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South Texas College of Law Houston Wins Unprecedented 127th National Advocacy Championship

No other law school in the country can claim half as many wins

HOUSTON (Oct. 5, 2017) – South Texas College of Law Houston again defended its title as the best advocacy law school in the United States with its unprecedented 127th national advocacy championship win at the 10th annual National Latina/o Law Student Association (NLLSA) Moot Court Competition in Atlanta over the weekend.

No other law school in the country can claim half as many wins.

STCL Houston swept every major award at the competition.

STCL Houston students Cesar Escalante and Jonathan Peña remained undefeated in all rounds, surpassing the University of North Carolina School of Law at Chapel Hill for the championship win. South Texas was named the Best Team, and the school also earned the Best Brief award. Additionally, Escalante received the Best Individual Advocate award.

Moot court competitions simulate appellate court proceedings with students working in teams to answer questions directly from a panel of judges.

Vice President and Associate Dean T. Gerald Treece worked closely with Rob Galloway '91, assistant director of Advocacy, in coaching the team, along with STCL Houston alumni Ryan Cantu '13 and Alex Gonzalez '12, both of whom were top advocates while students at the law school.

"Taking the top prize at the NLLSA Moot Court Competition last weekend was a highlight of my law school experience," said Escalante. "Our coaches Alex and Ryan were the biggest help, offering words of encouragement when we were stressed or overwhelmed. And Rob Galloway, South Texas' assistant director of Advocacy, also was a major help to us, both in his coaching and his knowledge of the law. I had the best partner in Jonathan. It was an all-around, successful team effort."

The NLLSA is a national organization focusing on advancing academic success and commitment to community service by Hispanic law students. The competition is held annually as part of the organization's fall national convention.

"Having the opportunity to argue before Judges Yvette Miller, Stephen Dillard, and Christopher McFadden at the Georgia Court of Appeals is one that I will never forget," said Peña. "But at the end of the day, this tournament was not about Cesar or myself – it was about advocating for our clients. By utilizing the strongest case law, and bringing passion and confidence to the courtroom every day, that is exactly what we did."

Treece, who has directed South Texas College of Law Houston's Advocacy Program for approximately 40 years, also recognized the strength of the law school's Legal Research and Writing Program as helping the students with a strong foundation in legal writing skills, which results in winning competition briefs.

"From the brief-writing stage until the clock concluded the final round, Cesar and Jonathan exhibited a level of professionalism and dedication that would be expected of licensed attorneys already in practice," said Cantu. "It was an honor to witness their trajectory from day one of practice to the big win, and I know they will bring great contributions to the legal profession."

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Photo Cutline 1:

South Texas College of Law Houston alumnus and advocacy coach Ryan Cantu '13 celebrates the law school's unprecedented 127th national advocacy championship with student winners, Cesar Escalante and Jonathan Peña at the 10th annual National Latina/o Law Student Association (NLLSA) Moot Court Competition in Atlanta last weekend. No other law school in the country can claim half as many national advocacy championships.



Photo Cutline 2:

South Texas College of Law Houston students Jonathan Peña, left, and Cesar Escalante celebrate their recent win – the school’s unprecedented 127th national advocacy championship – with their panel of judges at the 10th annual National Latina/o Law Student Association (NLLSA) Moot Court Competition in Atlanta.

About South Texas College of Law Houston:

Founded in 1923, South Texas College of Law Houston provides a diverse body of students with the opportunity to obtain an exceptional legal education, preparing graduates to serve their community and the profession with distinction and to be a positive force for change. The law school develops some of the country’s best litigators, advocates, negotiators, and transactional lawyers, but also empowers every student with something equally valuable: The unshakable notion that a legal education is a tool for making the world a better place. For more information, please visit www.stcl.edu.