The Jim M. Perdue, Sr. Trial Advocacy Award
Description and Application

**Description:** The Perdue Award seeks to recognize a University of Houston Law Center student who demonstrates a commitment to the Law Center’s Advocacy Program and shows a highly developed skill-set in the Art of Advocacy. The recipient of the Perdue Award will be recognized during the Blakely Advocacy Institute’s annual year-end Advocacy Awards Banquet. The recipient will receive a one-time cash scholarship in the amount of $5,000.

**Statement of Purpose by Jim Perdue:**

“I want to be a trial lawyer”. I don’t know when I first spoke those words but whenever it was it was a teacher that inspired me to persevere through what is now almost 55 years at the bar. Maybe it was my 5th grade social studies teacher who in 1950 asked me to debate a political topic, or maybe it was my high school debate teacher who introduced me to the principles of competitive articulation. In 1957 the honorable William Kilgarlin, at that time the debate coach at the University of Houston, found some funds to sponsor a debate scholarship for me. Without that leg up I doubt I could have ever attended college. Teachers and professors have, from the beginning of time, shaped individuals into significant voices in science, professions and government.

Today we need strong and robust voices in our trial bar. It is the responsibility of my generation to prepare and inspire those voices. These are compelling reasons supporting this award for excellence in trial advocacy.

Today some claim we have too many lawyers and to that canard I answer “We will never have enough great trial lawyers.” We can never have too many champions of justice to stand and speak for the vulnerable citizens of our country who find their lives irreparably damaged by powerful interests. We can never be short of those who are willing to defend our jury system against attack by those shrill voices that claim juries are too burdensome a responsibility for ordinary citizens and we would be better served with judges making these decisions. They argue some entity other than citizen juries would do a better job of resolving issues of right and wrong between neighbors, restraining government overreach or protecting the 99% of us who are without wealth, out of power and out of luck. Still, we know those are exactly the people who will fall into the pits of despair without someone to protect them from injustice.

The purpose of this award is to identify those inchoate but courageous voices, encourage and train them to be our next vox populi for those who do not know yet how essential it is to maintain a strong trial bar. Those of us who have spent our lives working in the rule of law vineyards know that there will always be people who one day will be saying, “I am in trouble and the only thing that can save me is the best lawyer I can find.”
Criteria:

Potential Candidates shall:

1. Complete, or be enrolled in, the basic Trial Advocacy course at the Law Center. Performance in other advocacy courses will be a consideration in the selection process but will not be a determinative factor.

2. Be an active member of the Law Center’s Interscholastic Mock Trial team, Moot Court team, or Alternative Dispute Resolution team.

3. Submit a video of a closing argument from the Plaintiff’s perspective (time limit: 10 minutes). Details for the submission will be provided by the Blakely Advocacy Institute office.

4. Submit three written documents:
   a. A narrative detailing the Candidate’s financial need (1 page).
   b. A narrative outlining the Candidate’s extracurricular activities.
   c. A narrative that explains “why I want to be a trial lawyer”.

Timeline for Submissions

February 5th: Submission period opens. The materials for the Closing Argument are available in the Blakely Advocacy Institute.

March 9th: Deadline for submitting all Award materials.

April 13th: Announcement of the Perdue Award winner at the Advocacy Awards Banquet.

Please direct any questions you have about the Perdue Award to:

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