

The University of Mississippi School of Law Wins the 2011 Pace National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition

The Twenty-Third Annual National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition was held at Pace Law School, White Plains, New York on Thursday, February 24 through Saturday, February 26, 2011. Over 250 law student competitors and more than 150 attorney judges assembled at Pace during the three days of the oral arguments. The University of Mississippi School of Law emerged as the winner out of 73 competing law schools from across the nation.

The Ole Miss team was comprised of second-year law student Dreda Culpepper and third-year law students Christina Ashoo and Neal Wise. Professor David Case and Stephanie Showalter served as team coaches.

Competing law schools received the competition problem in early October 2010. The problem involved the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the principal federal law governing the disposal of solid and hazardous waste. Principal issues raised by the problem included whether a state had failed to properly implement and enforce its hazardous waste management program, due to shrinking state resources, in violation of federal standards set forth in RCRA, and whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should be required to withdraw its approval of the state's program based on these allegations.

Each competing team wrote a federal court of appeals brief which was filed in late November 2010, and subsequently argued in three preliminary oral argument rounds at the competition in February. The brief constituted 40 percent and the three oral argument rounds collectively constituted 60 percent of the overall preliminary scores. The top 27 highest scoring schools after the preliminary rounds advanced to the quarterfinal round.

The Ole Miss Law School team competed against Loyola Los Angeles, University of Denver, University of Wisconsin, University of Wyoming, and Wayne State University in its three preliminary rounds. Dreda Culpepper was named Best Oralist in the team's first and third preliminary rounds, and Neal Wise was named Best Oralist in the team's second preliminary round. After the announcement that Ole Miss had advanced to the quarterfinal round, the team received the award for Best Brief – Appellant, one of three awards for the highest scoring briefs annually given at the competition.

Christina Ashoo and Dreda Culpepper argued for Ole Miss in the quarterfinal round, defeating teams from the University of Houston and Rutgers University. In the semifinal round, Dreda Culpepper and Neal Wise won against teams from UCLA and the University of California Berkeley, advancing Ole Miss to the championship round.

Ole Miss faced Baylor University and three-time defending champion Lewis & Clark Law School in the championship round. The final round was judged by the Honorable Anna L. Wolgast, Judge on the Environmental Appeals Board of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Honorable Mark R. Kravitz, Judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut, and the Honorable Nancy B. Firestone, Judge on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C. Dreda Culpepper and Neal Wise argued for Ole Miss in the championship round, defeating the teams from Baylor and Lewis & Clark and giving the University of Mississippi School of Law a national moot court championship.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MISSISSIPPI
School of Law