

Summer Youth Institute Takes Students a Step Forward

Three judges listened carefully to arguments on whether a strip search of a student entering a school was justified. Advocates debated whether an anonymous tip to the principal justified heightened security and whether the nervous conduct of a student provided enough reason for the strip search even after the student had passed through a metal detector without problem.

The two pairs of advocates were composed and articulate as they cited comparable cases and reasons for and against considering the search reasonable.

Yes, a viewer could pick up signals that the advocates were not as well versed as most who present such arguments. But they *were* impressive—especially considering they were eighth-, ninth-, and tenth-grade students from about a dozen Milwaukee-area schools, taking part in a weeklong program offering them knowledge, experience, and mentoring that might interest them in careers in the law. On Monday morning of this week in July, most of the students probably had little or no idea what an appellate argument involved. Now it was Friday morning. With Eckstein Hall as their base, they had attended a wide range of sessions, including visits to courts and law firms. The arguments were the capstone of the week. The teens had worked with lawyers and Marquette Law School students to get ready.

Twenty-two students from a wide range of backgrounds took part in the Summer Youth Institute, the first of what sponsors hope will be an annual program. The sponsors were Marquette Law School and the Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association (EDWBA). Collaboration and support came from the Just the Beginning Foundation; Johnson Controls, Inc. (through the work of one of its in-house counsel, Gil Cubia); Kids, Courts, and Citizenship; and the Association of Corporate Counsel Wisconsin Chapter (through Atheneé Lucas, in-house with ManpowerGroup). The steering committee included U.S. Magistrate Judge Nancy Joseph, who had suggested this program a year earlier; Marquette Law



School Pro Bono Director Angela F. Schultz; Melissa L. Greipp, associate professor of legal writing; Anne Berleman Kearney, adjunct professor of law and principal in Appellate Consulting Group; and Katy Borowski, executive director of the EDWBA.

Sessions stressed the commitment that students need to make to education and to improving themselves in both the short and long term. At lunch one day, Milwaukee attorney Cory Nettles told them that one of the best pieces of advice he ever received was to be “helpable”—someone who benefits from coaching. Jerome Okarma, general counsel for Johnson Controls, Inc., told the students, “If you don’t like reading, you don’t want to be lawyer.” The week included a session for parents with tips for getting children into and through college.

“I think the kids got a chance to be pushed out of their comfort zones,” said Max Wright, a teacher at Hmong American Peace Academy who was one of the institute’s instructors along with Barbara J. Janaszek, a Milwaukee attorney and former teacher. “Their horizons have been broadened.”

One of the students said as the week concluded, “I took a step forward in my life.” ■