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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY KATZ HOSTS 8TH ANNUAL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

*15 Top-Tier Law Schools from Across US Participate;
Rutgers School of Law Wins First Place*

The Queens District Attorney's Office hosted its 8th Annual Mock Trial Competition over the weekend, with Rutgers School of Law defeating 15 other teams from top-tier, nationally ranked law schools. New York Supreme and Criminal Court judges presided as law school students competed before senior prosecutors and members of the defense bar. The event was in-person for the first time since the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020.

District Attorney Katz said: "I am impressed with the exceptional performances of the teams in this year's mock trial competition and excited that we could convene in-person for the first time in four years. For their service and mentorship to the participants, I want to thank my colleagues in the judiciary and defense bar, as well as the prosecutors from my office who made this a tremendous learning experience for these students. Our legal system depends on cultivating new professionals with the high level of dedication, preparation, and performance they all demonstrated this weekend."

Rutgers University School of Law won the competition, defeating 15 other national teams. The champion team of four women was comprised of Livie Ruhl, Elizabeth Weinman, Paula Echeverria and Melanie Zelikovsky. The second-place winners were participants from the Drexel University, Thomas R. Kline School of Law. Winner of Best Oral Advocate, Final Round was Peter Gaynor of Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law.

2023 Participating Schools:

Brooklyn Law School
University of Buffalo School of Law
Chicago-Kent College of Law
Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law
Fordham University School of Law
Harvard Law School
Hofstra University, Maurice A. Deane School of Law
University of Houston Law Center
New York Law School
New York University School of Law
Pace University, Elisabeth Haub School of Law
Quinnipiac University, School of Law
Rutgers School of Law
St. John's University School of Law
Seton Hall Law School

During the mock trial tournament, each team of second-year law students studied a fact pattern and prepared a mock trial from the competition which began on Friday evening March 3. The competition consisted of two preliminary rounds, quarterfinals, semi-finals and a final round. Judges from Queens and Brooklyn counties volunteered to preside, along with seasoned prosecutors and defense attorneys who acted as evaluators and bailiffs. Participants received feedback each round and a culminating score from evaluators.

Sponsored by the Queens District Attorney's Office, the mock trial competition was supervised by Senior Assistant District Attorney Courtney Finnerty, Director of Litigation Training, with the assistance of Senior Assistant District Attorney Courtney Charles of the Homicide Bureau, Assistant District Attorneys Brian Hughes, Deputy Bureau Chief of the Special Victims Bureau and Gabriel Mendoza, Assistant Deputy Bureau Chief of the Hate Crimes Bureau and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Supreme Court Trials Pishoy Yacoub.

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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

