



News Release

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

LAW DAY ACTIVITIES AT THE COURTHOUSE

Over 250 teenagers and teachers from local area high schools accepted the court's invitation to spend the morning at the Waukegan courthouse today in celebration of Law Day. The event which is sponsored by the Judges of the Circuit Court of Lake County will give these students the opportunity to experience actual court in session and attend several other planned programs.

Law Day is observed annually on May 1st in the United States for Americans to appreciate and reflect on "our great heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under law." 2008 is the 50th anniversary of the first Law Day U.S.A. observed in the United States which took place on May 1, 1958.

Several judges were on hand to greet the students as they arrived. Shortly thereafter, assistant state's attorneys and assistant public defenders escorted the students to the various presentations throughout the court complex.

The programs included:

- A mock trial (with student participation) involving a case (inspired from real events as reported in recent headline news) of a group of teens who find themselves caught up in the frenzy of high school bullying and the internet. Judge Brian Hughes acts as facilitator and Judge Michael Fusz will preside over the trial. Assistant Public Defender Cynthia Haran plays the role of prosecutor while Assistant State's Attorney Stella Veytsel acts the part of the defense attorney. The defendants and the jury will be portrayed by the students;
- Staff from County Clerk Williard Helander's office did a presentation on eligibility to vote. Voting booths were set up for the students to vote a sample ballot and then processed through an optical scanner to tabulate the results. The students also had the opportunity to register to vote;

- A reenactment of a sentencing hearing conducted by Judge John T. Phillips involving a defendant who was found guilty of multiple counts of reckless homicide causing the deaths of a mother and three sixteen year old high school students;
- Dean Kharasch and Lou Archbold from State's Attorney Michael Waller's office addressed the topics of cyber crimes and identity theft; and
- A tour of the Lake County jail was led by jail administration.

The schools participating in this year's event were Grant, Lake Forest, North Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion Benton.

At 12:30 p.m. attention centered in the jury assembly room where the awards for the finalists of the Law Day competitions were announced.

Acting Chief Judge Christopher Starck and Judge Margaret Mullen, Chair of the Court's Public Relations Committee, along with other members of the Lake County judiciary, welcomed and thanked the students, families, and teachers for their participation in the various Law Day competitions.

Judge Joseph Waldeck chose the kindergarten through third grade finalists of the coloring contest. The kindergarten and first graders colored a picture of the "Statue of Liberty" while the second and third graders colored a picture of "People Around the Globe." Judge Waldeck selected the winners of the poster contest. Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders created posters illustrating the law day theme "The Rule of Law – What It Means to Me." Judge Waldeck, who has been on the bench since 1995, is assigned to Domestic Violence Court.

Judge Ray Collins chose the winning entries in the photo contest. The photos were judged on creativity, technical competence, and expression of the theme, "The Rule of Law – What It Means to Me." Judge Collins hears Small Claims cases and was appointed to the bench in 2004.

Judge Valerie Boettle Ceckowski selected the finalists for the eighth grade essay competition, and Judge Jorge Ortiz selected the finalists for seventh grade. The essays were limited to 500 words and judged on content, clarity of expression and originality. Judge Ceckowski sits in Arbitration and Probate Court and has been on the bench since 1997. Judge Ortiz, a judge since 2002, sits in the Family Division and hears divorces and child custody matters.

(A list of the finalists' names is attached)

Light refreshments were served.

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