

For Immediate Release

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Alameda County Courts Celebrate Law Day

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Alameda County Celebrated Law Week from April 28-May 1, 2003, culminating Thursday May 1, in a luncheon hosted jointly by the Court and the Oakland Rotary Club. Attorney General Bill Lockyer was the keynote speaker, Presiding Judge Harry Sheppard honored the Alameda County mock trial winners (Piedmont High School, they also placed 2nd in the state competition), and Judge Leo Dorado spoke briefly on the history of Law Day. That morning, Presiding Judge Sheppard hosted an informal breakfast comprised of judges, Rotary members, students, teachers, and parents from three local middle schools, kicking off Law Day, May 1, 2003.

Earlier in the week, Alameda County Board of Supervisors President Gail Steele read a joint proclamation (signed by all five board members and the PJ) in honor of Law Day into the record and then presented the proclamation to Presiding Judge Sheppard. The Court hung a proclamation in each courthouse that accepts public filings.

Additionally, at that Board Meeting, Presiding Judge Sheppard presented the Tri-Valley Haven Restraining Order Clinic Volunteer Team with the Liberty Bell Award, which annually honors a non-lawyer or non-government employee for community service that exemplifies the ideals of Law Day.

In addition to those two high profile activities, various court locations hosted eight local middle and high schools over the course of the week, giving students court tours as well as question and answer sessions with District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Judges, and Court staff.

Finally, as part of the Law Day Committee's outreach program, our Speaker Outreach Coordinator, Nancy Vue, sent judges and attorneys to over 25 classes in schools throughout Alameda County. The Bench-Bar Speaker Outreach Program is ongoing, so far over 600 students have been reached and 75 speakers have volunteered to be a part of the program.

The Bench-Bar Speaker Outreach Program and other Law Day activities were a result of the Court's Community Focused Court Strategic Plan calling for increased education and dissemination of information to the public. The Strategic Plan is the result of months of community-court collaboration led by Superior Court Judge Gordon Baranco.

These activities were the result of approximately eight months of planning by the Law Day Committee, made up of members of the Court, the Alameda County Bar Association, the Alameda County Law Library and the Alameda County Office of Education. The committee was co-chaired by Judge Leo Dorado, and Deputy District Attorney Kim Hunter. Members of the committee include, Assistant Presiding Judge Barbara Miller, Law Librarian Cossette Sun, Susan Jeffries Esq., Rachelle di Stefano from the Office of Education, and court staff including Planning and Research Bureau Chief Jim Brighton, Speaker Outreach Coordinator Nancy Vue, and Judicial Administration Fellow James Maynard.