

Justice At Johnston

Iowa Supreme Court Hearing Comes to Town

Junior Jackie Liang sat in the high school auditorium observing defense attorney Mary K. Conroy give her opening statement in the “Timothy Alvin Newton vs. Iowa” court case. Six of the seven Iowa Supreme Court justices listened from a makeshift bench on the stage.

The justices visited the high school the evening of Sept. 17, Constitution Day, to conduct a hearing, giving students the opportunity to learn first hand about the judicial process by seeing it in action. Newton’s attorney argued the controlled substances found in his system were taken days before his accident, concluding he should not be convicted of impaired driving.

Liang took notice of the attorneys’ demeanor (Conroy visibly shook during her statement and questioning). “The one thing that took me by surprise was the speaking skills of the two attorneys,” Liang said. “When I talked with one of the justices after arguments had been delivered, I was surprised to hear that they don’t take things such as presentation and speaking skills into account when making their decision.”

Court documents have always been available to the public and the courtroom has always been open to visitors. However, in recent years the justices came out of their chambers and traveled around Iowa, holding arguments at local public locations. When the high school was announced as their next location, social studies teachers urged their students to attend. Even some government classes had assignments over the Iowa Supreme Court justices and some cases they have tackled.

That same day all of the government classes were required to attend a talk from Chief Justice Mark Cady during third hour, but some juniors and sophomores attended also. “I’ve always been interested in law and have been in mock trial since seventh grade, so I wanted to see if I could go with the seniors to hear Justice Cady speak,” Laing said. ELP coordinator Sue Cline made the senior opportunity available to some juniors and sophomores. “Thankfully, I was able to go to the event during the school day, and then later that night I came back to the high school to hear the oral arguments,” Laing said.

Senior Grace Campidilli was interested as well. “What drew me was seeing how they would interpret things in a real life situation,” she said. “It was almost like being in a courtroom,” Campidilli explained her experience during the argument. “I think that’s what they were trying to create.”

Senior Sara Clausen went with a few friends. “OWI cases really interest me because you never know how it’s going to turn out.”



2. Junior Andrew Bauer plays a matching game in Emily Bowman’s U.S. History. Bowman used this strategy often. Matching cards used retrieval, retrieving previously learned knowledge, which furthermore engraved the information into students’ memories. (Photo by: Abby Watkins)



3. Ben Williams, senior, writes notes about the brain in AP Psychology. Each station had a scenario for the brain and the students had to answer how it would react. (Photo by: Ethan Burgett)



4. Junior, Emily Nguyen uses a green pencil to color a map of the United States in teacher Jessica Dowell’s AP U.S. History class. “I honestly enjoy history this year,” Nguyen said. “You go into depth with topics you’ve learned in the past and you’re able to work on projects and watch videos, etc. It’s a little different from regular U.S. history, but I say taking APUSH is worth it. There’s always room for growth and Mrs. Jessica Dowell does a great job in helping us learn and be interactive in the class.” (Photo by: Jordyn Cimmiyotti)

