



## Letter from the President

By Justin Bernstein

“I’m looking for a number ... “ - Northwood University’s All-American closer Jonathan Hartsfield and many imitators since 2009

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Last Thanksgiving, my mother asked me an interesting question. How many people does it take to run college mock trial? I told her, “a lot.” I think she was disappointed. After all, she’s a Jewish mother, and for years she’d been bragging to her friends that I run the whole thing by myself. But then I started thinking about the answer. I started looking for a number. I knew there were 28 people on our board of directors. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

There are an additional 32 people who serve on AMTA committees. For example, law student Cody Davis helps AMTA provide opportunities to students with disabilities, Chicago attorney Nick Gowen evaluates new policies on our Rules Committee, and Cedar Rapids attorney Abbe Stensland helped write the 2015 civil case. That’s 60 people total...and just a tiny fraction of what it takes to run college mock trial.

Many of our teams depend on coaches -- attorneys, professors, and alumni who help teach them trial advocacy. Our registration spreadsheet lists 168 “coaches” and 175 “professors” by name, but there are many coaches and assistant coaches and alumni volunteers not captured by that spreadsheet. Let’s estimate 500 coaches nationwide -- definitely an underestimate -- to bring our total to 560. We’re still just getting started.

AMTA hosted 35 tournaments this season. Consider what it takes to run a single tournament. Volunteers to judge the trials. Volunteers to find the judges. Volunteers to feed the judges. Volunteers to find and reserve and work with the facility. Volunteers to run the tabroom. Volunteers to serve as AMTA reps. Including the judges, it takes about 120 volunteers to run the average tournament.

Now multiply that by 35. That's 4,200 volunteers, or 4,760 total.

You might say I'm double counting. That's probably true. After all, some people who host one tournament serve as reps at others, and some judges attend multiple tournaments (nowadays some devoted judges attend more tournaments than our students). But in fairness, I didn't consider our National Championship Tournament, which this year featured 519 judges and a Furman volunteer everywhere you looked. So on the whole, 4,760 seems like a conservative estimate.

And, of course, this figure doesn't even include the volunteers from collegiate invitationals. Compared to official AMTA tournaments, invitationals are smaller (let's say it takes 90 volunteers per invitational), but there are many more of them (about 65). If we do the math, it means more than 10,000 people volunteer each year to make college mock trial happen. Ten. Thousand.

I am one of those 10,000 volunteers. Serving as AMTA President has been one of the great joys of my life. It has been so satisfying to give back to college mock trial a fraction of what it gave me: many of the highlights of my time in college, advocacy experience that continues to make me a better lawyer, and introductions to some of my best friends.

My term ends this month. So let my final acts be to thank our many, many volunteers -- *almost* too many to count -- and to encourage more of our alumni to get involved. If you want to judge, or coach, or host, please email incoming President Frank Guliuzza ([amta.president@collegemocktrial.org](mailto:amta.president@collegemocktrial.org)). Mock trial is the greatest undergraduate activity available, and with your help we can make it even better.