



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

Date of Release: 2/02/10
Point of Contact: James K. Booras
Robert A. Zastany
Telephone: 847.377.4500
847.377.3600

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

SCOUTS SPEND DAY LEARNING ABOUT LAW

A chilly morning did not dissuade an excited group of Scout attendees from arriving at the courthouse last Saturday to spend the next several daylight hours listening and learning about the rule of law. Their participation in the Law Merit Badge Day program is made possible through the collaborative effort of Chief Judge James Booras, Sheriff Mark Curran, Coroner Dr. Richard Keller, and the College of Lake County in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America, Northeast Illinois Council. This year 79 Scouts attended the annual one day event who represented Potawatomi, North Star, Aptakisic, North Woods and Fort Dearborn districts.

Robert Zastany, Executive Director of the Administrative Office of the 19th Judicial Circuit, welcomed the young men and gave an overview of the Law Merit Badge Day program. Zastany is a recipient of the prestigious Silver Beaver Scout Award.

Because of the large number of participants, the 79 Scouts were divided into three groups which made it easier to escort them to tour the Lake County jail with Rick Riddle of the Sheriff's Department, visit the Coroner's facility with Deputy Coroner Steve Carroll, and tour the courthouse with adult probation officer, Rob Zastany, and Joe Svoboda and Bob Kocanda, court information specialists. After the tours and a short morning break, Joe Svoboda addressed the entire group about the requirements that need to be completed to earn the Law Merit Badge. Judge George Bridges finished the morning session briefing them on the origin of law; the development of the jury system; the differences between civil and criminal laws; the Justinian Code and Magna Carta; and making reference to famous trials in history.

After a short lunch break, the Scouts returned to the courtroom to hear Judge David Brodsky address issues concerning indigent legal assistance, self-help resources, copyrights and internet piracy. By mid-afternoon, some of the young men found themselves participating in a mock trial serving as an eyewitness and members of a jury. Judge Brian Hughes presided over the case that involved the snatching of a briefcase that contained \$5,000 in cash from a person who was at the courthouse to pay taxes on his property. After

short deliberation, the jury found the defendant “guilty.” The trial performers, who, for the most part are county employees, then talked about their positions and the various career opportunities in law enforcement. Judge Hughes provided information about education and how one acquires a law degree, the requirements to become a judge, and how judges are selected.

At the end of the program, each Scout was presented with a Law Merit Badge and issued a certificate of completion. Over 525 Scouts have registered and completed the program successfully in Lake County since the event began in 1998.

Anyone interested in future participation or who would like more information about the Law Merit Badge program may send an email to Courts@lakecountyil.gov.

###

<http://19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us>