

Law Day 2008: The Rule of Law is important for everyone

Fifty years ago President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed the first Law Day a “day of national dedication to the principle of government under law.” The term “rule of law” is often referenced, but rarely defined. It is an expansive concept with many working definitions. It is perhaps best defined by what it is not: the rule of law, not of men.

Law Day 2008 at Pima County Superior Court featured a look at The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity from a couple of perspectives. First was the perspective of refugees who fled their native lands because the lack of rule of law meant their rights as citizens and members of society were not being respected. Second was from the perspective of members of the bench at superior court.

This year’s Law Day program began in the board of supervisors hearing room with a welcome from Presiding



Judge Richard Nichols engages in a discussion about the rule of law with students in his courtroom.

family’s best opportunity was to come to the United States. All three refugees hope to return to their homelands following their higher education with plans to make life better.

Following the panel presentations, the students moved to the courthouse to visit 13 courtrooms where they observed various types of hearings and engaged judges in conversations regarding



Law Day panelists visit a courtroom with Comm. Sharon Douglas.

the rule of law. The discussions that transpired in many of the courtrooms were insightful and spirited.

Shortly after noon as the students were moving to the jury assembly room for their lunch of eegees sandwiches the fire alarm sounded mandating that they evacuate the building. The students waited patiently in El Presidio Park and many were able to get something to eat before returning to their schools.

The Law Day 2008 celebration was filmed by Access Tucson and the broadcast will premier May 31 at 6 p.m. and June 1 at 8 p.m. on U74 on Comcast Cable and U99 on Cox Communications. For those persons who do not subscribe to either cable service the program can also be seen starting May 31 on <http://www.accesstucson.org>



Presiding Judge Jan Kearney

Judge Jan Kearney who greeted approximately 250 middle and high school students from 13 area public and charter schools.

A presentation and discussion featuring two refugees from Somalia and one from Afghanistan followed. The discussion was moderated by University of Arizona Political Science Professor Tom Volgy. Each of the refugees are attending Catalina Magnet High School and their stories, while unique are also somewhat similar. Ismail Mberwa and Kadar Iman, natives of Somalia told the 250 students, teachers and parents how they fled their native lands as children due to civil war and a breakdown in the fabric of society. Their first stops were neighboring Kenya where conditions were somewhat better, but their eventual stop was Tucson in search of an education that will lead to college.



Teacher Nancy Casey and her students from Cross Middle School arrive for the Law Day Program.

Sara Nabi, a native of Afghanistan, told the students that she left her homeland at age two and has never looked back. First stop for her family was neighboring Pakistan, but her mother knew that her