

From Classroom to Courtroom: Arlington Middle Schoolers' Journey into Justice

On March 28, 2025, 7th and 8th graders from Arlington Middle School left their classrooms behind to explore the inner workings of the U.S. District Court. Their day began in a U.S. Magistrate Judge's courtroom, where Assistant U.S. Attorney Wendy Cornejo, Assistant Federal Public Defender Mary C. Jermann-Robinson, and U.S. Probation Officer Arquita Bonner welcomed them with engaging introductions to their roles in the justice system and provided valuable context for the proceedings they would soon observe.

During this session, students gained firsthand insight into how legal professionals collaborate to uphold justice. They explored the complexities of federal criminal cases, the teamwork essential in and out of the courtroom, and the diverse paths that led each professional to their role. Hearing these personal journeys deepened their appreciation for the legal field and broadened their understanding of the many ways to serve in the pursuit of justice.

After wrapping up the Q&A, students settled into their front-row seats to observe the judicial process in action through a criminal report date and sentencing hearing, presided over by the Honorable Sheryl H. Lipman, Chief U.S. District Judge. Witnessing these proceedings firsthand offered a rare glimpse into the significance of legal decisions and the careful deliberation behind them. It was an enlightening experience, both inspiring ambitions for future careers in the legal field and serving as a thoughtful reminder about the lasting impact of personal choices.



Behind the Badge: Meet Deputy U.S. Marshal James Ratliff



During lunch, the students had a brief yet meaningful opportunity to meet Deputy U.S. Marshal James Ratliff. He shared intriguing insights into his role and responsibilities within the U.S. Marshal Service, along with a candid account of his personal journey to becoming a Deputy U.S. Marshal. His story not only showcased the variety of career paths available in law enforcement but also highlighted how every individual's journey is unique, shaped by their experiences, interests, and goals. It also emphasized the resilience and determination required to navigate these paths and achieve success.

Inspiring the Next Generation: Federal Judges Share Wisdom and Justice



During an engaging post-lunch discussion, Chief U.S. District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman, Senior U.S. District Judge John T. Fowlkes, Jr., and Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Tu M. Pham shared their unique experiences and insights, shedding light on the intricate responsibilities they uphold within the judiciary. Their personal stories of challenges and pivotal moments on the bench captivated the students, sparking curiosity and deepening their understanding of the complexities of judicial roles. By revealing the human side of justice, the Judges left a lasting impression, inspiring students to imagine their potential futures in the legal profession.