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FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

Date of Release: December 16, 2024
Point of Contact: Kasey Dunn Morgan
Telephone: 847-377-3818

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

LAKE COUNTY JUDGES WILL VISIT LOCAL CLASSROOMS AS PART OF THE JUDICIAL READING PROJECT

In conjunction with the February celebration of the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Judges will be among the many Illinois judges to deliver a program to grade school students based on the popular children's book by Martha Brenner, *Abe Lincoln's Hat*.

Abe Lincoln's Hat is an illustrated account of the adventures of our nation's 16th President, revealing the secrets he stored in his tall, black hat. The book portrays Lincoln as an absent-minded frontier lawyer who nudged his memory by sticking letters, court notes, contracts, and checkbooks inside his trademark top hat. There are other books that the Judges can read to a class as well.

A project of the [Illinois Judges Association](#) (IJA), the reading program is aimed at children in grades K-4 to encourage reading appreciation, value, and enjoyment. Judges dressed in their black robes will make classroom appearances, read the book, and discuss its intersection with history and the law. The book will be donated to the school library.

"Too many school children are not reading at grade level," said the Honorable Mary Schostok, a Justice of the Appellate Court, Second District, and former president of the Illinois Judges Association. "This reading deficiency affects student learning and contributes to the high school dropout rate. Our reading project is one small step, which we hope will inspire young students to appreciate the value of books as they learn a little about history and our system of justice directly from a sitting judge."

Email kvanwey2@lakecountyil.gov if you would like a Judge to come to your Lake County classroom to read one of a variety of books provided by the Illinois Judges Association and Illinois Judges Foundation to the students.

The project is the latest in a series of community programs undertaken by the Illinois Judges Association, including the IJA's Page It Forward reading and tutoring program. Other IJA programs are "Courtroom in the Classroom," a presentation that celebrates the U.S. Constitution; "7 Reasons to Leave the Party," covering the legal and personal consequences of drinking and driving, taking drugs, and engaging in other unhealthy behaviors; "Worries of the World Wide Web," a program created to address the increasing problem of cyberbullying, electronic harassment, and sexting/pornography and "Your Future, Your Choice," educate the students about the justice system, how a case goes through the system, what's the difference between the juvenile and the adult system and what are the crimes associated with the internet and social media. More information on these programs can be found on the [IJA website](#).

The [Illinois Judges Association](#) is a membership organization of 1,250 active and retired judges whose purpose is to foster public confidence in the independence of the judiciary, provide services and education to its members, and information about court operations to the public. Funding for the books was made possible by a grant from the Illinois Judges Foundation.

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