



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toxic tort case subject of high school ‘Moot Court’ through Supreme Court Learning Center summer program; Students to decide if plaintiff proved toxins caused illness

LANSING, MI, March 17, 2017 – This summer, high school students can experience what it’s like to argue a case before the Michigan Supreme Court, thanks to a program being offered by the Court’s Learning Center.

Rachael Drenovsky, the Learning Center’s coordinator, explained the program features participation in a “moot court,” in which participants prepare and argue a case. “The goal is to have participants learn about the legal system, and sharpen the skills a good lawyer needs: reasoning, writing, and oral presentation,” said Drenovsky.

Justice Richard Bernstein, the Court’s liaison to the Learning Center, offered advice to a participating student who asked the justice to identify classroom subjects that should be the focus of his study. “Writing, writing, writing and rewriting so readers clearly grasp your message is critical. Add to that the ability to express yourself verbally, coupled with an emphasis on well-rounded curriculum and you will be prepared for a legal career,” said Bernstein. “Those skills are requisite in any profession; participating in the summer program will benefit students regardless of the direction they take after high school,” he added.

The moot court focuses on a toxic tort case. The plaintiff sued an energy company, claiming he became ill after exposure to toxic fumes from an oil spill in the Kalamazoo River. Did he sufficiently prove the toxins caused his illness? Was he required to present expert witness testimony to establish the cause?

Students will meet and work with attorneys and other legal professionals; presenters will include members of the judiciary. The program will be held at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing.

“Exploring Careers in the Law,” is open to students entering grades 10 through 12 in fall 2017 and 2017 graduates. Participants meet July 17–21 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each day. The application deadline is May 26, 2017.

The registration fee is a \$75 donation to the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society Learning Center Fund. Registration is limited to 22 participants, selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Rachael Drenovsky at 517-373-5027 or drenovskyr@courts.mi.gov.

[Applications and additional information available here.](#)