

Nancy J. Diehl



Kids Celebrate Law Day

As president, I am privileged to participate in many interesting and enjoyable events. One such occasion was the recent 33rd Annual Law Day celebration at the Michigan Hall of Justice. Each year, the Lawyers Auxiliary and the State Bar sponsor a Law Day essay contest for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. This year's national Law Day theme was "The American Jury: We the People in Action"—a very significant topic, as the jury system is the foundation of democracy. It was fascinating to listen to these students read their essays on this important issue, and I would like to share the beliefs and thoughts of just a few.

A sixth grader from Ann Arbor states, "It is our duty to serve; it is every citizen's responsibility. When everyone is willing to serve as a juror, justice is maintained within the court system. You get a voice in our democracy when you are on a jury."

An eighth grader from Grand Rapids commented on the issue of using professionally trained jurors, which he does not believe

in, "One reason for this is that professional jurors will get paid, and if so, they may not care about the case as much as they care about the money they receive. Layman jurors, on the other hand, are more likely to give an honest opinion."

A seventh grader from L'Anse Creuse discussed issues of excessive pretrial publicity. He wrote, "I believe that one of our most important core democratic values is justice, the fair and equal treatment of all people in a court of law. If you keep the trial venue in an area where citizens are biased, you are de-

priving the defendant of a fair trial. When you read articles in the paper, you may subconsciously use those ideas to determine innocence or guilt."

Although I can't share all of the essays with you in this space, you can read them online.* What the kids had to say demonstrated their knowledge, interest, and passion in celebrating our heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under the law. I left feeling reassured that our

rights and freedoms as Americans were in safe hands for the next generation.

A special "hats off" to Mary Ann Farris, who for years has chaired the Law Day event, making it very special for everyone. And thank you to each and every student, teacher, and lawyer who participated in the many and various Law Day events throughout our state. ♦

*www.michbar.org/programs/lawday/home.cfm.

Photos by Michael M. Smith



Left to right: Lucas Ponto Breznau, Christopher Ranella, Honorable Clifford Taylor—Chief Justice, Kendra Lee Cook



Left to right: Meagan Mousty, Honorable Clifford Taylor—Chief Justice, Ishika Dey Rajan, Rosemary Sullivan



Left to right: Kimberly Grabowski, Honorable Clifford Taylor—Chief Justice, Hilary Habeck Hunt, Matthew D. Schmalzel