



Winter II, 2012

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Educator Newsletter

### COURT CALENDAR

- Mar 6–8 MSC Oral Arguments\*
- Mar 28 MSC Public Hearing\*
- Apr 3–5 MSC Oral Arguments\*
- May 1 Law Day
- May 8–10 MSC Oral Arguments\*
- May 28 State Holiday
- May 30 MSC Public Hearing\*
- Jun 25–29 Exploring Careers in the Law, 10th–12th grades
- Aug 1–2 Moot Court in Your Classroom Teacher Workshop

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

### Summer Programs at the Learning Center

Each summer, the Learning Center offers dynamic programs that illustrate the work of state courts. In 2012, there will be two moot court programs, one for high school students (10th–12th grades) and another for teachers who would like to use these simulations in their classrooms.



**Exploring Careers in the Law (10th–12th Grades)**  
June 25–29, 2012

**Moot Court in Your Classroom (Teachers)**  
August 1–2, 2012

Participants in both programs will examine how appellate courts work by arguing a case as if before the Michigan Supreme Court. The civil suit involves a case against 911 operators who treated a five-year-old boy's emergency calls as a prank, despite a life-and-death situation. According to the law, should the case be allowed to proceed?

An announcement and applications are available at <http://courts.mi.gov/plc>.

### Michigan Legal Milestones

The Michigan Legal Milestones program recognizes significant legal cases and personalities in Michigan's history. Information about the individual milestones and their locations is available at <http://www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm>.



### Law Day Contest

The State Bar of Michigan invites schools, universities and community groups, in partnership with members of the Michigan legal community to submit a creative entry illustrating the 2012 Law Day theme, "Michigan: No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom," using content from one or more Michigan Legal Milestones located throughout the state (see sidebar). Monetary awards will be given to the top finalists. Deadline: April 7, 2012.



More information: <http://www.michbar.org/programs/lawday/home.cfm>.



## In Brief: Courts Appreciate Jurors!

Jury duty is an important responsibility of citizenship, and jurors play a vital role in Michigan's courts. During Juror Appreciation Month each July, the Michigan Supreme Court urges the judiciary, attorneys, citizens, schools, businesses, and media to preserve and strengthen the jury system and to express appreciation for fellow citizens who answer the call of duty. The following link highlights the 2011 celebration, including statewide coverage about the importance of jury duty: <http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Press/Juror/index.htm>.

## New Jury Rules in Michigan's Courts

Did you know that jurors can now ask questions of witnesses, take notes and use them during deliberations, and take trial exhibits into the jury room when they serve in Michigan's trial courts? These changes are the result of jury reforms that became effective September 1, 2011.

The new rules are aimed at "giving jurors the tools they need for their very demanding job: seeking the truth," said Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. "The rules allow jurors to be more engaged and make well-informed decisions."

Before approving the reforms, the Michigan Supreme Court undertook a two-year pilot program involving 12 courts. In surveys, jurors who participated in the pilot program strongly favored the reforms. For example, 91 percent of jurors who participated in the survey agreed that being able to discuss the evidence before final deliberations helped them understand the case, focus on and recall the evidence, and reach a correct verdict.

The following link includes more information about the features of the jury reforms package: <http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Press/PR06-29-11Jury%20Reform.pdf>.

## Jury Duty Q & A

### What are the qualifications for being a juror in Michigan's state courts?

- Citizen.
- At least 18 years of age.
- Conversant in English.
- Mentally and physically able.
- No felony convictions.
- Resident of the district in which you are called to serve.

### Where does the pool of names for a jury come from?

The Secretary of State sends to the jury board a list of licensed drivers and those who possess state IDs.

### Do I have to respond to a jury questionnaire mailed to me?

Yes. According to state law, citizens must respond within 10 days.

### What if I do not show up for jury duty when called?

You can be held in contempt of court, fined, or even jailed.

## Best of the Web

### TRIAL BY JURY



## Lesson Plans

Scholastic – Our Jury System at Play (Elementary/Middle School)  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/americanjustice/index.htm>

Constitutional Rights Foundation – The American Jury: Bulwark of Democracy (High School)  
<http://www.crfc.org/americanjury/>

## General Information

What Every Juror Should Know (Online Quiz)  
<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/lc-gallery/juror.htm>

An Overview of Jury Duty in Michigan (Printable Brochure)  
<http://courts.mi.gov/scao/resources/publications/pamphlets/juryduty.pdf>