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Fall 2010

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Educator Newsletter

CALENDAR

Nov 25–26	Thanksgiving, State Holiday
Dec 7–9	MSC Oral Arguments
Dec 15	Administrative Conference*
Dec 24–25	Christmas, State Holiday
Dec 31–	New Year, State Holiday
Jan 1	Holiday
Jan 11–13	Oral Arguments*
Jan 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, State Holiday
Jan 19	Administrative Conference*

*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.

Learning Center – Law Day Tours, May 2

The Legacy of John Adams from Boston to Guantanamo

The American Bar Association has announced its annual theme for Law Day, “The Legacy of John Adams from Boston to Guantanamo.” This theme offers the opportunity to explore the historical and contemporary role of lawyers in defending the rights of the accused. The Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center will join the national celebration on May 2 with special tours, guest speakers, and free curriculum materials. Call 517-373-7171 to reserve your Law Day tours today!

Election Results

New Justice to Join Michigan Supreme Court

In the statewide election for Michigan Supreme Court Justice, the top finishers for two seats were the Honorable Mary Beth Kelly, currently of Third Circuit Court in Wayne County, and the Honorable Robert M. Young, Jr., an incumbent of the Michigan Supreme Court. Similar to other statewide offices, the Justices’ terms will begin January 1. Justices serve eight-year terms.

Court Community Connections

Michigan Supreme Court Case Heard in Lenawee County

In mid-October, the Michigan Supreme Court heard oral argument at Siena Heights University in Lenawee County as part of its Court Community Connections Program. The program is aimed at high school students who, with the help of local judges and attorneys, study the case, attend oral argument, and are debriefed by the attorneys who argued the case, *King v State of Michigan*. When the Court issues its opinion, it will be sent to judges and attorney mentors who will share it with students.

The Court will travel to Dearborn in May 2011 for its eighth off-site visit to help students understand Michigan's appellate system. To learn more, contact Barb Browne, browneb@courts.mi.gov or 517-373-0714.



Chief Justice Kelly speaking with students attending Court Community Connections at Siena Heights University. To view the argument and the debriefing (begins at 48:50), visit mistreamnet.com.



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In Brief: Access to Justice

In September, the Learning Center unveiled a new exhibit that helps demonstrate the importance of access to justice, a phrase used by courts and the legal profession to describe what is fair according to the Constitution and the law. Courts must protect the rights and resolve the conflicts of everyone equally. Courts must make sure that no one is given an advantage over another.

Citizens using the court have a number of basic rights, such as to:

- Be represented by an attorney or to represent oneself.
- Have barrier-free access to the court.
- Expect the court to treat them with fairness, respect, and courtesy.
- Be treated equally and not be subjected to discriminatory treatment on the basis of race, gender, or any other legally protected characteristic.
- Expect court proceedings to begin on time and proceed in an orderly manner.
- Request an interpreter if they are unable to communicate in English or they are hearing impaired.
- Expect that the judge and attorneys in will be prepared to hear or try the case when court is convened to hear the matter.

Citizens using the court have responsibility the to:

- Treat the judge, court employees, and attorneys with fairness, respect, and courtesy.
- Monitor their behavior, attitudes, and comments to ensure that bias due to race, ethnic or religious affiliation, or gender are displayed.
- Conduct themselves professionally and to follow the same rules an attorney would, if representing themselves in a case.

Self Help: General Information, State Court Administrative Office

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/selfhelp/intro/questions.htm>



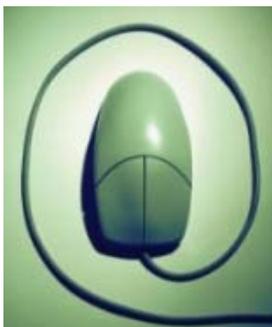
It has been said that finalizing an adoption is one of the few happy occasions at a courthouse. Each year, Michigan courts sponsor Michigan Adoption Day on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. The goal is to inform the public about the adoption process and the fact that many Michigan children need permanent homes. With 30 or more counties participating each year, Michigan's event is consistently the largest Adoption Day observance in the nation.

Michigan Adoption Day, November 23

<http://courts.mi.gov/adoption-day/>



Best of the Web MOCK TRIALS & OTHER SIMULATIONS



All Levels – Mock Trials, American Bar Association

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/mocktrials.html>

Scripts and fact patterns for mock trials at all grade levels.

All Levels – Small Claims Simulations, Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center

http://courts.michigan.gov/plc/curriculum/Small_Claims.pdf

Fact patterns for three cases. In small claims court, parties represent themselves, so the three roles involved are judge, plaintiff, and defendant.

All Levels – Mock Trial Resources, Constitutional Rights Foundation

<http://www.crfc.org/mocktrial.html>

Links to free scripts and other helpful resources.