

## Mock Trials Show Justice at Work

Rivers students had a unique opportunity to participate as mock jurors during a training session organized by Dan Rabinovitz '82 for the Boston Trial Program for the National Institute of Advocacy ("NITA"). Although it was the first day of winter break, 30 students jumped at the chance to head to the Moakley Courthouse in Boston to experience firsthand what is one of the cornerstones of American democracy, the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers. We spoke with Rabinovitz about this program as well as his career in law.

**Q: Why did you reach out to Rivers students to participate in the program?**

**A.** I think it's important for young people to see and participate in the trial process for two reasons. First and foremost, the American system of justice, which for most legal disputes guarantees citizens the right to have their case decided by a group of other members of the community, is absolutely the best system of justice in the world. It may not be a perfect system, but it is the best one. And everyone should know that from a young age, because it's something to be proud of—that we live in a society that allows for that. Secondly, many people are reluctant to sit on real juries. It's time

consuming. Perhaps the subject matter is not interesting to them, or in some cases people simply don't recognize the importance of it. My hope is that providing a forum for young people to enter one of the most beautiful courthouses in the country, to be sworn in, to hear evidence and argument, and then deliberate and render a verdict, makes it more likely that when they are summoned for real jury duty, they will be excited and not reluctant. I was floored that so many Rivers students showed interest!

**Q. Why do you spend your time training trial lawyers in the practice of their "craft?"**

**A.** When I was a young prosecutor with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office in Chicago, Illinois, I enrolled in NITA's two-week "boot camp" program, where I was introduced to an unbelievable fraternity/sorority of trial lawyers—people who just love being in a courtroom and trying a case to a judge or a jury. From day one, I was hooked. Literally, for generations NITA has fostered a huge pool of talented trial lawyers who volunteer their time to help young lawyers improve their skills in the courtroom and in the deposition room. As a young lawyer, I benefited greatly from those mentors and it

made me want to give back by doing the same thing. It's incredibly gratifying.

**Q. You have experience as both a prosecutor and defense attorney. Tell us about your recent opportunity at Murphy & King to shape a new area of practice for the firm?**

**A.** Having the chance to start my career as a Cook County Assistant State's Attorney, in Chicago, was an opportunity of a lifetime. The investigatory and trial skills I learned there were invaluable. However, I left that prosecutor role for private practice nearly 20 years ago. Murphy & King is a highly regarded firm, with a long track record of helping clients with litigation needs, insolvency issues, corporate work and complex real estate transactions. But in my mind, one of the things they are best known for is their ability to take cases to trial and win. For a number of years they have been exploring the possibility of expanding into the area of White Collar Defense and Internal Investigations. The opportunity to be the person who spearheaded that practice for such an outstanding firm was downright exhilarating. Opportunities like that do not come along often, and when they do, you must seize them.

