



Summer 2011

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Educator Newsletter

CALENDAR

Sept 5	State Holiday
Sept 7	Oral Arguments*
Sept 20	Constitution Day at the Learning Center
Sept 28	Public Hearing
Oct 4–6	Oral Arguments*
Nov 1	Sweet Justice Program
Nov 8–10	Oral Arguments*
Nov 11	State Holiday
Nov 24–25	State Holidays
Nov 30	Public Hearing
Dec 6–8	Oral Arguments*
Dec 23, 26	State Holidays
Dec 30	State Holiday
Jan 1	State Holiday

*Proceedings of the Michigan Supreme Court are broadcast on Michigan Government Television (MGTV). The State Bar of Michigan also archives proceedings online at www.michbar.org/courts/virtualcourt.cfm.

Upcoming Programs

Constitution Day

Celebrate the signing of the U.S. Constitution with us on **September 20**. Activities will include themed tours, free curriculum materials, and special guest speakers. *All grades.* (See page 2 for more Constitution Day resources.)



Sweet Justice: Clarence Darrow in Detroit, 1925–26

As a part of the Great Michigan Read, the Learning Center will present an historical mock trial on **November 1 at 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.** Limited transportation funds are available upon request. Reservations are required and seating is limited. *High school.*

Using trial transcripts, the program will reveal the story of Dr. Ossian and Mrs. Gladys Sweet, an African American couple who moved into an all-white Detroit neighborhood in 1925. Expecting violence, they and their friends armed themselves to defend the home, and a member of an angry mob that formed on their lawn was shot and killed. Was it murder or self-defense? Listen to the prosecution and Clarence Darrow's defense to decide.

School Tours, 2011–12

Openings are still available for tours of the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center during the new school year. The experience aligns most closely with the following themes:

- Michigan Studies
- Government and Civics
- Core Democratic Values
- Constitution Day

Great Michigan Read

For more information about the Great Michigan Read, visit <http://michiganhumanities.org/> and click on Programs. Resources include free teacher's guides and discussion kits for the featured book, *Arc of Justice* by Kevin Boyle.



The Great Michigan Read is presented by the Michigan Humanities Council with support from Meijer and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



**Call 517-373-7171 to make reservations
for tours and programs today!**



You received this newsletter because you are subscribed to *Justitia*, the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center newsletter for educators. If you no longer wish to receive these newsletters, please email LearningCenter-eNews@courts.mi.gov to unsubscribe.

Purpose of a Constitution

A constitution is the basic law of a nation or state.

- It organizes the government and gives the government authority.
- Like the Michigan and U.S. constitutions, it may guarantee rights for the people.
- No law may go against a constitution. Laws may not be “unconstitutional.”



Fast Facts for Constitution Day

U.S. Constitution	Michigan Constitution of 1963
Signed September 17, 1787. World's oldest written constitution still in effect.	Written in 1961–62; adopted in 1963. Superseded the constitution of 1908. Previous constitutions were adopted in 1850 and 1835.
Defines the roles of the three branches of federal government.	Defines the roles of the three branches of state government.
Amended to add the Bill of Rights in 1791.	The Declaration of Rights is contained in Article 1, beginning with “All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal benefit, security, and protection.” Const 1963, art 1, § 1.



Best of the Web CONSTITUTION DAY



Using Primary Sources

Constitution Day is the perfect time to introduce students of all levels to primary sources! The following websites offer resources and ideas for teaching with our nation's and state's founding documents.

Seeking Michigan: Early Documents – Archives of Michigan

<http://seekingmichigan.org/discover-collection?collection=p15147coll1>

Constitution Day Primary Source Tool Kit – Library of Congress

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/constitution/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf

Charters of Freedom – National Archives

<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html>

Docs Teach: Revolution and the New Nation – National Archives

[http://docsteach.org/activities/search?mode=browse&menu=open&era\[\]=revolution-and-the-new-nation&sortBy=title](http://docsteach.org/activities/search?mode=browse&menu=open&era[]=revolution-and-the-new-nation&sortBy=title)

Teaching with Documents: Observing Constitution Day – National Archives

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/>

Written Document Analysis Worksheet – National Archives

http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf