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### **LAW SCHOOL INTERNS LEAH GEORGE FROM VILLANOVA AND JILLIAN KENNEDY FROM DREXEL WIN DA'S MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Aug. 21, 2020) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele announced the winners of the DA's Office 20th Annual Summer Intern Mock Trial Competition for second-year law students. The winners were Leah George (hometown: Greensburg, Pa.) from Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law and Jillian Kennedy (Annandale, N.J.) from Drexel University Thomas L. Kline School of Law.

Taking second place in the finals were Emily Hoff (La Quinta, Calif.) from Temple University Beasley School of Law and Cecelia Carreras (Mission, Texas) from Villanova. Competing in earlier rounds were: Madeline Bagley (Ambler, Pa.), Kendal Kessler (Abington, Pa.) and Shelby McBride (Indiana, Pa.), all of Temple law school; and Ryan Kelly (Franklinville, N.J.) of Villanova law school.

In this unusual year with social distancing and restrictions on entry into the Montgomery County Courthouse, the Mock Trial competition was held virtually, with the intern prosecutors, judge, jury, defendant, defense attorney and witnesses all connected in a virtual courtroom through the Microsoft Teams app. The eight second-year law students (2Ls) acted as prosecutors of a fictitious murder case that involved legal hurdles and factual challenges to create difficulty, going up against a current prosecutor acting as a defense attorney. Throughout the competition, all of the roles were played by current prosecutors and DA staff. In the final rounds on Aug. 14, 2020, the jury was made up of District Attorney Steele, Deputy District Attorneys and Assistant District Attorneys. First Assistant District Attorney Edward F. McCann, Jr. sat as the judge for the final competition.

The competitors were certified legal summer interns, who were approved and certified under Pa. B.A.R. 321 and 322 by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Normally, the 2Ls are part of a large summer intern class of between 30 and 40 undergraduate and law students, all working out of the District Attorney's Office. However, this year due to COVID-19 the President Judge and Court Administration modified and severely restricted access to the Montgomery County Courthouse, not

allowing any interns from the DA's Office, the Public Defender's Office and other offices to work out of the Courthouse. Thus, the larger internship program was cancelled, and the 2Ls were provided with a robust online learning experience, observing court proceedings through Zoom and Scopia; preparing, researching and writing briefs for current court cases; learning about all aspects of investigations and prosecutions from detectives and prosecutors during weekly training sessions; and other educational activities.

"These eight second-year law students were some of the best we have seen. Not only were they solid in their skills and had a great work ethic, but they also rose to the challenge and adapted to the virtual environment in which we all now must operate," said DA Steele. "Every one of the students were prepared, poised and professional in their prosecution of this Mock Trial case, and it was a close decision as to the winners, but Leah George and Jillian Kennedy were just excellent in the homicide prosecution they conducted."

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele