



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2026

Pennsylvania Students Encouraged to Explore Civics with the Supreme Court of Pa Historical Commission

HARRISBURG – As the nation marks America’s 250th birthday, Pennsylvania students are invited to join the celebration while learning about the work and role of the courts with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Historical Commission.

Through its focus on the importance of civics education, the Supreme Court Historical Commission has launched a series of contest opportunities for students, aimed at helping students expand their knowledge about the work and the role of the state court system.

Beginning March 5, students will have the opportunity to participate in essay and coloring contests with winners honored during the Supreme Court’s May oral argument session at the Capitol.

“Civics education is the foundation of an informed and engaged citizenry. When students take part in opportunities focused on our courts, they gain a deeper understanding of the judicial branch and the role the courts play in protecting constitutional rights,” said Justice Sallie Updyke Mundy. “The Pennsylvania Historical Commission’s initiatives invite young people to explore how our justice system functions.”

Both contests are free and open to Pennsylvania students in public, private, charter, cyber-charter and home school settings. **The deadline for entries is April 24, 2026.**

The coloring contest is open to all students ages 5-11 and will give young students the opportunity to create their own judge. After printing the [cartoon judge cutouts](#), students can choose which judge they want to color and design using their creativity as their guide.

Students and parents are encouraged to submit photo entries on Instagram by tagging [@pennsylvaniacourts](#) or by mail following the instructions outlined below.

The essay contest is open to all students in grades 3 through 12, with essays being judged on creativity, overall quality and adherence to the questions:

- *Question (Grades 3-5) – Why is the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania important?*

- *Question (Grades 6-12) – Which Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice inspires you and why?*

Essay entries can be submitted by email to CommunicationsOffice@pacourts.us or by mail to:

AOPC Communications
c/o Stacey Witalec
601 Commonwealth Ave.
Harrisburg, Pa 17106

If submitting by mail, entrants should include the following information on a separate piece of paper: full name, school name, city, state, phone number, email (if applicable), teacher name and teacher email (if applicable).

Winners of the contests will be notified on May 8, 2026. In addition to being recognized for their outstanding work, winners will be invited to attend oral argument during the week of May 18 in the Supreme Court courtroom in the Capitol building, where they will observe the judicial process first-hand and be formally recognized by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Historical Commission is dedicated to exploring and preserving the rich history of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the oldest appellate court in North America. The Commission's activities include increasing public awareness of the Court's contributions to Pennsylvania's unique legal and constitutional heritage; promoting scholarship regarding the Court's history; presenting educational and civics programming for legal practitioners, scholars, historians, teachers, students and the general public; identifying and acquiring materials and artifacts of significance to the Court's history; and maintaining the Court's History Center.

More information about the Pennsylvania Courts is available on its website, Facebook, X and Instagram.

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