



## Attorney Spotlight: Render Freeman, Regional Coordinator, Gwinnett County Annual High School Mock Trial Competition

By: Matt Reeves, GCBA Vice President  
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Recently, Andersen, Tate & Carr, P.C. attorneys Render Freeman and Matt Reeves had an opportunity to discuss Mock Trial and the practice of law.

Q (Matt): What is your position in Gwinnett County's mock trial program?

A (Render): Regional Coordinator for the Gwinnett Region

Q: How did you first become involved in mock trial?

A: My partner, Don Swift - the prior regional coordinator, asked me to serve as a presiding judge on one of the trials back in 2006. The students' talent and passion were very impressive to me. I was immediately hooked.

Q: What are the biggest needs in Gwinnett County's mock trial program?

A: We need volunteers to serve as evaluators and presiding judges every year. Gwinnett is a very successful region with 11 to 13 teams competing. We need 3 evaluators and 1 judge for each of the 4 rounds and each evaluator and judge may only volunteer for a single round. With 13 teams competing, that means we need 130 volunteers. With a lot of hard work by Judge Debra Turner, we are able to recruit enough volunteers every year. I couldn't do it without her - and will never try. In addition to judges and evaluators, we need attorney coaches



to work with the teams to get them ready for the competition. Several of the lawyers in my firm have filled this role as well. They have found it to be fun and rewarding.

Q: Have you learned anything in mock trial work that has benefitted you in the practice of law?

A: For me, it's a great opportunity to get to know the Gwinnett bench and bar. Several attorney coaches have indicated to me that the coaching experience is a great opportunity to revisit the fundamentals of litigation such as rules of evidence and strategies of persuasion.

Q: Tell us about your trial practice.

A: After years of representing insurance and trucking companies, I have dedicated my career to helping injured individuals hold insurance companies responsible for the carelessness of their insureds. On occasion, I will represent defendants in injury cases, which has proven to be an important part of maintaining a proper perspective on this area of the law.

Q: What made you decide to move your practice from in-town Atlanta to Gwinnett County, and what have the differences been in practicing ITP and OTP?

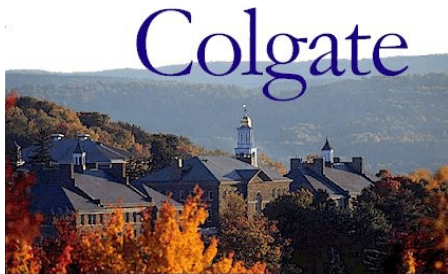
A: After eleven years of commuting to Atlanta, I pulled the plug and moved my practice to Andersen, Tate & Carr. Making this move added between 8 to 10 hours of disposable time to my week, and with traffic

these days, it's probably even more. Practicing with Andersen, Tate & Carr has been very rewarding. There's a real legal community here, and, in my opinion, Atlanta has simply gotten too big for there to be any sense of community among members of the bar. I've taken that 8 to 10 hours a week and applied it to community involvement such as the mock trial competition, the Rotary Club of Johns Creek and the Johns Creek Chamber of Commerce. These activities have been rewarding both personally and professionally.



Q: Tell us about your family, alma maters, civic activities, and something that we would probably not know from working with you on legal matters and mock trial?

A: I'm a born-and-raised Atlanta native and my family is from Georgia as far back as I can trace. I went away for college to Colgate University in upstate New York, which I loved.



My wife, Laura, and two boys, Griffin and Charlie, and I have lived in Johns Creek since 1996 (before it was even Johns Creek) and are active members of the Church of the Hills, Presbyterian Church.

While at Colgate, I sang in the all male a capella singing group - "The Colgate Thirteen," and for ten years sang with a similar group in Atlanta - "Sound Investment."



For more information on Matt Reeves, Render Freeman, and Andersen, Tate & Carr, P.C. visit the firm's website: [www.atclawfirm.com](http://www.atclawfirm.com).

*Many thanks to both of these gentlemen for their long-standing commitment to the Gwinnett County Bar Association.*

*—Ed.*