

Three Porzio Attorneys Served as Morris County Co-Coordinator for Vincent J. Appruzzese Mock Trial Competition

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By: Raquel Rivera, Christopher Mazza, David Disler

Three attorneys from Porzio, Bromberg & Newman served as Morris County Co-Coordinator for the first virtual Vincent J. Appruzzese High School Mock Trial Competition. David Disler, of Employment and Education, Chris Mazza of Bankruptcy and Financial Restructuring, and Raquel Rivera of Litigation worked with approximately 150 students from 11 Morris County high schools to become attorneys, jurors, and witnesses. The competition's goal was to help these students better understand the law, court procedures, and the justice system and improve their basic life and leadership skills. This year the students also learned about becoming adaptable as they have made the change to the online format.

Mr. Disler, Mr. Mazza, and Ms. Rivera provided information to the local school districts, sought volunteer attorneys throughout the County to serve as judges and coaches, distributed information to volunteers, determined who advances based on the judges' results, and issued CLE credit to participating attorneys. This year the Porzio volunteers coordinated the event entirely virtually.

The Morris County Bar Association, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, the New Jersey Bar Association sponsored the competition. While in previous years the trials were held in person, due to health regulations, distancing mandates, and student safety, the competition was held online.

The Honorable Stuart A. Minkowitz, A.J.S.C. served as the judge for the finals between West Morris Mendham High School and Morristown High School. In a highly competitive competition, West Morris Mendham High School prevailed as the Morris County champion.

In an e-mail to the teams, Mr. Disler congratulated all of the students and coaches on an incredible competition. Speaking on behalf of all three attorneys, Mr. Disler noted that "we were amazed by the feedback we received from the Judges who were incredibly impressed with how prepared the students were and how well adjusted they were to this virtual setting. As someone who has participated in a number of virtual courtroom proceedings, it truly was remarkable to witness how well all of the students performed and persevered, despite these unprecedented circumstances."

