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Students argue their case in moot court

By **DENISE M. CHAMPAGNE**
Daily Record Reporter

People are safer when McGruff the Crime Dog takes a bite out of crime, but taking a bite out of a neighbor can bring an owner into court.

Ninth-graders at the World of Inquiry School No. 58 sunk their teeth into the legal particulars last Wednesday in a fictional case before real judges in a real court. The students, arguing before the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, considered whether the dog, in this case a pitbull boxer mix, had a vicious propensity and whether the owner knew it did or should have known.

This is the fourth year the state Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department has sponsored a moot court competition for students at the school. All 69 ninth-graders participated.

"I'm pleased that so many judges, attorneys and staff members at the Appellate Division volunteered to work on this project," said Presiding Justice Henry J. Scudder, who filled his real life role for the mock trial. "We were really impressed with the students. I expect that the Appellate Division and School 58 will continue this partnership for many years to come."

Joining Justice Scudder on the bench were Justices Nancy E. Smith and Stephen K. Lindley, who are part of the Appellate Division; and guests: Supreme Court Justice Joanne M. Winslow,



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Anelis Quinones laughs with the judges during her argument about a dog bite case during the second round the World of Inquiry School #58 Moot Court Competition at the Appellate Division.

County Court Judge Victoria M. Argento and Penfield Town Justice James P. Mulley, who is also an employee of the Appellate Division.

"The partnership goes well beyond preparing students for standardized exams," said Gabe Chodak, a ninth-grade teacher at School 58. "It provides students with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in their academic careers and far beyond."

Student Xavier Anderson won first place in the competition, followed by Lloyd Davis, second; Matthew Molis, third; and Anelis Quinones, fourth.

"The students should be very proud of their performance," said Appellate Division Attorney Joseph Dier, an experienced moot court participant who helped organize the competition. "They exceeded all expectations."

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Alexander Brunelle argues for the dog owner in the second round of the competition. Seated is Xavier Anderson, who represented the plaintiff.



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Justice Victoria M. Argento, right, and presiding Justice Henry J. Scudder listen to arguments.



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Lloyd Davis argues on behalf of the plaintiff, who was bitten by a large dog, during the World of Inquiry School #58 Moot Court Competition.