

PRESS RELEASE

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OAKLAND CIRCUIT COURT ENGAGES STUDENTS IN CONSTITUTION DAY ACTIVITIES

Oakland County, MI (September 14, 2007) – On Monday, September 17, 2007, the Oakland County Circuit Court will serve as a hub for educators, students, and the school community as it commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787. Nearly 300 high school students from Waterford Alternative High School and 44 lawyers from the community will visit the Court to participate in a Constitution Day program.

Inspired by Circuit Judge Michael Warren, the program will begin with a presentation by Judge Fred Mester on the historical basis for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights at 8:50 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium located in the Courthouse at 1200 North Telegraph in Pontiac. Students will then be divided into groups to visit several courtrooms where various judges and 40 volunteer lawyers will teach on the First and Fourth Amendments of the Bill of Rights. Students will review the history and principles underlying the amendments, as well as how they directly affect current events. The students will return to the auditorium to learn what is like to live without a constitution through a presentation by child survivor of the Holocaust Rene Lichtman, Ph.D., who will be introduced by Judge Edward Sosnick.

In addition to the Court's interactive program, staff from Oakland Schools and the County's Information Technology Department have worked together to channel the audio and video presentations to servers located at Oakland Schools for viewing by more students than will fit in the auditorium for the event.

This novel and innovative Court organized event, co-sponsored with the Waterford School District, Oakland Schools, and the Michigan Center for Civic Education is meant to provide students with a better understanding of the significance of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and to encourage further study in the classroom.

“The very survival of our republic demands that our students be well steeped in the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights,” remarked Judge Warren. “We expect that the Constitution Day program will provide students with a better understanding of the history and meaning of the Bill of Rights and help this rising generation to come to a necessary understanding of and devotion to the Constitution. We hope that our activity will become a model for other courts in Michigan and nationally.”

Pursuant to legislation passed by Congress on May 24, 2005, Constitution Day is recognized nationally in public schools as a day to celebrate not only the birth of our government but the principles America was founded on; that is, a commitment to the rule of law, limited government, the social compact, equality, and the secured blessings of liberty, equality and justice.

A committee led by Judges Warren, Mester, and Sosnick organized the event, along with representatives of the co-sponsoring organizations. Other judges participating in this inspiring event are Chief Judge Wendy Potts and Circuit Judges Mark Goldsmith, Cheryl Matthews, Rudy Nichols, Colleen O'Brien, and Daniel O'Brien, as well as Probate Judges Linda Hallmark and Elizabeth Pezzetti.

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