



Contact:
Nancy Peters
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
300 SOUTH SIXTH STREET
612-348-5022 OFFICE
NANCY.PETERS@COURTS.STATE.MN.US

Fourth Judicial District Court Convenes at Edina High School for Students to Observe Court in the Classroom

For Immediate Release

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (October 25, 2007) – Students of Edina Public Schools observed court in session at Edina High School today as a part of a community outreach effort by the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

The state's largest trial court conducted a Rasmussen hearing and considered arguments in an adapted case. The purpose of the Rasmussen hearing was to determine if evidence obtained from a search and seizure could be suppressed or admitted at trial. In this case, the defendant was charged with felony possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree while in possession of a firearm.

The Hennepin County District Court welcomes the opportunity to educate the public about the third branch of government. Judge Toddrick Barnette, the presiding judge, believes that "holding court sessions out in the community is one way to educate the public about what we do. Having these opportunities inside the schools gives the kids a realistic view of the justice system at work."

More than 750 ninth through twelfth grade students observed today's hearing in the auditorium and participated in a question and answer session following the Rasmussen hearing. The students are currently studying civics, American Government, Contemporary Issues and Chemical Awareness.

One of the judiciary's top strategic priorities is to increase public trust and confidence by strengthening public education regarding the role of the courts. This is the first time the Fourth Judicial District has convened at Edina High School.

"We depend on strong courts to uphold the Constitution and to rule on cases fairly and impartially, based on the facts and the law. Strong courts are an essential part of our democracy and provide vital balance in our government," said Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Lucy Wieland.

About the Fourth Judicial District

The State of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District serves only Hennepin County and is the state's largest trial court with more than 750,000 cases received annually. The mission of the Fourth Judicial District is to provide a system of justice that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies. For more information, visit the website at www.mncourts.gov/district/4/.

###