

## **Pro Bono Lawyers Support Constitution Day in Berrien County**

Constitution Day 2009 was observed in Berrien County high schools by students taking Youth & Law, Civics or Society classes in both Benton Harbor and St. Joseph High Schools. A special curriculum was introduced for the first two weeks of school, and local students began their study entitled "Education for Everyday Democracy: the Jury Process." This was made available by the State Bar of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Center for Civic Education. Students reviewed and analyzed the "This is Our Town Too" story and the Jury Duty DVD entitled "It Isn't Fair if You're Not There." Chief Judge Al Butzbaugh spoke to the Benton Harbor students summarizing the concepts of jury selection, voir dire, and peremptory challenges.

Other sessions included the students' review of Supreme Court cases to learn about precedent. The students then applied case law to the fact situations in their stories.

The week also consisted of local pro bono attorneys working in classrooms where they engaged the students in an overview of Supreme Court cases highlighting evolution of the existing jury selection process. The lawyers provided them with an opportunity for discussion and question and answers.

The week culminated on Friday, September 25, with 120 students arriving at the Berrien County Courthouse at 9:30 a.m. reporting to the Jury Assembly room just as reporting jurors would. They were greeted by the Jury Clerk, and were processed for security clearance. There was a smooth arrival and processing. The students then engaged in discussions where the importance of participation by everyone in the jury process was reinforced. They then moved into each of the courtrooms where a judge, prosecutor, and defense lawyer offered opportunities to discuss the jury process, careers in the law, and other legal topics of interest to the students.

See photos at <http://www.michbar.org/generalinfo/constitutionday.cfm>