FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Annual Mock Trial Begins Friday**

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS (March 3, 2016) – The Arkansas Bar Association’s annual Mock Trial State Tournament will begin Friday, March 4 at noon, with the final round Saturday, March 5 at 4 p.m. It will be held at the Pulaski County Courthouse and the US Federal Courthouse in Little Rock.

More than 270 students from 23 high schools around the state will compete for the title of *Mock Trial State Champions* and the chance to compete at the national Mock Trial competition in Boise, Idaho this May.

“Each year, students come together from all over the state to compete and learn,” said Mock Trial committee vice-chair and local attorney volunteer Anthony McMullen. “The teams are given their case packets in October and spend the next few months preparing their arguments and strategy. Each team must play both sides – prosecution and defense – with 5 rounds of competition over the weekend.”

Approximately 100 local attorneys and judges volunteer to help with the coordination and judging of the competition, which will include 30 teams.

“Our case this year involves voter tampering, so it’s very relevant and presents a good learning experience for the students in an election year such as this,” said Crystal Newton, marketing and information specialist with the Arkansas Bar Association. “Overall, the Mock Trial program works to build rapport between high school students, the court system and civic duty. With the help of our attorney and judge mentors, we work to change the way students view our legal system by getting legal education curriculum into the schools in a fun and interactive way.”

The public is invited to attend the mock trials and watch the students make their arguments.

“It’s a really cool way to see students engaged and working toward a common goal. Several past Mock Trial competitors have gone on to become lawyers after their experience with this program,” said Newton.

Parents and teachers who are interested in bringing the Mock Trial program to their school are encouraged to contact the Arkansas Bar Association. The ArkBar can provide curriculum plans for in-school classes as well as material for establishing a Mock Trial team as an extra-curricular activity. Only six students and a teacher-sponsor are needed for a team.

**About Arkansas Bar Association**

The Arkansas Bar Association is a voluntary, statewide organization with 5,000 members. Among its purposes are the advancement of the administration of justice and the fostering among its members of high ideals of integrity, learning and public service.

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**For More Information:**

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