

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **High school students to hold court at Michigan Supreme Court August 2 Mock hearing to focus on real-life case about juvenile life without parole sentences**

LANSING, MI, July 25, 2013 – A real-life challenge to a teenager’s life without parole sentence for murder will be the focus of a mock Michigan Supreme Court session, enacted by high school students at the Michigan Hall of Justice next week.

The 22 students will play the roles of Supreme Court justices and attorneys in *People v Carp*, an actual case currently pending before the Michigan Supreme Court.

Like actual Michigan Supreme Court hearings, the mock Supreme Court session will take place in the Supreme Court’s courtroom on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Michigan Hall of Justice. The August 2 event, which starts at 11 a.m., is open to the public.

Learning Center Coordinator Rachael Drenovsky said she chose a real case to help students appreciate “how real-life problems and events present legal issues.” “We don’t often appreciate just how important a role the law has in our lives. This case has particular meaning for this group because it involves a young defendant.”

At issue is how state courts should apply the 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Miller v Alabama*, which held that mandatory sentences of life without parole for juveniles violate the Eighth Amendment. A teenager convicted of murder may still be sentenced to life without parole – but only after a hearing that, among other matters, takes into account the defendant’s age and age-related characteristics.

Raymond Carp, the defendant in the Michigan case, was convicted in 2006 of first-degree murder in the death of Mary Ann McNeeley. Carp, who was 15 at the time of the crime, was sentenced to mandatory life without parole under Michigan law. He now seeks resentencing in light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling.

Instructors for the Learning Center program include Michigan Supreme Court Justice Michael F. Cavanagh; Livingston County Prosecutor William J. Vaillencourt, Jr.; members of the State Appellate Defenders Office; Supreme Court and State Court Administrative Office staff; and other legal professionals. Sessions will take place July 29 – August 2 from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Hall of Justice, located at 925 West Ottawa Street, Lansing.

For more information, contact Rachael L. Drenovsky at 517-373-5027 or visit <http://www.courts.mi.gov/education/learning-center/>.

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