



Administrative Office of the Courts

P.O. Box 4820, Portland, Maine 04112-4820

Tel: (207) 822-0792

Mary Ann Lynch
Government & Media Counsel
P.O. Box 4820
Portland, Maine 04112-4820

Tel: (207) 592-5940
mary.ann.lynch@courts.maine.gov

Dedication of Renovated Washington County Courthouse And Supreme Judicial Court to Hear Appeals at Washington Academy on May 5, 2016

For Immediate Release:

Portland, Maine, April 15, 2016 –Justices of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and state, county and local officials will dedicate the newly renovated and expanded Washington County Courthouse in Machias on Thursday, May 5, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. The courthouse is located at 85 Court Street, Machias.

This \$8.5 million state-funded project began in June 2013 and was completed on time and within budget earlier this year. The construction renovated the 1855 courthouse and added an addition to the Washington County Courthouse. The building has operated continuously as a courthouse since 1855.

The project improved safety, technology and energy efficiency for all those using the courthouse. The project provides improved security through centralized entry screening, two new courtrooms, a modern clerk's office, jury room and meeting room spaces. Two new parking areas were built to serve courthouse users and court employees.

The dedication will be open to the public and the media.

The Supreme Judicial Court will also hear appeals in 3 actual cases on the morning of May 5, 2016 at Washington Academy in East Machias, at the invitation of State Senator David Burns. This visit is part of the Supreme Judicial Court's annual program to visit Maine high schools.

Beginning in 2005, the Court has held oral arguments yearly in actual appellate cases in high schools around the state. Last year, court was held at high schools in Hermon, Farmington, and Scarborough. These trips are arranged at the invitation of local legislators. Since 2005, the Supreme Court has visited 32 Maine high schools and heard over 94 appellate cases before Maine high school students and faculty. In each school, the gymnasium, cafeteria, or auditorium is turned into an actual courtroom for the morning so that the students can observe the appellate process. Students receive copies of the parties' legal briefs in advance of the oral arguments, and after the oral arguments the lawyers stay to

answer questions from students. When the cases are decided, the schools receive a link to the decision to provide to the students.

Chief Justice Leigh Saufley said, “We are pleased to be able to hold court at three more high schools this year and appreciate the invitation of the schools and the legislators who issued the invitations. This year, we begin with this trip to Washington County, and specifically Washington Academy in East Machias, as part of our celebration of the new court facilities in Machias.”

“On September 8, 2016 the Court will hear cases in Fort Kent, and on October 26th, the court will travel to South Berwick, to Marshwood High School. Creating a real courtroom in a high school takes great effort on the part of the faculty and school staff. We appreciate the work that is involved to bring this real life civics lesson to Maine high school students. Of course, the high point for the Court is the chance to meet and talk with Maine students. While each community and school is unique, we continue to be impressed each year with the quality and level of interest that Maine students from all around the state bring to these hearings. ”

The press is welcome to attend. The case schedule and legal briefs will be posted, on or before May 1, 2016 on the Court web site, at:

http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine_courts/supreme/oral_arguments.shtml

Live audio streaming of these cases, and all other Supreme Judicial Court oral arguments is available at:

http://www.courts.state.me.us/maine_courts/supreme/oral_arguments.shtml

For press interviews, video recording, or photographs of the Court, while the court is in session at Washington Academy, please contact Mary Ann Lynch, by e-mail by May 3, 2016, to schedule an interview.

Photographs, interviews, and video of students are subject to the rules of the high school, and the press is requested to contact school officials directly.

FMI: mary.ann.lynch@courts.maine.gov