

OHIO MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM CASE SUMMARIES

2024-25 Denver Saidi v. Wyatt Latu: Denver Saidi, principal of Trillium High School and candidate for city council, becomes concerned when a deepfake video featuring their speech at the Snow Ball Dance begins circulating online and damages their campaign. Saidi has filed a lawsuit for defamation against Trillium student Wyatt Latu, who used a generative AI app to create the video, and simultaneously seeks a preliminary injunction from the court to have the offending video taken down. Students in this year's case will participate in the hearing in which the court is considering that injunction.

2023-24 State of Buckeye v. Ash Espinosa: Ash Espinosa and Harley Diallo are cousins and were co-owners of a junkyard called Diallo's Scrap & Sale. In November of 2020, the two became involved in a conspiracy to embezzle and launder money. Over the course of the next year, \$80,000 was embezzled from Trillium High School and laundered through the junkyard, in addition to another \$320,000 from other illicit sources. Eventually, the cousins were caught and arrested for their financial crimes, with both Espinosa and Diallo pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering. The court must now decide on a loss amount reasonably attributed to each Defendant, and as a result, whether the seizure of additional assets would constitute an excessive fine under the Eighth Amendment. The State of Buckeye has already seized assets from Ash Espinosa and Harley Diallo, but there is a remaining loss of \$18,500 that must be recovered.

2022-23 In Re S. Khan: Stevie Khan was a student at Trillium High School. When a prank ruined the school's annual alumni breakfast during their junior year, Stevie became a suspect. During the investigation into the prank, Stevie was brought into the Dean of Students' office where Stevie was asked about their involvement in the prank. At some point during the questioning, the school resource officer (SRO) Ari Nowak became involved. Stevie's statements during the questioning led to a search warrant and Stevie's ultimate arrest. Now, Stevie Khan is moving the court to suppress the incriminating statements that led to the search warrant, claiming a violation of their constitutional rights. Stevie claims that their questioning was a custodial interrogation, and they should have been read their *Miranda* rights.

2021-22 State of Buckeye *ex rel.* Hollis Fitzpatrick v. Fran DeBier, et al.: Hollis Fitzpatrick was the owner of a family restaurant, Fitzpatrick's, in downtown Harmony. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the state of Buckeye in 2020, Fitzpatrick's struggled financially and ultimately shut down. Hollis blames the government restrictions for the closure of their restaurant and is taking legal action to be compensated for their loss. This case asks students to consider whether the pandemic restrictions were so severe that they constituted a taking of Hollis Fitzpatrick's property that requires just compensation.

2020-21 State of Buckeye v. Micah Opressa: In 2019, Micah Opressa pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter in the death of their former best-friend, Haumea Robins. A year into their sentence, Micah found out the eyewitness who saw Micah fleeing the crime recanted their testimony. Now, Micah has filed a motion to withdraw their guilty plea, claiming the prosecutor violated their constitutional rights when they knowingly withheld this information when they offered Micah a plea deal. The Supreme Court ruling in *Brady v. Maryland* requires the prosecution to overturn exculpatory evidence during trial. In this Mock Trial case, students will argue whether this precedent also applies to plea negotiations.

- 2019-20 Rory Maldonado v. Blake Varga et al:** During their senior year at Trillium High School, Rory Maldonado was suspended by Principal Blake Varga for organizing and hosting a gun rights demonstration. The demonstration occurred off campus at a nearby public park but Principal Varga claimed that Rory's demonstration caused disruption at the school. Rory believed Principal Varga simply disagreed with Rory's position on gun rights, which led to the suspension. Now, Rory is suing Principal Blake Varga and the school for a deprivation of their First Amendment Rights.
- 2018-19 State of Buckeye v. Quinn Woolf:** High school student, Quinn Woolf, was arrested on charges of aggravated assault and telecommunications fraud for stealing \$120 million from the State of Buckeye's pension fund. The state is basing its charges on drone footage of the Woolf's backyard captured from 400 feet in the air that was later enhanced. Defense has moved to exclude the drone footage, claiming that police violated Quinn's Fourth Amendment protection against unlawful search and seizure.
- 2017-18 State of Buckeye v. Adam Smith:** Inspired by the popular podcast Serial, students tackle the post-conviction relief petition of Adam Smith, a defendant convicted of the murder of his ex-girlfriend in 1999. Almost 20 years later, Smith has filed a petition for a new trial, alleging ineffective assistance of counsel. Smith contends that his original attorney mishandled cell phone evidence in his case and failed to pursue a potential alibi witness.
- 2016-17 Pat Justice v. CAT News, et al.:** During a campaign stop at a local high school, the incumbent Governor met with Principal I.M Veritas. After a heated argument, the Governor stormed out, just as Principal Veritas suffered a fatal brain aneurysm and died. A student reporter heard the argument and reported to CAT News that the Governor killed the principal. Justice lost the election and has now filed a civil suit against CAT News, alleging defamation.
- 2015-16 State of Harmony v. Riley Green:** En route to the annual Medieval Fair, a student causes a disturbance while playing in character with a bow and arrow at a convenience store. The store owner calls the police, and as Officer Green arrives on the scene, he finds AJ in the parking lot holding his bow and arrow. After issuing a warning, Officer Green makes the decision to use deadly force prevent further harm. Officer Green is charged with felonious assault.
- 2014-15 Emerson Jones v. Buckeye Juvenile Correctional Institute:** Emerson Jones, a juvenile incarcerated at the Defendant Buckeye Juvenile Correctional Institute (BJCI) Jones claims that the Defendant violated their Eighth Amendment right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. Emerson contends that BJCI used excessive force to contain a fight in the cafeteria, and that medical staff failed to provide proper care and treatment for Emerson's resulting injury. BJCI counterclaims that the guard used necessary force to mitigate the riot situation, and that it met the standard of medical care in treating Jones' injury. BJCI counterclaims that the guard used necessary force to mitigate the riot situation, and that it met the standard of medical care in treating Jones' injury.

2013-14 Phillips School District v. Jesse Springfield. Philips High School agrees to license naming rights to its field to a large corporation. Students then organize to protest this action both in school and on the field itself. The school district responds by installing security cameras and searching the lockers of the students involved as well as filing an action to remove the students from the field. The students claim the school district has violated their First and Fourth Amendment rights.

2012 -13 State of Ohio v. Dakota Allen: A high school sophomore is suspected of setting a fire at the school that resulted in the death of a maintenance worker. The police then engage in a lengthy interrogation process that involves driving to the scene of the crime and the victim's home as well as various interrogation techniques. Late in the day, the defendant makes a statement claiming responsibility for the fire and is subsequently charged with Murder and Arson. However, the defendant later recants the confession. The defendant has alleged that the statements were improperly coerced by the police in violation of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments and filed a Motion to Suppress.

2011-12 State of Ohio v. Storm Jackson: Storm Jackson, a college freshman, is accused of stealing prescription drugs while attending two real estate open houses and while visiting at the houses of two friends. The Defendant and his parents' names were on a sign-in list at both of the open houses. Without a warrant, the police subpoenaed and obtained Storm Jackson's cell phone GPS records before he was arrested. Storm Jackson has filed a motion to suppress claiming that the evidence seized was the result of an improper search and seizure that violated his Fourth Amendment rights.

2010-11 Taylor Henlacks v. Dana Brody, M.D., Ph.D., FCAP: The 2011 Ohio High School Mock Trial competition analyzes an individual's rights to the body parts of a deceased family member. In this year's case, after an individual died suddenly in a single car accident, an autopsy was performed with the family's consent to determine the cause of death. During the course of the autopsy, a section of the brain was removed and sent to pathology where it was discovered that the brain cells are regenerative (or "immortal"). The decedent's family has filed a lawsuit against the County Coroner alleging that the coroner violated the family's due process rights by sending the regenerative cells to a research lab instead of returning them to the body.

2009-10 Alex Leslie v. Erehwon Local School District: A high school student is suspended for violating a school disciplinary code after posting comments critical of a teacher on his/her personal blog. The blog was created on the student's home computer and no school resources were used. All of the comments about the teacher were posted from the student's home computer but were accessed by other students through the high school's wireless network. The student alleges that the school impermissibly abridged his/her off-campus speech. The school argues that the posts to the blog because the comments caused a disruption at the school and posed a substantial risk that the high school administrators and teachers were diverted from their core educational responsibilities. The trial for the mock trial competition has been bifurcated and will focus only upon whether the school is liable for violation of the student's First Amendment right of free speech.

2008-09 Terry Silva v. Buckeye Equality School District: A high school soccer player has had his/her dream of college scholarship threatened by a new school district resolution that requires students to show proof of U.S. citizenship or legal status in the United States before being allowed to participate in extracurricular activities. The student argues that the school district's resolution violates the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and is preempted by federal immigration law.

2007-08 The People's Church v. The City of Urbanopolis: The People's Church is allowing homeless persons to camp on church property. But due to concerns related to crime and the public health, the city has begun dispersing the homeless persons from the church grounds. The church argues that the city's actions unconstitutionally burden the church's free exercise of religion, as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

2006-07 The City of Strawberry Hills v. Chris Washington: The city of Strawberry Hills uses eminent domain to take Washington's house, not for a public project, but rather to permit a private developer to build a mixed use development as part of an urban revitalization project. The case demonstrates that state constitutions may be an additional source of protection for individual rights, and have the potential for rising above basic rights accorded by the U.S. Constitution.

2005-06 State of Ohio v. Terry Bale: Terry Bale is convicted of aggravated murder. Before the jury decides on his sentence, the defendant's lawyers submit a motion to eliminate the death penalty as a sentencing option alleging that the defendant has been found to have schizophrenia and sentencing him to death would be violate the Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishment.

2004-05 Biotex Labs v. Animal Rights Foundation: A laboratory begins animal testing and catches the attention of an animal rights group who puts possibly inflammatory statements about the laboratory on their website. The lab is then vandalized. The lab is suing ARF for damages, claiming the language on the website caused animal activists who read the website to take action.

2003-04 State of Ohio v. Trilby Van Acker: A student is accused of leaving a bomb in a backpack under the bleachers at a heavily attended outdoor political rally. The subsequent actions of the police and facts of the "confessions" are taken to court for a suppression hearing when the student claims his/her fourth and fifth amendments rights were violated because the statements were involuntary and made before the Miranda warnings were read.

2002-03 Ex Parte Miller: The case is set in 1864 and revolves around a community celebration on a large farm in southern Ohio. A few days later the owner of the farm was arrested and taken to a military prison, charged before a military tribunal with inciting an insurrection in violation of the laws of war. Miller filed a writ of habeas corpus saying his right to a civil trial were violated as was his right to freedom of speech.

2001-02 City of Malloryville v. Alex Carlson: A student was brutally attacked and left unconscious. There was one witness, an elderly woman with poor eyesight. From her statement and the DNA taken from the crime scene, police asked brown-haired students at the local high school to give a saliva sample. A DNA match was found. The student filed a motion to suppress evidence seized as a result of an improper search and seizure.

2000-01 State of Ohio v. Chris Blake: This case concerns the issues of profiling, traffic stops, and what constitutes a legal search at a traffic stop.

1999-00 Turner v. Raetown Board of Education: When a student-athlete violates the school's zero-tolerance respect policy, disciplinary action threatens the student's college scholarship. The student files a lawsuit on the grounds that the respect policy and penalty violate the student's First Amendment and due process rights.

1998-99 City of Whiteacre Bluffs v. K. J. Tyler: A criminal case in municipal court in which the City prosecutes K.J. Tyler for loitering. Defendant Tyler denies the charge and maintains the arrest was unlawful because the ordinance abridges freedom of association under the First Amendment.

1997-98 United States v. Dorain Lowe: A high school student is charged with possession of drugs and drug trafficking after an e-mail message is intercepted by the student's principal

1996-97 C. Washington v. Mid-City Veterans Foundation: A high school senior files suit against a veterans' organization because s/he was passed over for an academic scholarship that the organization awarded to a minority student.

1995-96 In the Matter of C. Northern: A student-led crime prevention organization runs afoul of a hypothetical state statute prohibiting paramilitary training when they attend a survival skills camp.

1994-95 In the Matter of H. Roller: A juvenile court hearing in which high school students claim their First Amendment and other constitutional rights were violated when they are cited for curfew violation while attending a "religious" meeting in a local restaurant.

1993-94 Noble v. Katiesburg School District: This case deals with sexual harassment in the schools. Parents of a female student filed a lawsuit against their daughter's school district claiming the school knew she was being harassed and failed to stop it. The student teams will argue whether the attentions received by the student were sexual harassment or just flirtatious teasing she couldn't handle.

1992-93 Ohio v. Rexline: A student, waiting in a crowd to attend a rap concert, is searched by the police trying to control the crowd. As a result, Rexline is arrested for underage possession of alcohol. The court must decide if the search was legal under the Fourth Amendment and whether the flask can be entered into evidence.

1991-92 Koe v. Provider X: A student, who tested HIV positive, sues a medical provider and asks the court to close proceedings to ensure personal privacy. The media intervene to try to keep the proceedings open. The court must decide if the right to privacy is more important than the public's right to know.

1990-91 Green v. Tullensburg: A student is expelled for allegedly making threats against the star freshman basketball player in violation of the school's ethnic intimidation rule. The student claims violation of the right to free speech and claims the school rule is so vague it violates substantive due process.

1989-90 Trooper v. Townsville: This case presents a confrontation between the First Amendment rights of high school students and the authority of the school to regulate student government elections and student newspapers.

1988-89 Carps v. Board of Education: The performance of an inspirational song by a student at a high school graduation ceremony is questioned on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment requirement of separation of church and state.

1987-88 Generic v. Childfair: This search and seizure case examined whether evidence seized from a student's car during a school function was legally admissible under the Fourth Amendment in a criminal prosecution.

1986-87 Whitley v. Board of Education: A high school athlete, required to take a random drug test, maintained that the test was faulty and procedures conducting it improper. The student used these grounds to challenge school policies making the test a condition for participating in extra-curricular activities.

1985-86 YMS v. Board of Education: When a student newspaper refused to print an ad by a student club sponsoring war games to raise money for a field trip, the club asked for an injunction to prevent their First Amendment right to freedom of the press from being violated.

1984-85 Fulton v. Maddville: A student athlete unknowingly drank spiked punch and was disciplined for violating a school substance abuse policy. The student claimed a violation of both substantive and procedural due process.

1983-84 Bradley v. Ross: A one-eyed basketball player who was denied the right to play on the school team because of his handicap seeks an injunction claiming his constitutional right to privacy and due process was violated.