The Centre for Child Law held its sixth annual Child Law Moot Court competition on 18 and 19 September.

The final round was held at the Gauteng Division, Pretoria. The preliminary and semi-final rounds took place at University of Pretoria.

The judges were Judge Jody Kollapen, Chris McConnachie an advocate in Johannesburg and Melanie Murcott an attorney and lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria.

The hypothetical facts dealt with the question of whether children can be charged with the manufacturing and distribution of child pornography if they take and send ‘naked selfies’ of themselves.

The winning team came from University of Johannesburg (UJ). University of the Witwatersrand took home the prize of Best Heads of Argument.

Other universities that entered were Rhodes University, the University of the Western Cape, North West University (Potchefstroom Campus), the University of Pretoria, the University of Venda and the University of the Witwatersrand.

‘The idea behind the competition is to expose students to the idea behind child law and to learn about the complexity behind child law. We are concerned sometimes that people think child law is some kind of junior area of the law, an area of the law that you could cope with if you were less skilled. We do not believe that to be true. We believe it requires a very high level of skill,’ said University of Pretoria Centre for Child Law director, Professor Ann Skelton.

The winning team comprised fourth year LLB student, Stanley Malematja, and second year LLB student, Jessica Odendaal from UJ.

Mr Malematja said: ‘It was a thrilling experience to participate in the sixth annual Child Law Moot Court competition.

It took a lot of preparation, which would not have been possible without my partner Jessica Odendaal and my remarkable coaches and finally the legal knowledge I acquired from the lecturers of the law faculty of my university. It takes hard-work and dedication to be the best or achieve a goal, I worked hard and committed myself to the competition and the results are evident.’

Ms Odendaal said: ‘Winning the child law moot court competition 2015 was both, a rewarding and motivating experience.

During our time spent preparing for the competition, there were many tears shed, long hours and late nights working towards winning the competition. Our coaches pushed us beyond our limits and in doing so, taught us that we are only confined by the limits that we set for ourselves.

‘I have definitely gained so much from this experience and I would like to say thank you again to my coaches and especially team partner Stanley Malematja. Winning this competition would not have been possible without their support, hard work and dedication.

Finally, I would like to thank my university for giving me this incredible opportunity. It has been an honour to have been selected and to represent the University of Johannesburg throughout the competition.’

The keynote address

The Tax Ombud, Judge Bernard Ngoepe, gave the keynote address and provided more insights into the mandate of the Tax Ombud which is set out in s 16 of the TAA, being: ‘... to review and address any complaint by a taxpayer regarding a service matter or a procedural or administrative matter arising from the application of the provisions of a Tax Act by South African Revenue Service [Sars].’

Judge Ngoepe also informed delegates that the Tax Ombud is in the process of ‘motivating for the amendment of the Tax Administration Act on issues that negatively affect the independence of the Office of the Tax Ombud.’ He further stated that: ‘We believe that this office must enjoy full legal status in order to operate and act independently without relying on Sars for financial and human resource.’