

Law Related Education

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Committee on Law Related Education

SCOUT MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS, HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIALS, & THE CROWN ACT ON THE HORIZON... OH MY!

2022 ISBA High School Mock Trial Invitational

BY SARAH TAYLOR

The 2022 ISBA High School Mock Trial Invitational was held virtually on March 11-13, 2022, adding yet one more successful Invitational to the many that have preceded this Invitational, and thus reinforcing the relevance and value of annually hosting such a Project for all of the participants. Teams of students and their coaches representing **fifty** high schools from throughout Illinois participated in their long-awaited and painstakingly rehearsed trials on the first

two days via Zoom. The top eight scoring teams in the regular rounds (in alphabetical order) were Bartlett High School, Evanston High School, Highland Park High School, Naperville North High School, Niles West High School, Stevenson High School, Timothy Christian High School, and Whitney M. Young Magnet School.

These eight teams then competed for the top three awards on Sunday, March 13,

Continued on next page

2022 ISBA High School Mock Trial Invitational
1

How the Illinois CROWN Act, If Passed, Can Protect Employees and Students From Race-Based Hair Discrimination
1

Boy Scout Merit Badges: What They Are, How to Get Them, and How to Give Them
3

How the Illinois CROWN Act, If Passed, Can Protect Employees and Students From Race-Based Hair Discrimination

BY SHARON L. EISEMAN

If anyone had asked me what the crowning achievement of our Illinois Legislature has been during the pandemic, I would answer, without much thought, "Consideration of the passage of the CROWN Act." The Act was recently

approved as SB3616 by a plurality vote in the Senate and is now awaiting a vote in the House. If our state representatives support this bill as overwhelmingly as did the senators, then the CROWN Act

Continued on next page

2022 ISBA High School Mock Trial Invitational

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

2022. Third place went to Stevenson High School; second place went to Niles West High School; and first place was awarded to Timothy Christian High School. Timothy Christian High School will thus represent Illinois at the National High School Mock Trial Competition in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which will also be held virtually this year.

The winner of the 2022 Donna E. Schechter Memorial Law Test Award for the highest team score on the written law exam was York Community High School.

The 2022 Invitational was a success due to the hard work and enthusiasm of the teams and their coaches, families, and other supporters, and the dedication of the ISBA's Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public, the Mock Trial Coordinator, Katy Flannagan, and ISBA staff members, and Empire Mock Trial staff.

How the Illinois CROWN Act, If Passed, Can Protect Employees and Students From Race-Based Hair Discrimination

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

becomes law when the governor signs it. The CROWN Act amends the Illinois Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based upon an individual's texture or style of hair. We have State Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago) to thank for taking the lead to achieve a good result for our state.

What is also interesting is that the push for passage of this Act arose from the CROWN Coalition of organizations, including Dove, the National Urban League, Color of Change, and the Western Center on Law and Poverty. If all goes well, Illinois will join a growing number of states that have passed similar legislation, with California having been the first in line to do something explicit to identify and stop race-based discrimination in the workplace and educational venues based solely upon particular hair texture and protective hairstyles common among people of color.

The acronym CROWN stands for

Thanks and recognition also are extended by the ISBA and its LRE Committee to the many judges, attorneys, paralegals, law students, and others who generously volunteered their time to serve as presiding judges, jurors/evaluators, and Blue Shirts (bailiffs) for each trial. The Law-Related Education Committee appreciates the support and hard work of these entities and individuals. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2023, as well as new teams and new volunteers!!

A full list of participating schools and volunteers and general information about the Mock Trial Invitational will be posted on the ISBA Mock Trial website at: <http://www.isba.org/teachers/mocktrial>. ■

“Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.” Without legal protection, employers and schools have ordered Black people to avoid the common protective ways of styling natural hair—styling hair into braids, twists, cornrows, afros, or otherwise tightly coiling it. Accordingly, the Act more broadly also prohibits the denial of employment and educational opportunities because of hair texture or protective hair styles.

Similarly, both public and private schools have also shown intolerance for natural hairstyles by forbidding girls and young women from wearing them in class photos. There have even been instances of students being sent home because such hairstyles were banned in school codes.

A few years ago, a real-life situation like the ones made illegal by the CROWN Act came to the attention of the public through a Chicago Tribune editorial that documented

Law Related Education

Published at least four times per year.

To subscribe, visit www.isba.org or call 217-525-1760.

OFFICE

ILLINOIS BAR CENTER
424 S. SECOND STREET
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701
PHONES: 217-525-1760 OR 800-252-8908
WWW.ISBA.ORG

EDITORS

Sharon L. Eiseman

PUBLICATIONS MANAGER

Sara Anderson

✉ sanderson@isba.org

LAW RELATED EDUCATION COMMITTEE COUNCIL

Sandra L. Sweeney, Chair
Billie J. Constant, Vice-Chair
Hon. John J. O'Gara, Secretary
Christine G. Zeman, Ex-Officio
Hon. Michael J. Chmiel
Sharon L. Eiseman
Kelli Fennell
Lesley D. Gool
Hon. Rex L. Gradeless
Hon. Justin M. Hansen
Simone Haugen
Stephen D. Iden
Maryam Judar
Stephanie P. Klein
Joseph P. Lyons
Raquel G. Martinez
Melissa M. Olivero
Hon. Edward J. Schoenbaum
Brittany Jenay Shaw
Sarah J. Taylor
Stephen M. Komie, Board Liaison
Kimberly A. Furr, Staff Liaison
Kelsey K. Chetosky, Associate Member
Nancy G. Easum, Associate Member
Kathleen A. Flannagin, Associate Member
Adam Michael Janes, Associate Member
Marylou L. Kent, Associate Member
Kateah M. McMasters, Associate Member
Stanley N. Wasser, Associate Member

DISCLAIMER: This newsletter is for subscribers' personal use only; redistribution is prohibited. Copyright Illinois State Bar Association. Statements or expressions of opinion appearing herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Association or Editors, and likewise the publication of any advertisement is not to be construed as an endorsement of the product or service offered unless it is specifically stated in the ad that there is such approval or endorsement.

Articles are prepared as an educational service to members of ISBA. They should not be relied upon as a substitute for individual legal research.

The articles in this newsletter are not intended to be used and may not be relied on for penalty avoidance.

the experience of Black girl wearing her hair in braids with red ribbons who was excluded from her class photo for violating the school's dress code and sent home. The piece admonished her parents for letting their child go to school with a hairstyle that was forbidden by the school's dress code. The very embarrassed parents apologized profusely, while the school and the Tribune columnist got away with their race-based humiliation of a young girl and the scolding of her family. Ironically, the editorial noted that the school code also prohibited students from coloring their hair, yet a Caucasian boy who had dyed his hair chartreuse was allowed to join his fellow students in the class photo from that the African American girl was excluded. The racist viewpoint in this set of facts reveals the application of a double, race-based standard—by the school, the Tribune staff writer, and the Tribune. It reflects the ease with which a black girl was locked out while the gate was wide open to her white counterpart.

This scenario provokes the question: Why does the CROWN Act have to be passed in order to stop such blatant, commonplace, and hurtful discrimination? Yet that is the purpose of state and local legislative bodies. Unfortunately, as with other corrective laws that are enacted, before we decide that a new or stronger law is necessary to curtail discrimination, we first have to learn of the pain and anguish suffered by the victims of discriminatory actions. In these scenarios, they are employees fearful of retaliation if they complain. They are children who are excluded from standing next to their white classmates in the class photo, along with their terrified parents, simply because they are Black and maybe acting “too Black.”

How particular schools treat students with hairstyles they consider extreme can also be perplexing. As the father of one student prevented from being in her class photo but not sent home, asked: “They let her stay in school, so if she's not a disruption to the class, then why is she a disruption

to the picture?” Fortunately, one of the provisions in the new law requires the State Board of Education to provide educational materials to all the schools in order to inform them about protective hairstyles. Perhaps that is the best start for implementing the CROWN Act. What we understand can sometimes help us be not only more reasonable but more compassionate and thus more inclusive.

While we may be distressed by the story of the girl with the red ribbon in her braids and the thought of those who have been punished for their race and natural physical features, we can be courageous to press for change. With the guidance of those with authority and the ability to be heard, we can learn—even if by force for some—how to celebrate every child and adult from wherever they came and whomever their ancestors were, because diversity and inclusion are what make us feel whole and perhaps even be whole. ■

Boy Scout Merit Badges: What They Are, How to Get Them, and How to Give Them

BY MELISSA OLIVERO

Looking for a way to share your passion for the law and civics education with the leaders of tomorrow? You can volunteer as a merit badge counselor with the Boy Scouts of America. The Scouts BSA program is for young men and women ages 11 to 18. Merit badge counselors teach scouts about future careers, the trades, hobbies, science, sports, and business. Some merit badges, especially American Heritage, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, and Citizenship in the World, focus on civics and history. A few others, particularly Law and Crime Prevention, cover the legal system and law-related careers. Still others, including Communication, Public Speaking, and Scholarship, are areas in which most attorneys have some expertise that would

be relevant to service as a merit badge counselor.

The Merit Badge Program allows scouts to meet with people who are experienced in a particular field and learn from them. Each merit badge has a lengthy list of requirements that each scout must fulfill in order to earn the merit badge. For example, the Law merit badge has 11 requirements, including learning about two famous cases and discussing legal systems throughout history. The scouts need to meet with a counselor to earn their merit badges. And **HERE is where you can help:** By signing up as a merit badge counselor, you can help youth in your area earn merit badges. You do not have to wear a uniform or otherwise be involved in scouting to be a merit badge

counselor.

In order to become a merit badge counselor, you must first complete Scouts BSA's online Youth Protection Training (YPT). This course takes less than two hours and explains Scouts BSA's requirements for working with youth. You will learn that there must always be two adults present when any counselors are working with a youth. After obtaining your YPT certificate, you must fill out an Adult Application and provide authorization for a background check. All of these measures help keep our scouts safe. There is no cost to complete the required training or background checks, or to register as a merit badge counselor.

You can complete merit badges with one scout, a few scouts, or a group of scouts. I

have met with many individual scouts and also with several small groups of scouts. I recently taught at a Merit Badge University at York Community High School in Elmhurst. Over 1,200 scouts attended this event. I worked with 110 scouts, broken up into groups of 25-30, guiding them through the Law and Crime Prevention merit badges. The scouts had to complete some of the requirements at home before the event and we covered the other requirements in class. Two of the groups conducted a mock trial. Scouts in all of the groups were able to ask questions about careers in the law and notable court cases. It was an enjoyable experience for me and I believe the scouts learned a lot. Almost all of the scouts I met that day were interested in becoming attorneys or entering another law-related career. It would be nice if we could follow

them all to learn what career choices they ultimately make and how much the Merit Badge Program and the volunteer merit badge counselors influenced those choices.

Scouting is not just about camping, wilderness survival, and public service. Merit badges are an important way that young men and women can learn about the adult world. If you are interested in becoming a merit badge counselor, you can contact the local Scouts BSA council in your area. You can find your local council by going to <https://www.scouting.org/about/local-council-locator/> and entering your ZIP code. For more information on the 137 currently offered merit badges, please go to <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>. ■

Melissa Olivero is an attorney employed by a federal agency. She is also the scoutmaster of Scouts BSA Troop 123 in Peru, Illinois, and a merit badge counselor.

LET US PROMOTE, *You!*

Clients contact us and we refer them to you.
IT'S THAT EASY!

Join the ISBA's Lawyer Referral Service ***TODAY***

PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP

Just \$50 per year

With a Premium Membership, your name and contact information will be given out to consumers who call the ISBA's live operators seeking paid legal assistance in specific areas of law.



ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

[ISBA.ORG/ILLINOISLAWYERFINDER](https://www.isba.org/illinoislawyerfinder)

