



The John Marshall Foundation  
*Justice in the Classroom Program*  
Outcomes from the 2007-2008 Pilot Year

*“The Judicial Department comes home in its effects to every man’s fireside; it passes on his property, his life, his all.”*

*John Marshall*

### **Introduction**

The mission of the John Marshall Foundation is to promote a greater understanding of Chief Justice John Marshall and his many contributions and accomplishments related to the founding of our nation. What better way to achieve this mission than to educate our nation’s students about his life and legacy? The *Justice in the Classroom Program* is specifically designed to carry out this goal. The program brings federal and state judges into classrooms for presentations and discussions with students about the Constitutional foundations of our nation, our three co-equal branches of government and the role of the judiciary in preserving the rights and liberties of all citizens.

The *Justice in the Classroom Program* was created to achieve the following learning impacts:

- An enhanced awareness on the part of students of the value and importance to them, as citizens, of the United States Constitution and the judiciary.
- An enhanced understanding of the early history and development of an independent judiciary operating under a written constitution.
- An improved awareness of, and appreciation for, the critical role played by Chief Justice John Marshall as one of the Nations’ Founding Fathers, a patriot, soldier, statesman, jurist and one of the country’s most important Americans.

Before embarking on statewide and nationwide implementation of the program, the educational staff of the John Marshall Foundation designed a pilot year study conducted in several county and city public and private schools in the Richmond area. The ultimate goal during the 2007-2008 pilot year was to develop an excellent, replicable prototype that could be implemented successfully in schools everywhere. The staff sought to introduce the program to various key stakeholders, to discover and solve problems in the presentation itself, to make improvements, to refine the experience, and to create supportive resources for all participants. Feedback from both objective and subjective evaluations from

students, teachers and judges after each presentation provided especially valuable information that led to improvements and refinements along the way.

### **Stakeholders**

Implementing the *Justice in the Classroom* Program requires orientating and orchestrating many key players:

- Judges No persons are better equipped to speak to students about the meaning, purpose and value of the judicial branch than sitting or retired judges. They bring the element of real-world, concrete and practical experience with our system of justice.
- Policy Makers Legislators and State Department of Education personnel set principles and plans of action and lead in the development of state standards of learning.
- School Leaders Superintendents, instructional supervisors, principals and lead teachers are entrusted with assuring that students have the best possible educational experiences possible. Further, they are charged with facilitating their schools in attaining Standards of Learning and full accreditation.
- Students The most important constituency. All of the other stakeholders work on their behalf by providing opportunities to acquire knowledge and by encouraging and guiding them to become citizens prepared to serve their communities in the future.
- Financial Supporters Foundations and philanthropic individuals from the John Marshall Foundation Board and beyond who provide necessary funding to support learning opportunities provided by our *Justice in the Classroom* Program.
- The John Marshall Foundation Educational Staff Key players in communicating the value of the program and promoting it with all stakeholders; developing resources; discovering and solving problems, with the goal of creating an excellent, replicable model for implementing the program in schools everywhere.

### **Specific Elements of the Pilot Year Program**

Utilizing the entire 2007-2008 school year in a pilot program for *Justice in the Classroom* allowed for ample time to assure that all the pieces were in place to move forward in future years with a very worthwhile, tested, learning opportunity for students across the nation. The following is a month-by-month description of the pilot year activities.

- July and Early August, 2007 The John Marshall Foundation Education Committee met to provide input, support and guidance for the pilot year plans. This key committee also met periodically throughout the rest of the year. The educational staff began to develop support materials and resources for judges, coordinators, teachers and students. The staff met individually with Social Studies coordinators in Chesterfield, Henrico and Hanover Counties and the City of Richmond as well as a private school representative. The program was introduced and was accepted by all coordinators as a value-added component to senior government students' educational experience. Two pilot schools were selected in each district to host the program during the school year. The staff began to select and schedule judges for the presentations.
- Late August, 2007 An orientation workshop was presented at the John Marshall House for area coordinators and lead teachers to demonstrate the program and to distribute related resources and materials.
- September, 2007 Lynn Brackenridge, Executive Director of the John Marshall Foundation, presented an overview of the program at the Virginia Civics Summit held at the State Capitol. The First Lady of Virginia, Anne Holton, legislators from the Virginia House of Delegates and the State Senate, leaders from the State Department of Education, district coordinators and other interested supporters were in attendance. The program was received enthusiastically.
- October, 2007 The Honorable Michael Allen, a Circuit Court Judge from Chesterfield County, gave two 90-minute Justice in the classroom programs at James River High School. The first was to a classroom of 25 Advanced Placement Government Students and the second was to an assembly of approximately 100 students. The Honorable Larry E. Gilman, Judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Hanover County, presented to a group of 70 government students at Hanover High School. The John Marshall Foundation hosted an information booth at the Virginia Council of Social Studies Annual Conference held in Richmond. Attendees from around the state learned about the Justice in the Classroom Program and received materials and resources.
- November, 2007 The Honorable Charles S. Russell, Senior Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court presented at Deep Run High School in Henrico County to 60+ students in an auditorium setting. The Honorable Gary A. Hicks, Circuit Court Judge in Henrico County presented to group of 30 senior government students in a trailer setting at Highland Springs High School. The Honorable Stephen Buis, Judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Court in the City of Richmond presented to an honors class of 20+ government students at John Marshall High School.

- *December 2007-February, 2008* The John Marshall staff used annotated notes, observations, and evaluations from teachers, students and judges to create additional on-line resources and to further refine and realign the 90- minute presentation schedule for the spring semester.
- *March, 2008* The Honorable Larry E. Gillman, Judge of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Hanover County, presented *Justice in the Classroom* at his alma mater high school—Patrick Henry High School. There were 24 honors students. The session was video-taped and Judge Gilman was also interviewed by the school's TV news staff.
- *April, 2008* The Honorable Bradley Cavedo, Circuit Court Judge for the City of Richmond, presented to a class from the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies. The Honorable Angela E. Roberts, Chief Judge of the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Court, presented to approximately 100 government and International Baccalaureate students at Thomas Jefferson High School. To provide herself with background information on John Marshall, Judge Roberts not only read several books and articles, but she also visited the John Marshall House to further acquaint herself with the life and time of the Great Chief Justice. Also in April, The Honorable Charles S. Russell, Senior Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court, presented the program to an assembly of private school students from Saint Gertrude High School.
- *May, 2008* The John Marshall Foundation together with the Center for Civic Education hosted a National Teachers' Seminar from May 8 – 11 in Richmond. The John Marshall staff presented an overview of the *Justice in the Classroom* Program to the attendees and invited them to launch the program in their respective states. Attendees received resources and materials and the assurances of the John Marshall Foundation Staff that they would be supported in every way possible in this endeavor.
- *June, 2008* The Educational Staff at the John Marshall Foundation contacted judges for presentations in the 2008-2009 school year. To date, nearly every judge who participated in the pilot year had enthusiastically agreed to do at least two presentations in the new school year. The staff is also putting the final pieces in place for the first Richmond Area Teacher's Seminar to be held August 11-13. This seminar is made possible through generous grants from the Seay Foundation and the Windsor Foundation.

**What Works Best** In our quest to create an excellent, replicable model presentation for the *Justice in the Classroom* Program, we discovered some problems and found some solutions that made the program even better with each subsequent presentation. Each school's staff, students and teachers were most hospitable and accommodating. We are deeply appreciative of the cooperation

and enthusiasm in each school. Further, we are most grateful for the 150% effort of each and every judge. Each one was engaging, knowledgeable, and very well prepared. We know that the students truly had an opportunity to enhance their awareness of the critical role John Marshall played in the early years of our Nation's history. Here is a brief summary of what seems to work best:

- Cooperative and enthusiastic school leaders. Many principals and area coordinators joined in the presentations to show their interest and support.
- Students who have had expectations clearly set by their teachers and who have had an opportunity to engage in some activities to heighten their curiosity and awareness before the judge's visit.
- Auditorium-based assemblies with up to 100 students work just as well as individual classroom presentations and allow for many more students to have an opportunity to experience the program and the visit from a judge. Having a quality audio system, lapel mikes, and wide screens are also helpful.
- Actively engaged students. Studies show that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Having students read significant quotes throughout the presentation (using a portable microphone), and engaging them in a "Think, Pair, Share" exercise works very effectively to insure optimum learning.
- Judges need a break in a 90-minute time slot. The most effective use of time seems to be a 45-minute presentation of the *Justice in the Classroom* power point program by the judge. This is followed by a 20-minute "Think, Pair, Share" activity led by a teacher or the staff that involves every student; and a 25- minute presentation by the judge on the state court system and on the everyday life and duties and responsibilities of being a judge. Finally, students should have an opportunity to ask questions.
- Judges who enter the classroom wearing judicial robes have an immediate positive impact. Students should be asked to rise and stay standing when the judge enters the room. This is not just to show respect for the judge, but also, and more importantly, to show respect and acceptance for the rule of law in our Nation.
- Having a chart of the state judicial system posted for the judge to use. Having a bottle of water on hand for the judge is important.
- Securing a brief bio of the judge beforehand, and having a student read it to the class in the introduction of the judge.

- Several weeks before the program provide each judge with a packet of useful, relevant materials—including a biography of John Marshall (we recommend *The Great Chief Justice: John Marshall and the Rule of Law* by Charles F. Hobson).
- Several weeks before the program, provide each participating teacher with a packet of pre and post activities and background information, including relevant SOL's, web resources and readings.
- Provide self-addressed stamped return envelopes for the lead teacher and judge to use to send back evaluations.
- Using the on-line resources provided by the John Marshall Foundation found at <http://www.johnmarshallfoundation.org/justice.htm>

**Moving Forward** Building on the foundation laid and the knowledge acquired during the pilot year, we have plans to expand into more classrooms and to introduce the *Justice in the Classroom* Program to a wider audience throughout the state and nation. Our plans include the following:

- Refine and expand the high school version of the program to include a few more highlights and significant cases from the Marshall Court.
- Develop a similar program appropriate for middle school students.
- Present our program to an October 2009 gathering of the Virginia State Council of Social Studies Specialists.
- Expand our base of judges by asking each judge who previously presented to recommend some colleagues who may be interested in participating.
- Connect with state Supreme Court educational offices throughout the nation to introduce our program and to assist in developing the program in their respective states.
- Secure additional funding to support our program as it expands and impacts ever more students.
- Expand our on-line resources to facilitate distant efforts to present the program.

### **Quotes from Pilot Year Participants**

