisprudence \(J.D.\)](#) and [Master of Laws \(LL.M.\)](#) degrees. The Law Center is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the American Association of Law Schools.

### **About the University of Houston**

The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized by The Princeton Review as one of the nation's best colleges for undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city, UH serves more than 39,500 students in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region in the country.