

News Advisory

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



Supreme Court rides circuit to North Providence

November 22, 2011: The Rhode Island Supreme Court will again practice the centuries-old tradition of “riding the circuit” when it hears oral arguments at North Providence High School on Tuesday, November 29.

“We are very pleased to have North Providence High School as the venue for this session of the Supreme Court,” said Justice Francis X. Flaherty, the court’s liaison for the planned visit. “By traveling to different parts of the state, we can bring the courthouse to communities outside Providence so students and others can see firsthand how their justice system works.”

In the days before the automobile, courts would travel throughout their jurisdictions to hear arguments. This practice, called riding the circuit, was eventually dropped as transportation methods made it easier for litigants to travel. In the last 10 years, the Supreme Court has revived this practice as a way to open up the judicial process. Now, twice a year, the Supreme Court literally moves its entire operation to a local community and invites students and members of the community to see the process firsthand. The court last traveled in April 2011 to Classical High School in Providence.

Court will begin at 9:15 a.m. in the M. Beatrice Ward Auditorium at North Providence High School, 1828 Mineral Spring Ave., North Providence. The auditorium entrance faces Mineral Spring Avenue. Parking is in front of the school. The court session is open to the public. Those wishing to observe should arrive by 9 a.m.

While at North Providence, the justices will hear arguments in four cases: a defendant’s appeal of responsibility for student loans arising from a divorce judgment; an EMT’s injury while assisting hospital personnel with an unruly patient; a defendant’s appeal of a probation violation; and a plaintiff’s appeal for a new trial in a case involving a bus accident.

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