

JUDICIAL DECISIONS YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT AND SOME YOU HAVE NOT!

No judicial decision is made in a vacuum. There is always a back story that is relevant to the decision-making process. This year, we explore a number of provocative decisions of the United States Supreme Court and delve into the history and background that led to the ultimate adjudication. Many of the decisions are well-known; others are obscure yet raise significant issues that still resonate to this day. Two classes will be devoted to the New Jersey court system as well as the always relevant issue of judicial ethics. Here is a brief description of the sessions for this year's course. (Some are repeated from prior courses and except for the first class, the order of classes may vary from this syllabus.)

- 1) Transformed from a corrupt, Dickensian court structure to the finest modern court system in the country, the New Jersey Courts will be the subject of our first session. We will explore the history and politics that led to this transformation as well as examine the workings of this modern and nationally recognized judicial system.
- 2) Although the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II seems like ancient history, it has become more relevant during the past few years. We will discuss the background and decisions that addressed the issue of internment of American citizens during that war.
- 3) The session entitled "The Ten Commandments, Plastic Reindeer and Candy Canes," considers the issue of religion in public places. We will explore cases involving the display of the Ten Commandments but will venture off into other related issues involving the Constitutional exercise of religion.
- 4) What can judges do when they are not judging? This session will focus on the ethical limitations on judge's extra-judicial activities, and the class will be called upon to decide a series of ethical questions involving extrajudicial conduct.
- 5) Many of us attended schools where the flag salute was an ordinary occurrence. What about those who objected? In a session entitled "Four Brave Children!" we will discuss two cases that addressed this issue with surprising results.
- 6-7-8) A number of Supreme Court decisions are well-recognized as positive legacies of a great institution; however, some decisions have not fared as well. Three classes will focus on

the most controversial and criticized decisions of the Court. One – Dred Scott – is well known; the other two addressing women’s suffrage and eugenics are less familiar, but all have had a profound impact on this nation and its citizens.

(Relevant court decisions pertaining to a particular subject will be provided to enrollees after enrollment is closed.)

(Recommended reading – Nelson Johnson, Battleground New Jersey, Vanderbilt, Hague and Their Fight for Justice - available at Amazon.com. – Cost ranges from \$15 to \$21.)

Leader: Philip Carchman is a retired Judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division.

Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, 8 weeks: September 26 through November 28.
No class October 17, November 21.

Location: Monument Hall.