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PHOTO ATTACHED

February 10, 2020

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Connelly teacher and student awarded top Mock Trial honors

February 10, 2020, Anaheim, CA – Cornelia Connelly School was honored to have Mock Trial Teacher Coach, Dorothy Morris, and student, Tahlia Garcia '21, win top awards at the annual Mock Trial Awards Reception hosted by The Constitutional Rights Foundation, Orange County on Thursday, February 6. With over 900 high schools students from 40 local high schools competing in the 2019-2020 Mock Trial season, the small all-girls Catholic high school from Anaheim scored a huge win.

Dorothy Morris, Connelly English Teacher and Department Chair, was awarded Mock Trial Teacher Coach of the Year. Morris was elated upon hearing the news of the award and said, “I feel proud. I am proud of my girls, and I am proud of myself and my fellow coaches. While we did not get the wins we wanted this season, we worked hard, stayed positive, and had a ton of fun.” Mrs. Morris was especially touched knowing that she was nominated by her students, who have been nominating her for a few years. “I am tremendously attached to my Mock Trial girls, and it is beautiful to see concrete evidence that my affection is reciprocated.”

Connelly junior, Tahlia Garcia, who has been participating in Mock Trial since her freshman year, was also honored at the awards reception; she was awarded Outstanding Pre-Trial Attorney. Garcia expressed her gratitude saying, “I am so honored to have received this award and I couldn’t have done it without the support of our amazing attorney coaches. Mrs. Morris definitely deserved her award because she puts so much into our team and we appreciate her very much. Everyone on the team is so passionate about mock trial and I am grateful for the opportunity to compete for Connelly.”

Each year the Constitutional Rights Foundation sponsors the Mock Trial Competition. The competition is statewide and Cornelia Connelly is a member of the Orange County chapter. Mock Trial combines law-related education with tournament-style competition. Using a simulated criminal court case, students explore current and complex legal, social, and constitutional issues. Student teams from over 40 local high schools prepare to enact every role in a trial with the guidance of attorney and teacher coaches. The teams meet at the Central Justice Center for eight rounds of competition. Superior Court, California Appellate, and Federal Court judges preside at the trials, and attorneys observe and rate the performance of student teams in a variety of categories. More than 900 students and hundreds of volunteers from the legal and education communities participate in the program.

This is Cornelia Connelly School's final year participating in CRF-OC's Orange County Mock Trial Competition. The school is scheduled to close at the end of the academic school year in June 2020 due to years of diminishing enrollment, increased debt, and shortfalls in fundraising efforts. Despite this discouraging news, Connelly students have never ceased striving to perform to their utmost abilities. They continue to lead, serve, and inspire just as their school motto states, and their foundress, Cornelia Connelly exemplified .

Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim is a Catholic, independent, college-preparatory high school for young women that was founded and sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1961. Connelly's exceptional curriculum and programs prepare young women to be leaders based on an underlying philosophy of trust, reverence and respect. For more information about the school, please go to www.connellyschoolanahem.org.

CAPTION for photo (Connelly Mock-Trial Awards2000px.jpg): Connelly teacher, Dorothy Morris, was awarded Mock Trial Teacher Coach of the Year, while Connelly junior, Tahlia Garcia, was awarded Mock Trial Outstanding Pre-Trial Attorney. They are shown with volunteer attorney coaches, Cris Albanese and Matt Feron.