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Southwestern Law School's Moot Court Team Wins International Competition

Second-year students James Engel Perero and Katie Darnell take top prize at the Stetson International Environmental Law Competition

November 22, 2006, Los Angeles, CA – Southwestern's Moot Court program continues to shine, as Katie Darnell and James Engel Perero won the Stetson International Environmental Law Moot Court Competition held November 8-11 in Tampa, Florida. Participating teams competed in two phases: a regional (national) qualifying competition against law schools from the U.S. and Australia, and an international competition against top teams from around the world.

Southwestern's team finished as finalists in the regional round, which qualified them to advance to the international competition. In addition, Darnell earned the honor of Second Place Oralist in the regional portion of the event. In the international round, Darnell and Engel Perero competed against teams from John Marshall and Hastings, as well as international teams from Brazil, India, and Sydney, Australia. In the end, the Southwestern team prevailed in front of a bench of international environmental law scholars, practitioners, and human rights attorneys. Darnell also earned the Best Oralist title in the international round.

"We are proud to add this great achievement to a long line of Southwestern moot court titles," Dean Bryant Garth said.

The team spent several weeks preparing for the competition, working on a problem that concerned two fictitious nations: a big country, "DeLand" and its lack of greenhouse gas regulation killing the coral reefs of a small country, "Acropora." Acropora – Latin for coral – sued DeLand.

"We were the respondent. We were the 'bad guy'," said Darnell, a second-year student in

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the SCALE (Southwestern's Conceptual Approach to Legal Education) program. "I think we won because we went a step further. Industry self regulation is a valid policy and we substantiated our arguments."

Engel Perero pointed out the 14 practice rounds they worked at during a six week period with a variety of practitioners and advisors judging helped them prepare as well. "Our hope was to qualify for international," said Engel Perero, a second-year day program student. "So we exceeded our highest expectations."

While the Sydney team defeated Southwestern three times in the qualifying and preliminary rounds, Southwestern had higher oral scores in those rounds and was able to win across the board in the international round.

Southwestern alumni, which included two members of last year's Second Place team of the same competition – Nanette Reed '06 and Edward Wiley '06 – along with Melanie Partow '04, advised this year's winning team. "Of particular note is our team's success over the team from Sydney, Australia. It was well deserved," Partow said.

Southwestern Law School has one of the largest moot court programs in the country, with teams competing in more than a dozen competitions annually.

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Founded in 1911, Southwestern is a nonprofit, nonsectarian independent law school approved by the ABA and a member of the AALS. One of the most diverse law schools in the nation, Southwestern offers two, three and four-year full-time and part-time J.D. programs of study, as well as the only LL.M. program offered in entertainment and media law. The school's 10,000 alumni are members of the legal profession in virtually every state and more than a dozen foreign countries and include members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, former mayors of Los Angeles, and other prominent leaders in law, business and politics. Southwestern has created an award-winning campus that includes the internationally acclaimed art deco Bullocks Wilshire landmark that houses the second largest academic law library facility in California and the Julian C. Dixon Courtroom and Advocacy Center, the most technologically advanced facility of its kind.