

# Order in the Court: Houston High Criminal Justice Students Tackle Federal Justice System

On February 27, 2025, criminal justice students from Houston High School visited the U.S. District Court. They kicked off their visit by observing a criminal sentencing hearing presided over by the Honorable John T. Fowlkes, Jr., Senior U.S. District Judge, giving the students a real-world experience and an up-close look at how the judicial process unfolds.

After the hearing, the students headed to U.S. Magistrate Judge Charmiane G. Claxton's courtroom, where they were warmly welcomed by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lauren Delery and Neal Oldham, Assistant Federal Public Defender Presita West, and U.S. Probation Officers Dawn Gardner and Alicia Cook. This distinguished group delivered an insightful overview of the criminal justice process, deepening the students' understanding of the sentencing they had just observed.

The session concluded with a lively Q&A, giving the students invaluable insights into the diverse roles and responsibilities within the judicial system. The interaction allowed them to delve into the intricacies of legal careers and the collaborative efforts required to uphold justice.



*Students engage in discussions with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Delery and Oldham, Assistant Federal Public Defender West and U.S. Probation Officers Gardner and Cook.*

## ***Meeting the U.S. Marshals***

To give the students a more comprehensive understanding of the federal justice system, Deputy U.S. Marshals Jess Ivie and Joe Beidl led an engaging discussion about the vital roles and responsibilities of the U.S. Marshals Service. Afterward, the students enjoyed a guided tour of the Marshals' facilities, where they met and interacted with more Deputy Marshals. This experience provided them with a detailed look at the operations, making their visit even more enriching.



*Deputy U.S. Marshals Ivie and Beidl detail roles and responsibilities.*

## ***Lunch and Learn with Federal Judges***

The visit concluded with a lunch and an engaging Q&A session, showcasing an impressive array of judges. Chief U.S. District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman, Senior U.S. District Judge John T. Fowlkes, Jr., Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Tu M. Pham, Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Jennie D. Latta, and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Andre B. Mathis shared their diverse perspectives and unique experiences from their roles in the judiciary. This inimitable opportunity provided students with a multifaceted understanding of the judicial system.



*Group Photo marking the end of the visit to the U.S. District Court.*