



BAR ASSOCIATION
OF ERIE COUNTY

Call for Mock Trial Judge Volunteers

The Bar Association of Erie County is pleased to present the 2026 Mock Trial Tournament. This annual competition affords area high school students an unparalleled opportunity to develop advocacy and basic trial practice skills. Students learn how to conduct direct and cross-examinations, present opening and closing statements, analyze legal issues, and learn the dynamics of a courtroom. While the program fosters an understanding of the adversarial system, it stresses the importance of professionalism and civility. Students learn how to be zealous but courteous advocates for their clients.

In this year's criminal case, *People v. A. Carmen Erickson and Carson Blocker*, the two defendants are accused of stealing used cooking oil from Big Burn's Bar-B-Que Pit. Erickson, who goes on trial first, claims that they could not have been at the crime scene at the time of the theft because they were at home playing an on-line video game with others. The prosecution claims to have an eyewitness who places Erickson at the crime scene. The defendants have been charged by Prosecutor's Information with PETIT LARCENY in violation of Penal Law §155.25 and RESISTING ARREST in violation of Penal Law §205.30. The case can be accessed here: <https://nysba.org/nys-mock-trial/>

The Tournament begins in January. We would be honored if you would preside over one or more competition rounds. The schedule will be as follows:

- ▶ Preliminary Round 1: **Saturday, January 24, 2026** (morning) at 9:00 am @ Buffalo City Court: **Need 2 Judges**
- ▶ Make Up Round: **Tuesday, January 27, 2026** at 6:00 pm @ Phillips Lytle: **Need 1 Judge**
- ▶ Make Up Round: **Friday, January 30, 2026** at 6:00 pm @ Clarence High School: **Need 1 Judge**
- ▶ Preliminary Round 2: **Saturday, January 31, 2026** (morning) 9:00 am @ Buffalo City Court: **Need 5 Judges**
- ▶ Playoff Round 1: **Saturday, February 7, 2026** (morning) 9:00 am @ Buffalo City Court: **Multiple Judges Needed**

If you are interested in judging any of these rounds, please contact Matthew J. Fitzgerald, the Tournament Chair, at (716) 847-5402, or via e-mail at mfitzgerald@phillipslytle.com.

A maximum of three (3) CLE credits in skills may be earned for judging or coaching mock trial competitions during any one reporting cycle, i.e., within a two-year period. Newly admitted attorneys (less than 24 months) are NOT eligible for this type of CLE credit.