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Chicago State University Student Places First in National Undergraduate Diversity Mock Trial Competition and Receives Tuition Wavier

(CHICAGO) - Chicago State University (CSU) graduate, Arthea Pleasant, is the recipient of the first place mock trial team honors at the Eighth Annual John Marshall Law School (JMLS) of Chicago National Undergraduate Diversity Mock Trial Competition. In addition, she has been awarded a tuition waiver from the John Marshall Law School in the amount of \$15,000.00.

“The first place mock trial winner, Arthea not only had an outstanding grasp of the facts, but also demonstrated an excellent courtroom demeanor and style,” said Attorney Marian E. Perkins, CSU professor, Criminal Justice Department and CSU mock trial coach.

Pleasant is a 2009 graduate of CSU and the previous president of the CSU - Pre-Law Association. She received her degree in the Board of Governors program with a concentration in pre-law and successfully completed courses in the CSU Criminal Justice and Political Science departments.

CSU mock trial participants have competed in the JMLS Midwestern Regional Mock Trial Competition since 2009. This is the first year that a CSU mock trial participant won the first place mock trial team honors. “We practiced during the week, stayed up late nights, and on weekends preparing for this mock trial,” said Pleasant. “Securing the first place seat is a major accomplishment not only for me and my family, but for Chicago State University and the Pre-Law Association.”

The students are randomly placed in teams of three. As a result, students from different colleges and universities compete on the same team. The students are judged at the competition by law students and trial lawyers who practice in Chicago. The teams were judged on how they delivered the following aspects of a trial: opening statement; direct-examination; and cross examination of a witness and closing argument. The students must also portray the witnesses; object, where appropriate; admit documents into evidence and follow courtroom rules and etiquette. This year the mock fact pattern resulted in a murder trial.

“At the competition, CSU students delivered their opening statements and closing arguments without notes and performed with grace under fire,” said Perkins. “It was such joy to coach our CSU mock trial competitors!”

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More than 75 students from colleges and universities throughout the United States participated in the 2011 JMLS National Diversity Mock Trial Competition. Recent college graduates and current undergraduates interested in legal careers can participate in this competition approved by the American Mock Trial Association. "We competed against many well prepared, brilliant students from across the country," said Pleasant.

The Bronze School Award was also given to CSU, in honor of the institution's fourth place in the overall competition. Perkins accepted the award on the university's behalf. "I admire our students for participating in the John Marshall Law School Mock Trial Competition. All of the CSU mock trial competitors showed such dedication," said Perkins.

In addition to Arthea Pleasant, the following CSU mock trial participants competed in The John Marshall Law School 2011 Diversity National and Midwestern Regional Competitions:

Tora Swint - A 2008 CSU graduate awarded a Certificate of Participation, a Gavel, "Honorable Mention" and a tuition waiver in the amount of \$1,500.00 to attend JMLS for her score in the JMLS National Diversity Mock Trial Competition. Swint also competed and was a member of the Third (3rd) Place mock trial team at the JMLS Midwest Regional Competition held February 26-27, 2011, and received a tuition waiver from JMLS in the amount of \$3,000.00, for a total of \$4,500.00.

Mariel Kirk - A CSU undergraduate in the Criminal Justice Department and member of the Second (2nd) place team at the JMLS Mock Trial Midwest Regional Competition held February 26-27, 2011 at JMLS. Kirk was awarded a Certificate of Participation and a tuition waiver from JMLS in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Debbie Pleasant - A CSU undergraduate student in the Criminal Justice Department and the current President of the CSU Pre-Law Association. Pleasant participated in the 2011 JMLS Midwest Regional and National Diversity Mock Trial Competitions. She received a Certificate of Achievement for her participation in the competitions from JMLS.

Jaquetta Wesley - A CSU undergraduate student with a major in Economics. Wesley participated in the 2011 JMLS Midwest Regional Diversity Mock Trial Competition. She received a Certificate of Achievement for her participation in the competition from JMLS.

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*Chicago State University was founded as a teacher training school in Blue Island, Illinois on September 2, 1867. Today, the University is a fully accredited public, urban institution located on 161-picturesque acres in a residential community on Chicago's Southside. CSU is governed by a board of trustees appointed by the Governor of Illinois. The University's five colleges—Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Pharmacy—offer 36 undergraduate and 25 graduate and professional degree-granting programs. CSU also offers an interdisciplinary Honors College for students in all areas of study and has a Division of Continuing Education and Nontraditional Degree Programs that offers extension courses, distance learning and not-for-credit programs to the entire Chicago community.*

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