



News Release

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

SCOUTS EARN LAW MERIT BADGE

Scouts arrived at the courthouse early Saturday morning in anticipation of learning about the rule of law and how laws protect our fundamental rights. The Law Merit Badge Day program is made possible through the collaborative effort of Chief Judge Victoria Rossetti, Sheriff Mark Curran, Coroner Dr. Richard Keller, and the College of Lake County in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America, Northeast Illinois Council.

The popular one day event attracted ninety Scouts for the Fourteenth Annual Program and ranked as the second largest group of attendees since the event has been offered. Districts represented included Aptakisic, Potawatomi, and North Star from Lake County; Signal Hill (Palatine); Des Plaines Valley (Clarendon Hills/Downers Grove); Indian Trail (Chicago area); Nishnabec (Tinley Park); Rainbow Council (Morris); and Southeastern (Kenosha).

The day began with a welcome and overview of the program by Joe Svoboda, a Scout leader and a court information specialist for the Administrative Office of the 19th Judicial Circuit. He also addressed the group about the requirements that had to be met to earn the Law Merit Badge.

Shortly thereafter the three separate groups were escorted for tours of the Lake County jail with Rick Riddle of the Sheriff's Department, the Coroner's facility with Deputy Coroner Orlando Portillo, and the courthouse with adult probation officer, Rob Zastany, Bob Kocanda, a court information specialist, and Joe Svoboda. The morning session concluded with a presentation by Judge George Bridges on the origin of law; the differences between civil and criminal laws; the development of the jury system; the Justinian Code and Magna Carta; and famous trials in history. Judge Bridges has been a member of the Lake County judiciary for over 15 years and is currently assigned to the Felony Division.

After a short lunch break, the Scouts reported to a courtroom to listen to Judge David Brodsky who spoke about issues concerning legal assistance for indigents, self-help resources, copyrights and internet piracy. He also provided information about education and how one acquires a law degree, the requirements to become a judge, and how judges are selected. Judge Brodsky was appointed associate judge in 2007 and hears family matters including divorce prove-ups, contested divorce hearings and child custody and visitation cases.

Another highlight of the afternoon found the Scouts acting out roles in a mock trial as eyewitnesses and members of a jury. Judge Brian Hughes presided over the trial that involved the snatching of a purse that contained over \$5,500 in cash from a person who had gone to the courthouse to pay property taxes. After short deliberation, the jury found the defendant "guilty." The other role players in the trial were county employees who talked about their law-related positions with the county and the many career opportunities in law enforcement. Appointed associate judge in 2000, Judge Hughes is assigned to the Misdemeanor/Traffic Division at the main courthouse in Waukegan.

At day's end, each Scout was presented with a Law Merit Badge and issued a certificate of completion. Over 650 Scouts have registered and completed the program successfully in Lake County since the event began in 1997.

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.

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