

U of M Law Team Second in Nation in Appellate Competition



University of Memphis law students Jennifer Bellott and Michael Goodin faced Harvard University's team in the final round of the national championships of the American Bar Association's National Appellate Advocacy Competition. In a split decision by the judges, the U of M team finished second. Bellott was named National Best Advocate, an award given to the best oral advocate of the competition. Associate Dean Barbara Kritchevsky was the team's coach.

After advancing undefeated through the regional competition, the team defeated Seton Hall and Texas Wesleyan in the preliminary round of the national finals. They went on to top the University of California, Berkeley, and Washington University, then eliminated Seton Hall in the Final Four. Memphis and Harvard were left as the final two teams.

Some 180 teams from around the country entered the competition. Four teams from each of six regions participated in the national finals, which were held April 3-5 in Chicago.

Bellott, a Memphian, earned her undergraduate degree from McGill University in Montreal. Goodin, from Vicksburg, Miss., graduated from Mississippi College in Jackson.

"I could not be more proud of Jennifer and Michael for their success," said Kritchevsky. "Advancing undefeated to the final round of a national competition is a very rare feat and a remarkable accomplishment. Receiving the award for National Best Advocate in a competition of this magnitude is similarly impressive."

The competition emphasizes the development of oral advocacy skills through a realistic appellate advocacy experience. Competitors participate in a hypothetical appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court by writing a 40-page brief as either respondent or petitioner, then arguing the case in front of the mock court.

The Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law prepares graduates for private practice and public service. The School of Law recently was ranked fifth in the nation by *preLaw* magazine as a best value law school based on the combination of low tuition, the high percentage of graduates passing the Tennessee bar exam, and the success of graduates in finding employment. Its graduates include judges, other public servants, and leading practitioners in the Mid-South and around the nation.

The School of Law is accredited by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association, the official accrediting agency for legal education, and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools, the learned society for legal education in the United States.