

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **U.S. CONSTITUTION IS FOCUS OF MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT TV INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF JUSTICE TAYLOR; PROGRAM OFFERED AS CONSTITUTION DAY STUDY AID**

LANSING, MI, September 12, 2007 – Michigan teachers looking for ways to observe Constitution Day will receive an assist from the Michigan Supreme Court and Michigan Government Television (MGTV) when “Astonishing Document: The American Constitution” airs on MGTV on Monday, September 17 at 10:01 a.m.

The program is also video streamed on the MGTV web site for viewing at any time. Because MGTV covers all branches of Michigan state government, it is possible, although unlikely, that the Constitution Day program may be preempted by live House or Senate sessions.

A provision Congress passed in 2004 requires all federally-funded schools, including colleges, to teach about the Constitution on September 17, the day the document was adopted in 1787. Schools can determine what kind of educational programs they want. If September 17 – now designated “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day” – happens to fall on a weekend or holiday, schools must teach Constitutional lessons the day before or the day after.

In 2005, the Michigan Supreme Court and MGTV conceived of “Astonishing Document” as a way to help teachers and students celebrate Constitution Day, said Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor of the Michigan Supreme Court.

“Unfortunately, too many people think of the Constitution merely as some musty old piece of paper enshrined in a glass case,” Taylor said. “I don’t think that we fully appreciate just how amazing the Constitution is; it’s the user’s manual for our democracy. We have to remember that the framers were creating an unprecedented kind of government, one that provided for freedom and the balance of power – not as happy by-products, but as essential features of American democracy.”

The interview features Taylor and MGTV Executive Director Bill Trevarthen, who posed questions to the Chief Justice about the Constitution’s history and meaning.

“The Court is very grateful to Bill Trevarthen and MGTV for making this program possible,” Taylor said. “We hope that, in addition to sharing this program with their students, teachers will ask their students to explore some of the issues we will raise during the interview.”

Trevarthen said, “One of MGTV’s goals is to provide students and educators with a working knowledge of government, so this partnership with the Supreme Court fits very well with our mission. We believe that this program will be valuable for teachers and students alike.”

To find local cable channels which air MGTV, visit MGTV’s web site at <http://www.mgtv.org>.

For more law-related educational resources, including lesson plans and teacher guides, visit <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/plc/resources.htm>.

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