



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Supreme Court to Conduct Arguments Before Marion County High School Students as Part of LAWS Civics Education Program

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia will host approximately 200 Marion County high school students as it convenes to hear arguments Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the Marion County Courthouse as part of its Legal Advancement for West Virginia Students (LAWS) civics education program.

“The LAWS program is one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences we have as Supreme Court justices,” said Chief Justice William R. “Bill” Wooton. “It gives the Court the opportunity to go into our schools, interact with our students and give them the opportunity to witness the judicial process unfold right before their eyes. We want this experience to help them better understand how their government and legal system works and hope it will potentially inspire them to pursue a future career in the legal field or public service.”

Students from North Marion, Fairmont Senior and East Fairmont high schools, as well as several local homeschooled students are expected to attend the event, which begins at 10 a.m.

The Court will hear arguments in three cases between 10 a.m. and noon. Following each argument, the students will have an opportunity to talk to the attorneys who argued each case. The Supreme Court justices and students will then travel to Fairmont Senior at 12:30 p.m. for lunch, which will feature a question-and-answer session between the students and justices.

The Court conducts these LAWS program visits with schools around the state twice a year. Prior to the oral arguments, local attorneys and judicial officers visit the schools involved to explain the appellate process and to help students study the cases.

“Given that the Supreme Court of Appeals travels only twice a year, we are particularly thankful that our Marion County Schools students will have the opportunity to hear reputable attorneys who will present appellate arguments in three live hearings before our

West Virginia judicial branch,” said Dr. Donna D. Heston, Superintendent of Marion County Schools.

“When we talk about the value of meaningful, real-world learning opportunities for our students, this is precisely what we are honored to have in Marion County on February 19, 2025,” Superintendent Heston said. “It adds a rich instructional moment for our students to make real-world connections beyond what our expert teachers are providing in the classrooms throughout our county on a daily basis. We are honored that the Supreme Court justices and attorneys presenting the cases can engage with and spend meaningful time with our students and teachers in this, perhaps, once-in-lifetime opportunity for them.”

Since LAWS was established in 1999, more than 7,000 students from 37 counties have participated.

The cases scheduled for argument Wednesday are:

- 10:00 a.m.: Case No. 22-822: *State of West Virginia v. David Hunter Lewis*
- 10:50 a.m., Case No. 22-706: *State of West Virginia v. Richard Dane Small*
- 11:35 a.m., Case No. 22-674: *State of West Virginia v. Joseph Wayne Mason*

Additional information and briefs associated with the cases can be found on the arguments calendar page of the Supreme Court’s website located here:

<https://www.courtswv.gov/appellate-courts/supreme-court-of-appeals/current-docket/february>.

In addition to being open to the public, the arguments will be live streamed on the Supreme Court’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/wvsupremecourt>.

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