

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF LAW FINISHES AS RUNNER UP AT THE 2007 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION

On February 24, 2007, a team from the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law reached the Final Round of the National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition (NELMCC) held at Pace University School of Law in White Plains, New York. The law student members of the Memphis team were Tamara Zellars Buck, Tiffany Taylor, and Melissa Van Pelt, and the faculty coach was Professor David Case.

The 2007 NELMCC involved teams from nearly 70 law schools from around the country. Three teams are required to argue in each round representing, respectively, parties asserting environmental injuries as a result of industrial activity (appellants), members of regulated industry (appellees), and the federal government (intervenor). The 27 teams with the highest combined scores for both a written brief (submitted in December 2006) and three preliminary oral argument rounds advance to the Quarterfinal Round. The Memphis team advanced to the Quarterfinal Round after competing in the preliminary rounds against such law schools as the University of New Mexico, Lewis & Clark Law School (Ore.), the University of Kansas, Louisiana State University, and Washburn University (Kan.). Presiding judges named Tamara Zellars Buck of Memphis Best Oralist in the first of the team's three preliminary rounds.

In the Quarterfinal Round, Memphis (Melissa Van Pelt and Tamara Zellars Buck arguing on behalf of appellants) defeated the University of Alabama and the University of Oregon to advance with eight other teams to the Semifinal Round. In the Semifinal Round, Memphis (Tiffany Taylor and Melissa Van Pelt arguing on behalf of appellees) defeated Arizona State University and Washington University in Saint Louis.

Memphis competed in the Final Round against Georgetown University and Lewis & Clark Law School. Melissa Van Pelt and Tamara Zellars Buck argued on behalf of appellants before the final round bench of the Honorable Carlos Lucero (United States Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals), the Honorable Robert Smith (New York Court of Appeals), and the Honorable Kathie Stein (Environmental Protection Agency Appeals Board). Following a round described by the presiding judges as extremely close between all three teams, Georgetown University was declared the overall winner.

The Pace NELMCC is recognized as the preeminent environmental law moot in the United States. The University of Memphis has reached the Quarterfinal Round in five out of the last six years, and the Semifinal Round in three out of the last four years. This year's appearance in the Final Round was the first for the University of Memphis since 1997.