

'I'll bring the Ohio Supreme Court to you'

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Body

April 28--A snowstorm ruined the chance for St. Paul High School students to tour the Ohio Supreme Court building and hear oral arguments.

So the students had to turn around. Justice Sharon L. Kennedy eventually heard the story and decided to do something about it.

"I will bring the Ohio Supreme Court to you," she told Brooke Meyer's American history and government classes Wednesday morning.

Kennedy started by sharing the many interesting architectural and artistic aspects of the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center, which is home to the Ohio Supreme Court. The building is named for Moyer, who grew up in Sandusky and was the chief justice from 1987 through 2010. He died April 2, 2010 at the age of 70.

Formerly known as the Ohio Departments Building, it first opened in 1933. Kennedy said the structure was "in ruins" at one point and Moyer was a visionary who saw the promise in what once was known as "Ohio's Pride." It reopened in 2004 after a four-year renovation.

"It's an iconic building in downtown Columbus because you will see it in nearly every photo of downtown Columbus," Kennedy said. "That's one beautiful building."

Every time she said drives to work and "the big bronze doors" open to allow her inside, "I get a little excited" and noted she often has to pinch herself because she works there.

One part that Kennedy marvels at is a staircase that appears to have no support system.

"It's as if it has no foundation," the justice said. "It looks like it's standing in the air with no support."

The major part of Kennedy's informative talk with the St. Paul students was about the Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, the three branches of government (legislative, executive and judicial) and she explained what each level of court does. She said the Declaration of Independence set the cornerstone which allows "you to live free today."

'I'll bring the Ohio Supreme Court to you'

Regarding the separation of power in the legislative, executive and judicial branches, Kennedy said they allow our republic to move forward and it's "only when they work in concert that we live free."

One thing she stressed is we have the capability and option of speaking to our government representatives, either by phone or in person. Kennedy said providing feedback allows one to have a say in the way government should function.

As she shared the roles of each court in Ohio, she told the students it's most likely that their experiences with judges in county and municipal courts will shape what they think of the overall judicial system and judges in general.

Kennedy recommended the students shake the hands of those judges if they meet one since they handle about 2.1 million cases in Ohio each year.

"They will hear more cases than anyone else. ... They are the work horses of the justice system," she said.

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