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Sent: Saturday, July 21, 2007 12:04 AM
To: susanfox@flappeal.com.
Subject: Florida High School Appellate Competition

Hi Susan, I am Annette Boyd Pitts, Executive Director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. We offer a wide variety of programs to educate students and the public about the legal system. I work closely with the Supreme Court on its Justice Teaching initiative and go to classrooms with the justices. Our office sponsors the high school mock trial program, a variety of constitutional education programs for students, law related academic competitions and a wide range of curriculum materials and other resources and training for teachers, attorneys and judges to work with students.

I am writing to you about one of our newest programs that I am so proud of. Three years ago Justice Pariente discussed with me her desire to see us sponsor an appellate competition for high school students that would be tied in to our successful mock trial program. We found volunteers to help us design the program and attended the moot court competition during the Florida Bar meetings to analyze the best way to develop a high school program. The YLD even gave us funds for the last three years to develop the program.

Well we have been very successful I am pleased to say. The following link helps to tell the story of this success. http://www.flrea.org/reports/2007_Moot_Court_Report.pdf The program includes a briefwriting component followed by oral arguments by invitation at the various DCAs using actual judges. We then select the top five to six teams in the state to invite to Tallahassee for oral argument. We do preliminary rounds at the First DCA. This year, Judges Benton, Kahn, and Wolfe served on the judging panel. They were extremely impressed with our students.

The top two teams proceeded to oral argument at the Florida Supreme Court where six of Florida's seven Supreme Court justices served on the panel. The students were magnificent and get better and better every year. The design of the program is solid and our volunteers have been critical. I have even developed a constitutional law course for the Department of Education that has been approved. this will help grow the program further as the course includes a briefwriting component.

This year Justice Pariente asked me if we could try to incorporate a scholarship to help provide additional incentives and rewards for these incredible young people. We also learned from the YLD that the funding they were providing for start up will need to soon be phased out before we had planned. It generally takes us 5-7 years to grow a new program to the extent that the program sustains itself because of student interest. This is how we planned our successful mock trial program and now the students and schools fund all their own travel and expenses.

The appellate program is still in its infancy and is too young to stop funding at this stage. This is the stage that we need to grow the program.

I have attached a link to this year's program report that I hope you will enjoy. Is it possible to obtain sponsorship from the Appellate Practices Section in helping us fund and grow this program. Please let me know how to proceed. Our budget for the program in travel and other expenses state-wide is approximately \$25-30,000. We donate all staff time. We would also like to incorporate a \$5000 scholarship for the best advocates. We could actively involve the Section in the program to the extent you would want to be involved.

We could also use the help of your section in volunteers for evaluating the briefs. Our team is already working on the problem this year. I hope you can assist us with this valuable initiative. I believe we may be the only state in the US that has developed such an innovative program with an issue on appeal from our mock trial case to help students experience the entire process.

I apologize for the length of this email. I hope to hear back from you.

Annette Boyd Pitts
Executive Director