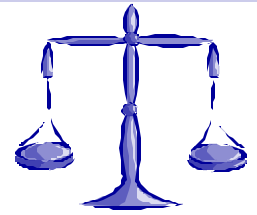


Around the Courts



Lincoln's Day in Court

by Judge Steve Pihlaja

In January a group of about 25 lawyers, court reporters, law clerks, legal secretaries, administrators and judges began spending their Wednesday lunch hour at Lincoln Elementary school as a part of **'Everybody Wins (When Adults Read with Children)'**. The volunteer program was sponsored by the Minnesota State Bar Association and directed by MSBA's Lisa Wilde. Each volunteer was paired up with a second- or fifth grader as a reading partner. Students selected their own reading materials in the school library, with books on snakes, dinosaurs, and sharks the popular choice among second-graders.

The mentor's reward, a demon-

stration of student skills, came on the last Wednesday in May. A group of Lincoln fifth graders who had been coached by attorney Bill Orth visited the Hennepin County Government Center over their lunch hour and staged a mock trial/debate based on the new conceal-and-carry gun law. I nominally presided over the trial, but the real power was held by student Regina "Judge Ginny" Todd, who prodded the student lawyers to move their cases along and made sure that everyone followed the trial rules.

Gun Law Advocates, Inc., the plaintiff, was represented by Jazmine Rogers, Breona Howard, and Shakeel Ross. The defendant,

The Society Opposed to Conceal and Carry Laws, was represented by Caleb Curry, Alisha Dantzer, Tieshawn Fields, and March Phonphiboun. The student lawyers presented their arguments and then answered the penetrating appellate-judge-style questions of students Terrell Dixon, Kwemella Ellis, Tamika Washington, Mai Neng Thao and Pa Der Vang. The student-lawyers stood as they responded to these tough questions: "How can you defend yourself so that the criminal takes you seriously;" "How can we keep guns out of the hands of children;" "What happens if a gun is illegally sold to a person;" "Would you feel safe if everyone carried a gun;"

(continued on page 9)



Attorney Bill Orth, court reporter Steve Gill, and Judge Steve Pihlaja gather with Ms. Lawrence-Wensel's 5th grade class from Lincoln Elementary