



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins Presides as Judge in Manorhaven School Mock Trial

JACK M. MARTINS May 23, 2011

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A classroom in the Manorhaven School in Port Washington served as a court room on Friday, May 20 as the fifth grade Manorhaven Mock Trial Team conducted a civil trial complete with witnesses, exhibits and complete New York State Civil Procedure.

The case involved a woman, Jo Moncrieff, who was denied a position as a news field producer for a television station. The Plaintiff Team argued that the woman was the best

qualified candidate but was denied the position because she is in a wheel-chair and was thus discriminated against. The Defense Team argued that the woman was not the best qualified candidate since the position of in-field news producer required the candidate to be able to get around quickly.

The Plaintiff Team presented their argument with well-thought out questions to witnesses as they attempted to establish that Ms. Moncrief was indeed discriminated against because of her need for a wheelchair. In making their case, they cited the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Defense Team also asked tough questions of witnesses to bring out their argument that Ms. Moncrief was not the best candidate for the job because of her inability to get around locations quickly, something that was needed in a position where reporting the news first is paramount.

Senator Jack M. Martins was honored to preside as the judge during the trial, carefully taking notes and making sure the students followed the correct guidelines for civil procedure in a New York State courtroom.

The students were extremely impressive as they knew the details of the case and the strategies they needed to prove their arguments. After each side presented three witnesses each and made their closing statements, Senator Martins left the “courtroom” to deliberate.

He returned with suggestions for each of the members of the Defense Team and Plaintiff Team. Senator Martins ruled in favor of the Defense Team as a matter of law but said the Plaintiff Team gave a better presentation.

“All of the students who participated were winners. To be able to articulate themselves at such a young age is a tribute to the Manorhaven School, its staff, the parents and, of course,

the students,” said Senator Martins.

The Mock Trial is part of the Port Enrichment Program (PEP) and was organized by PEP teacher Kimberley Singh. Senator Martins encouraged the students and school to continue to hold mock trials. “This is a unique opportunity for students. The ability to present a side of an argument and consider the opposing viewpoint in a public setting will serve the students well as they go through their education,” he said. “I was proud to be a part of it. I am looking forward to participating again.”

The students who participated in the trial included:

**Manorhaven Plaintiff Team**

Savanna

Ana

Julia

**Witnesses**

Ali

Kyle

Laila

**Manorhaven Defense Team**

Evan

Brianna

Benji

**Witnesses**

Matthew

Eric

Sophie