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USD Law School to Host Regional Trial Competitions

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for immediate release

USD LAW SCHOOL TO HOST REGIONAL TRIAL COMPETITIONS

Student teams from the University of San Diego School of Law will join 16 teams from eight other California law schools February 5 through 7 for three days of a regional battle to determine which team goes to the National Trial Competition in Houston, Texas next March 18 through 20.

Theresa Player, assistant clinical professor of law at USD, the host institution, and coordinator for the Western Regionals, explains that the competition is a response to criticisms, many of them from the bench of the U.S. Supreme Court, concerning "the low level of competency among trial lawyers." Initiated by the American Bar Association and ABA-accredited law schools, the competitions provide early training for law students in the development of trial skills. "There will be as much realism as possible," Player says. "Students will be under the same pressures as lawyers in actual trials, and will be graded on every aspect of their trial skills from opening to closing statements."

The competition structure calls for four rounds during which judges will determine, by a process of elimination, the two top teams of the 18 competing groups. These rounds will be held at the San Diego County Courthouse, third floor, and

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University of San Diego
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successive winners will be determined by local judges and experienced trial attorneys. Scheduling calls for the first round on Friday, Feb. 5, 6 to 9 p.m., followed by rounds on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon and again from 2 to 5 p.m.; and on Sunday morning, 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

The semi-finalists will compete at the USD School of Law Grace Courtroom on Sunday afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m. San Diego attorneys Janeen Kerper and Robert Baumer will join presiding judge Leland C. Nielsen, Federal District Court Judge, in determining which of the two teams will go to the National competition in Houston.

Participating will be teams from the schools of law at USD, California-Western, Golden Gate, Loyola, Pepperdine, McGeorge, Whittier, and University of California at Davis and at Santa Clara.

According to Player, the competition is open to the public. "We encourage the public to attend," she said, "and to participate as mock jurors, which adds to the realism of the competition."

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