



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Kanawha Family Court Judges host high school mock trials**

**For immediate release Monday, Nov. 8, 2010**

**CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Eleventh Circuit Family Court Judges will preside over mock trials presented by high school students from around Kanawha County on Wednesday, Nov. 10, at the Robert C. Byrd United States Courthouse, 300 Virginia St. E., Charleston.**

*Although photographers and television cameras normally are not allowed in the federal courthouse, they will be allowed in to these trials.*

**This is the sixth year that Family Court Judge Mike J. Kelly has written a mock trial scenario for county high school students that involves domestic violence, a topic Family Court Judges often handle and that, unfortunately, affects the lives of many students.**

**This year's scenario involves a woman accused of killing her husband, whom she alleges had previously abused her.**

**Students at one high school take the side of the defense while students at another take the side of the prosecution. Each school can create three exhibits. Students play the parts of attorneys, witnesses and jurors. Although Judge Kelly writes witness statements, all the students are free to write their own scripts and act out their parts as they wish.**

**"Some of the students are as good as young lawyers," he said. "It gets very competitive. The feedback I get from the teachers is that the kids love it."**

**A volunteer attorney works with each school to help students prepare. The attorneys are assigned by the Eleventh Family Court Circuit Bench-Bar Committee and each can meet with his or her assigned students up to five times. Judge Kelly said he had to put a limit on the meetings because "some of the super-competitive attorneys were spending an entire week out there."**

**Judge Kelly got the idea for the mock trials from similar programs in other states. Before he became a judge, he represented the West Virginia Federation of Teachers, and he worked with that teacher's union and the Kanawha County Board of Education's social studies coordinator to launch the program.**

**The Kanawha County program precedes, and complements, the West Virginia Supreme Court's *West Virginia Law Adventure* mock trial program for middle school students.**

**The schedule for Nov. 10 will be:**

**8:30 a.m. George Washington High School v. Sissonville High School  
Family Court Judge Ken D. Ballard presiding  
attorneys Andrew Nason and Robert Bastress assisting**

**South Charleston High School v. St. Albans High School  
Family Court Judge Kelly presiding  
attorneys Lonnie Simmons and Bryan Escue assisting**

**11:30 a.m. Nitro High School v. Capital High School  
Family Court Judge Robert M. Montgomery presiding  
attorneys Mark Kelley and Dennis Bailey assisting**

**Herbert Hoover High School v. Riverside High School  
Family Court Judge Sharon M. Mullens presiding  
Attorneys Ariella Silberman and Brittany Ranson assisting**

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**Note: Supreme Court press releases now are available on Twitter at wvcourts. Press releases will continue to be posted on the Court website, however the listserv will be discontinued on January 1, 2011.**