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Spring 2010

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Educator Newsletter

## CALENDAR

May 3	Law Day
May 11–12	Oral Arguments*
May 13	Administrative Conference and Public Hearing*
Jun 3	Public Administrative Conference*
Jun 21–25	Exploring Careers in the Law, 10th–12th Grades
Jul 19–23	Exploring Careers in the Law, 7th–9th Grades
Jul 31	Final day for Michigan Supreme Court opinions to be issued for 2009–2010 session
Sept 17	Constitution Day Tours and Activities

\*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](http://www.michbar.org/courts/virtualcourt.cfm).



Future “judges” at Exploring Careers in the Law

## Check Us Out!

### Make Your Plans Up to a Year in Advance

Similar to other Lansing venues, the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center makes tour reservations up to a year in advance. Tours can support the following:

- Teacher retreats or professional-development days.
- Classes learning about state government.
- Students investigating Core Democratic Values.
- Groups studying specific topics in law, history, or government (with sufficient notice).
- Constitution Day celebrations.

Call 517-373-7171 to make a reservation today!



## Exploring Careers in the Law 2010

### Openings Available for 7th–9th Graders, July 19–23

Do you know current middle school students interested in becoming lawyers or judges? To learn about the legal field, they can attend Exploring Careers in the Law at the Michigan Hall of Justice, Lansing. Openings are still available for the middle school session of this program, July 19–23, 2010.

Participants entering 7th–9th grade (fall 2010) explore a range of law-related careers. They meet with judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals, and observe proceedings at Lansing’s District Court 54A.

For more information, visit the Learning Center web site at <http://courts.mi.gov/plc/resources/programs.htm> or contact Rachael L. Drenovsky at [drenovskyr@courts.mi.gov](mailto:drenovskyr@courts.mi.gov) or 517-373-5027.



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## In Brief: Oral Arguments in the Michigan Supreme Court

As in most appellate courts, the Michigan Supreme Court's official courtroom proceedings related to cases are called "oral arguments." These timed proceedings are the only opportunity the attorneys have to speak directly to the seven justices hearing their case. Oral arguments are a formal type of conversation in which the attorneys state what they believe is a fair resolution of the case and the justices ask questions of the attorneys to clarify points and issues.

The appellant – the party attempting to persuade the Court that the Court of Appeals decision is wrong – speaks first and can reserve a portion of the time allotted for rebuttal. This allows the appellant to speak after the other side – the appellee – has argued. The moving party always gets the last word.



Only the attorneys for the appellant and the appellee sit at the counsel tables inside the railing. Because the arguments concern matters already established by the records of the proceedings below, there is no need for the attorneys to consult with their clients.

No witnesses are called to testify and no exhibits are offered. Those events have already occurred at the trial court level. The justices and attorneys depend upon the records of the lower courts.

The arguments are timed, with the lights on the podium indicating that time is almost expired (yellow light) or that the speaker is out of time (red light).

Unlike proceedings in the trial courts, the arguments are never interrupted by the opposing attorney. Each side in turn has the undivided attention of the Court.

At the conclusion of the arguments, no decision is rendered by the Court. The process of the Court's arriving at a decision is just under way. It may take several months for the written opinion to be issued. The Court's yearly deadline for issuing opinions is July 31. Thus, cases heard October 2009–May 2010 must be completed by the end of July 2010.

### Best of the Web ORAL ARGUMENTS IN THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



#### All Levels – Schedule of Oral Arguments, Michigan Supreme Court

[http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Clerk/msc\\_orals.htm](http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Clerk/msc_orals.htm)

Lists the schedule of oral arguments and includes links to case information for 2002–present.

#### All Levels – Virtual Court, State Bar of Michigan

<http://www.michbar.org/courts/virtualcourt.cfm>

Features streaming video of Michigan Supreme Court oral arguments, public administrative conferences, and public hearings. Videos are posted 24–48 hours after proceedings occur. Note: The Court hears cases on topics that may be disturbing to young viewers. It is highly recommended that you review cases before using them in the classroom. Background information on all cases is available through the Michigan Supreme Court web site (see link above).

#### Middle School/High School – “Oral Arguments in the Michigan Supreme Court” DVD with Discussion Guide

<http://courts.michigan.gov/plc/resources/curriculum.htm>

Explains the role of oral arguments using *Wayne County v Hathcock* (2004) as a case study.