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Ohio Supreme Court convenes in Ada

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Ohio Supreme Court Justice Maureen O'Connor listens to a lawyer answer her questions during the session held at Ohio Northern University.

A live session of the Ohio Supreme Court was held at Ohio Northern University last week, with arguments on four separate cases being heard by the panel of seven. Special invitations were extended to the schools in the county to come and observe the session and then discuss it afterwards with the lawyers from both sides.

The Ohio Supreme Court does these Off-Site Programs periodically to encourage high school students to learn about the judicial branch of government.

Originally started by Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer in 1987, the Off-Site Program also provides in-class preparations before the Supreme Court visit. Program coordinators say that not only are students exposed to law, but also history and debate.

Of the four cases argued in ONU's Moot Courtroom, there was one local case. AllState Insurance Company vs. Dailyn Campbell, et al is in regards to the November, 2005 incident where Mr. Campbell and four other juveniles placed a fake deer in the roadway at night and watched as vehicles swerved to avoid the decoy. One teenage driver though, Robert Roby, Jr., lost control while swerving, flipped his car and he and his passenger, Dustin Zachariah, were severely injured.

In the case of AllState vs. Campbell, the lawyers were in agreement as to the facts in the case, but in question was the intent of the boys. Did they deliberately intend to cause harm by their prank? Was the harm a certainty, or was there an opportunity to avoid or escape the harm? Lawyers for Campbell insist that the harm was not certain, that there are still questions as to where the deer decoy was placed in the road, and witnesses said that there were vehicles that were able to safely avoid the deer.

"We have an occurrence because injuries weren't intentional," said Paul Scott, attorney for Campbell.

At the debriefing session afterwards, USV students peppered the lawyers with questions about the case. They were told that Roby's parents wanted this case heard by high schoolers, to prevent a similar act from happening again.

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