

BY: Senator TEDISCO

COMMENDING Augustine Classical Academy upon the occasion of winning the New York State Bar Association Mock Trial Competition on May 21, 2024

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those young people who, by achieving outstanding success in educational competition, have inspired and brought pride to our majestic Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Augustine Classical Academy upon the occasion of winning the New York State Bar Association Mock Trial Competition on Tuesday, May 21, 2024; and

WHEREAS, The statewide program involves thousands of New York high school students competing at the local, county, and regional levels; the eight regional champions compete over two days in Albany each May; the top two teams face off in the final match held at the James T. Foley Federal Courthouse in Albany; and

WHEREAS, Augustine Classical Academy, a small Saratoga County Christian school, bested an impressive prosecution put on by Clarence High School from Erie County to win the New York State Bar Association Mock Trial Competition; and

WHEREAS, The fictional criminal case, "the People of the State of Nivana v. Lindsay Gordon," involved a business owner charged with 3rd degree Arson following the destruction of her business, Gordon Paint Supplies; the mock criminal investigation revealed that Gordon was in debt and facing bankruptcy while also maintaining a \$2 million insurance policy on the business; and

WHEREAS, The courtroom was filled to capacity with students, parents and advisers watching the final match as the defense team used a strategy focusing on tearing apart the arson investigation and attacking the credibility of its investigator; the defense also focused on a disgruntled former employee, as a potential suspect in the crime; Lindsay Gordon's attorney accused the investigator of confirmation bias and having tunnel vision in focusing on his client as a suspect; for nearly three hours, the teams examined and cross examined several witnesses including Lindsay Gordon who took the stand in her own defense; and

WHEREAS, The student attorneys from both teams handled examinations and objections with confidence and stamina before Justice Eddie J. McShan of the Appellate Division, Third Department; following closing arguments, Justice McShan found Lindsay Gordon not guilty of arson, handing the win to the Augustine Classical Academy team; and

WHEREAS, Justice McShan gave high praise to both student teams, giving due praise to the witnesses in the case for their commitment and dedication to their part; and

WHEREAS, In a show of team unity and celebration, the Augustine Classical team, still gathered in the courtroom, sang a sacred harp hymn, "Antioch," used as their fight song this year; Coach Thomas Trouwborst believes it speaks to the goals they set for the team each year; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such impressive academic achievement are brought to our attention, they should be revered and celebrated by all the citizens of this great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate the members of the Augustine Classical Academy Mock Trial Team: Hannah Trouwborst, Nora Catalano, Carter Van Amburgh, Isabelle West, Dominic Marra, Effie MacKenzie, Sophie Van Amburgh, Caleb Gascoyne, David Zhao, Ethan Gossman, Elliot Gorss, Ethan West, and Coach Thomas Trouwborst upon their momentous win; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the aforementioned members of the Augustine Classical Academy Mock Trial Team and Coach Thomas Trouwborst.