



## 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

### LAW MERIT BADGE DAY

The courthouse was abuzz this past Saturday with 70 Boy Scouts who were given the opportunity to learn about the Lake County criminal justice system and at the same time earn their Law Merit Badge. The event is presented with the cooperation of Chief Judge Dave Hall and, with the support of Sheriff Mark Curran, Coroner Dr. Richard Keller, and the College of Lake County, is held in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America, Northeast Illinois Council.

The Scout Districts represented on Saturday included Ottawa from Michigan; Nishnabec from Munster, IN; Southern Trails from Brookfield, WI; Gateway from Kenosha, WI; Potawatomi from Waukesha, WI; and Heartland from Peoria; Northern Trails from Addison; North Star and Aptakisic of Northeast Council; and Signal Hill of Northwest Council.

The activities for the day long event began at 8:30 a.m. with a welcome and an orientation of the Law Merit Badge program presented by Robert Zastany. Zastany, whose full-time position during the day is the Executive Director of the Administrative Office of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, is also a merit badge counselor.

After orientation, the 70 Scouts were divided into two groups so that eventually each group would have a tour of the morgue led by Coroner Dr. Richard Keller and a tour of the jail with Rick Riddle of the Sheriff's Department. After their tours, the groups were reunited to listen to Joseph Svoboda, a merit badge counselor, who gave an overview of the requirements that had to be met in order to earn the Law Merit Badge. Later in the day, Svoboda, who is the 19<sup>th</sup> Circuit's webmaster, would discuss the circuit's website, the internet, and available self-help resources. The last session for the morning was led by Circuit Judge George Bridges who introduced the young men to the differences between civil and criminal laws; the origin of law; the development of the jury system; the Justinian Code and Magna Carta; and famous trials in history.

After the lunch break, Associate Judge Brian Hughes presided over a mock trial involving the snatching of an envelope that contained \$3,000 in cash from a person

who was at the courthouse to pay her taxes. The Scouts served as members of the jury which resulted in a "not guilty" verdict. Trial participants included Mary Kay Foy, assistant state's attorney, as the victim; Fred Day, assistant state's attorney, as the defendant; John Radosevich, assistant public defender, as the prosecuting attorney; Marc Bangser, assistant state's attorney, as the defense attorney; Brett Ligenza, Sheriff's deputy, as arresting officer; and Vernita Allen-Williams as court reporter.

After the mock trial, Judge Hughes talked about education and how one acquires a law degree; the requirements to become a judge; and how judges are selected.

At the conclusion of the program, the Scouts were awarded their Law Merit Badges and issued certificates of completion. Since the event began in 1998, over 400 Scouts have registered and successfully completed the program.

Anyone interested in future participation in the Law Merit Badge program should contact Robert Zastany at 847.377.3600.

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