



NAPALSA

THE NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION



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For questions, comments, or suggestions for the NAPALSA newsletter, please contact Ali Hokusui, An Phan, or Paul

What is NAPALSA?

NAPALSA was established in 1981. We are a completely student-led organization. Our Board of Directors consists of 12 diverse and dedicated law students across the country.

NAPALSA was created to support, to advocate for, and to provide a voice for Asian Pacific Americans in the legal community. We provide extensive networking opportunities for our law students to observe and learn from practicing attorneys and judges. We also jointly hold a national conference each November in conjunction with the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Convention.

This Month's Focus: The Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition

THE THOMAS TANG MOOT COURT COMPETITION

The Thomas Tang National Moot Court Competition was founded in 1993 by the APA Law Student Association of the South Texas College of Law, Houston, Texas. It is an appellate advocacy competition administered by the NAPABA Law Foundation and the NAPABA Judicial Council. The purpose of this Competition is to develop advocacy skills without regard to the merit of the petitioner's or respondent's cases.

The Competition honors the late Judge Thomas Tang, a champion of individual rights, an advocate for the advancement of minority attorneys, an ardent supporter of NAPABA and the moot court competition. Judge Tang served on the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals from 1977 until his passing in 1995. Judge Tang's wife, Dr. Pearl Tang, continues the legacy and participates every year.

Judge Tang's decisions during his more than eighteen years on the Ninth Circuit reflected his strong commitment to civil rights for all people. Judge Tang was known for his kindness and warmth, and the leadership role he played in the Asian Pacific American legal community. He provided tremendous support to NAPABA and its activities, including the creation of this national moot court competition.

The Competition is open to all students but is especially designed to reach out to APA law students and provide them with an opportunity to showcase their writing and oral advocacy skills and compete for scholarships totaling \$10,000.

The chairs for this year's competition are: Judge Alvin T. Wong, Leah Gould, and Linda Tran.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Registration Opens: April 17, 2017

Problem Date: May 1, 2017

Registration Deadline: August 25, 2017

Brief Deadline: September 17, 2017 9:00 pm EST

Regional Competitions: Late September - Mid October

National Finals: November 2-5

THE 23RD ANNUAL THOMAS TANG MOOT COURT COMPETITION

By Leah Gould

Alstyn Bennett and Barret Armbruster of Southern Methodist University emerged victorious as the 2016 Thomas Tang Moot Court National Champions. Arguing before an esteemed panel, the Champions beat out the deft team of Bethany Pandher and Richard Rafuls from Nova Southeastern in the final round. The Champions were each awarded a \$2,000 scholarship, and the Runners-up were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. Additionally, Arlene Galarza and Andrew Marsh of Chapman University were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for Best Brief, and An Nguyen of the University of Washington received a \$2,000 scholarship as Best Oralist.

The National Asian American Bar Association Law Foundation (NLF) is pleased to announce the 23rd Thomas Tang National Moot Court Competition was successfully concluded at the NAPABA Convention in San Diego from November 3-6, 2016. The final round argument was held at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California courthouse before Judge Denny Chin, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, Senior Judge Susan Oki Mollway, U.S. District Court for the District of Hawai'i, Judge Dana Sabraw, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, and Major General Tom Ayres, U.S. Army JAG Corps. NLF wishes to congratulate the champion team from Southern Methodist University Law School and thank all of the volunteers, attorneys, and judges who participated in the national as well as the five regional competitions and gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support of State Farm Insurance Company.

Written by Georgia State College of Law's Professor Natsu Saito, this year's problem focused on the legal issues associated with the freedom of religion provided by the First Amendment. Specifically, the problem posed two difficult questions: (1) whether the denial of state funding to a church preschool based on its religiously motivated failure to comply with a state law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation infringes upon the guarantees of freedom of religion provided by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution; and (2) if a state's refusal to fund a church preschool because it discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation is found to infringe upon rights guaranteed by the Free Exercise Clause, whether such state action can meet the requirements of strict scrutiny. More than 40 teams competed at regional competitions held in Atlanta, GA, Washington, DC, Kansas City, MO, and Los Angeles, CA, and Portland, OR.

THE 23RD ANNUAL THOMAS TANG MOOT COURT COMPETITION

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

The Thomas Tang National Moot Court Competition is named in honor of the late Judge Thomas Tang, a champion of individual rights and the advancement of minorities in the legal profession, who served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit from 1977 to 1995. Judge Tang served along with Judge Herbert Choy, the first Asian American appointed to the federal bench. Judge Choy served on the Ninth Circuit from 1971 to 1984, when he took senior status. The Asian Pacific American (APA) Law Student Association of South Texas College of Law founded the competition in 1993 and began as an effort to allow APA law students to explore litigation as a career path, with the hope of eventually preparing them to become future judges. Dr. Pearl Tang, Judge Tang's wife, and members of their family continue to be involved in the program to further Judge Tang's legacy.

Preparations are underway for the 2017 Thomas Tang National Moot Court Competition in Washington, DC. Registration will open on April 17, 2017, and the problem will be released on May 1, 2017. **If you would like to be involved, please email us at ThomasTangMootCourt@gmail.com.** See you next year!

About the Author

Leah Gould is a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division in New York, NY. She practices in the area of criminal antitrust prosecution. She received her B.A. in International Affairs from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, and her J.D. from the University of Colorado in Boulder, CO. After law school, Leah clerked on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. She was the 2012 Thomas Tang Moot Court National Champion.

2016 COMPETITION PARTICIPANT RECAPS

Grace Lee ~ SMU Dedman School of Law '18L

I came to law school with the mindset that I would try to experience as much as I could, especially activities that were outside of my comfort zone, such as a moot court competition team. I signed up to try out for only one team, thinking that I would be happy if I made the team, but if I did not, I could say that at least I tried. At that time, I did not have an immense passion for appellate advocacy and so I was afraid to increase my chances of making it onto a team by trying out for multiple teams. Little did I know that I would later view my time on a moot team as one of the most effective, valuable experiences of my law school career.

Out of all of the teams I could have tried out for, I am so glad that I tried out for the Thomas Tang team. Moot court practices were like nothing I have ever done before and I grew as a law student through the experience. An immediate change I noticed was that I became more comfortable during cold calls in my classes. Most of all, I was greatly inspired by our coaches. They came to our campus after work or invited us to their offices so they could help us practice at least twice a week. Each coach had a strong passion for helping law students. I am sure there were days they would have wanted to go home to their families after work, but instead, they tirelessly came to us and spent hours with us on weekdays and weekends, just so that we could gain confidence and have a great time at the competition. That is all they wanted – for us to have fun at the competition and learn something in the process.

Training for the Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition was challenging, but rewarding. I improved my written and oral advocacy skills, honed in on legal research and analysis skills, and met many great people, both students and attorneys.

2016 COMPETITION PARTICIPANT RECAPS

An Phan ~ SMU Dedman School of Law '18L

The Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition was my first foray into moot court, and it was a great learning experience. I was encouraged to join the Thomas Tang team at SMU by my roommate, who competed at the Thomas Tang national competition. She spoke highly of the competition and the preparation process, highlighting that it made her a better researcher, writer, and speaker. I decided to participate in the competition because I wanted to be challenged, quite literally, at the podium, fielding questions by attorneys and judges much more qualified than myself.

Indeed, it was a challenge, but a rewarding one. With SMU's strong reputation at the competition, my moot court practices were rigorous and frequent. The process taught me to question all of my assertions and be immediately prepared to answer with cogent responses.

The Tang Regional Competition in Atlanta was well-run, with prepared judges and a smooth schedule. I enjoyed competing, and the judges, attorneys who had themselves competed in Tang, were gracious and helpful in their critiques. The other esteemed competitors came prepared, which made the level of competition enjoyable.

Competing in the Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition made me a sharper law student by forcing me to constantly question the support for my assertions. Now, in class as a 2L, when a professor posits a question, I think about my response, consider the professor's counterargument, and then formulate my subsequent response in a sort of legal mind game. Call it crazy, but I imagine that's a skill that lawyers use often.

To anyone considering competing in Thomas Tang, I encourage you to challenge yourself to become a better researcher, writer, and speaker. I'm thankful for my experience, and I'm sure you will be, too.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NAPABA Events • Regional Events • Networking Opportunities

2017 NAPABA Lobby Day

May 22-23, 2017
Washington DC

(Registration Closes April 12)

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
Congressional Reception

Monday, May 22 | 6-8 p.m.

NAPABA Southwest Regional Conference

hosted by APIS

April 6-7, 2017
Austin, TX

NAPABA Western Regional Conference

hosted by APABA-Silicon Valley

July 20-22, 2017
Silicon Valley, CA

NAPABA Central Regional Conference

hosted by APABA-MO

August 24-25, 2017
Saint Louis, MO

NAPABA Northeast Regional Conference

hosted by APABA-PA

September 8-10, 2017
Philadelphia, PA

Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition

Regionals begin September

The Competition is open to all students but is especially designed to reach out to APA law students and provide them with an opportunity to showcase their writing and oral advocacy skills and compete for scholarships totaling \$10,000.

NAPALSA Mentorship Program

Applications due March 17, 2017

May NAPALSA Newsletter

Next newsletter will focus on the JAG Program and its contributions to NAPALSA.

REMINDERS

Dates • Deadlines

2017 NAPABA Convention:
November 2-5, 2017
Washington D.C.

Registration opens on June 15!

Application opens in June!

2017 NAPABA Convention
Scholarship Application

Become a NAPABA Member today!

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quarterly newsletter, etc.

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