



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE
(For immediate release)

**No. 06:2023
18 March 2023**

HISTORIC FIFTH WIN FOR THE NORMAN MANLEY LAW SCHOOL AT THE 13TH ANNUAL CCJ INTERNATIONAL LAW MOOT

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. On Friday 17 March, the Norman Manley Law School was declared the winner of the XIII Annual Caribbean Court of Justice's (CCJ) International Law Moot competition. The Jamaica-based institution bested six other law schools and law faculties from throughout the region, for its second consecutive win, having also taken the Challenge Shield in the 2022 competition. They now tie with the Eugene Dupuch Law School from The Bahamas for the most competition wins.

It was a joyous occasion for all those involved as this was the first Moot to be held in person since 2019. Last year's competition was conducted virtually for the first time in the Moot's history following a two-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, none were more excited than the winning team, comprising students Ronaldo Richards, and Akeelia Richards Adalia Nembhard and advisor, Taneisha Brown. When asked about the lessons learnt from the Moot, the winning team explained "this is not just a competition, it's a network created by the Court that allows young advocates in the region to come together to discuss something that is very important to the region and it helps to shape our minds as to what advocacy will be like in the future...it's more than an experience, it's a network where you get to learn and meet the judges and other people from the region."

Established in 2009 to help law students become more familiar with the Court's Original Jurisdiction, the Moot has since become one of the Court's flagship events. Its objective is to raise awareness of the Court's Original Jurisdiction (OJ) and the rights afforded to Caribbean Community (CARICOM) citizens under the Caribbean Single Market Economy, which was established by the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC). Such rights include the freedom of movement, trade and services, and the movement of money within CARICOM. In his opening remarks, CCJ President, the Hon. Mr Justice Adrian Saunders affirmed that "...as an apex Court, we have long recognised that the role we play in the region extends far beyond hearing and resolving disputes. That role includes fostering a regional legal culture to support the development of Caribbean jurisprudence. This is a responsibility that we have readily embraced. Hosting the Moot is a testament to our commitment to strengthening the rule of law and enhancing justice delivery throughout the region."

The competition also aims to support students in developing their advocacy skills by providing an opportunity for participants to take part in simulated court proceedings before a panel of CCJ Judges. In his remarks, the Hon. Mr Justice Burgess, Chair of the Moot Steering Committee opined that "the entire

experience - from preparation of arguments to standing before the Court making those arguments - improves a participant's overall understanding and knowledge of the area of law, in this case, Community and International Law.”

This year's competitors included the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, Eugene Dupuch Law School from The Bahamas, Hugh Wooding Law School, Norman Manley Law School from Jamaica, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine and the University of Guyana who argued the case of an allegation of discrimination based on nationality contrary to Article 7 of the RTC. In the fictional case, a CARICOM citizen resident in Trinidad and Tobago possessed a Legal Practice Certificate but was refused admittance to the Trinidad Bar on the basis that only nationals of Trinidad and Tobago with qualification could be called to practice law. The Honourable Messrs. Justice Wit and Anderson and the Honourable Mme. Justice Rajnauth-Lee formed the panel of judges.

Second place was awarded to The UWI Cave Hill which also won the prize for “Best Academic Institution.” One of the team's advocates, Mr Rahym Augustin-Joseph also received the inaugural “Sir Henry Forde Best Oralist Award”. This is a new prize introduced at this Moot to recognise outstanding performances by individual advocates. It is named after Barbadian attorney, Sir Henry Forde who was among the first attorneys to appear before the Court when it was established in 2005. The Norman Manley Law School also won the Social Media Spirit Prize, created in 2022, to raise the profile of the teams via social media and to foster increased support for the teams.

Members of the public who are interested in viewing the competition, recordings of the teams' presentations and the award ceremony can visit the Court's [YouTube channel](#) . Photos of the event can be accessed here [Law Moot 2023 photos](#).

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court's Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, four states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica and Guyana. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region's coming of age.

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