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Teaching Federal Trials and Great Debates in U.S. History



This June 22-27, the Federal Judicial Center's History Office will host its [Ninth Annual Summer Institute for Teachers](#) in Washington, D.C. At the institute, titled *Federal Trials and Great Debates in U.S. History* and co-sponsored by the American Bar Association's Division for Public Education, high school teachers in history, government, civics, and law will examine pivotal episodes in American history through the lens of famous federal court cases. Twenty-one teachers from around the country will spend a week hearing from historians and federal judges about three major cases and working with each other and faculty advisors to develop curriculum that they can bring back to their students.

The institute builds on teaching materials developed by the Federal Judicial Center as part of its Teaching Judicial History project. The Center's website now includes eleven cases that span U.S. history and cover events ranging from the enforcement of anti-sedition laws at the start of the nineteenth century, to the suppression of habeas corpus during the Civil War, to the integration of public schools in the South in the 1950s. Each teaching unit presents a narrative of the case, with a focus on the legal issues presented to the federal courts and the larger historical context that produced the case. Units include detailed biographies of the participants in the cases, a collection of historical documents for students to analyze, and suggestions for learning activities for teachers to bring to the classroom.

The cases that make up the Teaching Judicial History project demonstrate that federal court history is also local history. Each

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Alan C. Page to Speak at AASLH Luncheon

Each year, the Court and Legal History Affinity Group sponsors a luncheon at the AASLH Annual Meeting. This year's speaker is Alan C. Page.

Minnesota's first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Alan C. Page, was

teaching unit focuses on how cases moved through the federal courts from the trial level and opens a window into the lives of individuals who experienced and drove historical change.

The teaching unit on *Olmstead v. U.S.*, for example, introduces students to the Prohibition era through the operations of bootleggers and law enforcement in Washington State. The case of the *Amistad* allows students to learn about slavery and the slave trade through the experiences of a group of Africans who rebelled against their captors and found themselves in federal court in Connecticut.

The case of *Chew Heong v. U.S.* paints a portrait of the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants in late nineteenth century California. Each case shows students how federal law mattered to actual people in particular places and times and the role that federal courts played in ongoing debates about social, cultural, and political change.

To learn more about the Teaching Judicial History project and view the complete collection of teaching units, please visit the website of the Federal Judicial Center at <http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf/page/teaching.html>.

For more information on the summer teacher institute, visit http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/summer_institute_for_teachers.html.

Daniel S. Holt, Associate Historian, Federal Judicial Center

Panel at the Upcoming AASLH Annual Meeting



The Court and Legal History Group is sponsoring a panel at the upcoming [AASLH Annual Meeting](#) in September that gets right at the heart of the conference theme of collaboration. The session, "Shall We Get Together: How to Make Partnerships Work," will

feature two success stories of historians, museum professionals, and educators working together to produce programs and exhibits that are truly "greater than the sum of their parts."

We are always excited to feature the work of our members at the AASLH annual meeting and this year is no different. Rachael Drenovsky, a long time participant in the Court and Legal History Group, is the Learning Center Coordinator at the [Michigan Supreme Court](#) in Lansing. She will discuss how the collaboration at the Michigan Supreme Court between educators, historians, museum professionals, and court staff informs the work of the Court's Learning Center, which hosts on site tours and programs, produces exhibits, and develops curriculum for educators on the history of the law and the courts.

The Court and Legal History Group also makes it a point to reach out to local historians and other professionals in the cities where the

elected to the court in 1992. He was reelected in 1998, 2004, and 2010. Previously, he served as an assistant attorney general and a special assistant attorney general, and was an associate with the Minnesota law firm of Lindquist and Vennum.

Justice Page is widely renowned for his former career as a professional football player. Elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1988, he is best known for his defensive efforts with the Minnesota Vikings in the 1970s.

Justice Page, who attended law school at the University of Minnesota during the height of his football career, is an ardent defender of equal education for children. He is the founder of the Page Education Foundation, which assists students of color with post-secondary education.

About the AASLH Court & Legal History Affinity Group

Please feel free to forward this e-mail to colleagues. [Click here for more Court & Legal History resources.](#)

To sign up to receive future issues of *Court & Legal History Affinity Group News*, join the AASLH Court & Legal History Affinity Group. **The Affinity Group is not a membership organization and there is no fee to join.**

AASLH is held each year. This year we are pleased to have Amy Mino, the Executive Director of the [Landmark Center](#) in St. Paul, present on her experience in making the Landmark Center into a cultural and historical hub of the city. The Landmark Center was built in 1902 and originally served as a Federal Court House and Post office. In the 1970s, citizens organized to save the building from demolition. Owned by Ramsey County, Landmark Center is managed by Minnesota Landmarks, a not-for-profit organization. The Landmark Center is on the National Register of Historic Places and houses a number exhibits, including one on the history of the building's former tenants, including the federal court, and the history of how the Landmark Center came to be.

The conference is September 17-20 in St. Paul, MN. Registration for the conference will open online on June 6.

Daniel S. Holt, Associate Historian, Federal Judicial Center

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