



STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT
22ND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS



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For Immediate Release

Contact: James (Dan) Wallis
Trial Court Administrator
Phone (815) 334-4385

Email: courtadmin@co.mchenry.il.us

**MCHEMRY COUNTY JUDGES VISIT
SCHOOLS IN HONOR OF LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
9 Local Judges Participate in Annual
"Judges Go to School" Program with Illinois Judges Association**

WOODSTOCK, IL — In conjunction with the February celebration in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, 9 McHenry County Judges visited local schools to read to students, discuss the judicial system, and answer their questions.

The February 12 visits are part of the annual Judges Go to School Day program put on by the Illinois Judges Association. The program encourages judges to take advantage of a court holiday by visiting students in their local schools. Across the state, judges at every level will meet with thousands of students and donate hundreds of books.

Locally, the visits are part of an ongoing partnership between the judges and local schools that uses classroom visits, assembly-style presentations, and courthouse tours to increase civic awareness, an understanding of the judiciary, and important social issues. This partnership puts judges in contact with over one thousand students each year.

This year, judges were able to meet with elementary, middle, and high school students on February 12. Judge Tiffany Davis visited first- and second-grade classes in Woodstock and Judge Christopher Harmon visited first- and second-grade classes in Greenwood. In Crystal Lake, Judge Kevin Costello visited the 3rd graders at Glacier Ridge Elementary, while Judge Carl Metz visited with the 4th and 5th graders. At Hussman Elementary, Judge Justin Hansen met with the 5th grade and Judge Suzanne Mangiamiele read to the kindergarten and 3rd grade classes. Earlier in the day, Judge Hansen and Judge Jennifer Johnson met with the 7th grader class at Richard

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Michael J. Sullivan Judicial Center
2200 North Seminary Avenue, Woodstock IL 60098
Office: 815/334-4385 Fax: 815/338-0248

Bernotas Middle School. Finally, Judge Mark Facchini and Judge Michael Zasadil met with the students taking Law in America at Cary-Grove High School.

When meeting with younger students, the judges will often wear their robe and read a book. With the older students, the judges often discuss their job and the court system in a way that demonstrates why the court system matters to the students. At every age level, the judges encourage participation and welcome questions.

The judges' visits were well-received. Greenwood Principal Julie Smith said, "The students were excited to meet real judges. This was a great learning experience and opportunity to interact with some important leaders in our community." Elise Dean, District 47's Director of Literacy and Social Science, was similarly positive about the impact, saying "The students gained so much insight into our government and truly appreciated the real-world examples. The judges' visit made a lasting impact!"

The participating judges also had very positive feedback. "I was impressed by the insightful questions from all three classes I spoke to; their curiosity and engagement was apparent throughout my visit" stated Judge Kevin Costello. Judge Michael Zasadil had the unique experience of visiting a class and teacher he had while a student at Cary-Grove High School. "It was great to come back to Cary-Grove and see Mr. Holter's students. My passion for law began in one of his classes years ago, so this felt like taking a step back in time. Judge Mark Facchini and I really enjoyed the presentation and hope the students did too" stated Judge Zasadil.

The presenting judges follow in the footsteps of other judicial colleagues who have spent time in local classrooms. In addition, the presentation meets the objectives of organizations like the Illinois State Bar Association and the Illinois Judges Association which encourage attorneys, judges and court officials to engage with the public, their local communities, and their local schools to build a broader understanding of the U.S. judicial system.

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