By Kathy Parrish

To County Clerk Lynn Alles, the courthouse is "a place where people come for resolution of life's most serious matters."
Folks rarely drop by just to visit.
Last week, though, the court threw open its doors to the public for a special taw Day open house. And more than 500 high-school students and 200 senior citizens took the opportunity to tour offices, courtrooms and hear public officials talk abdut their jobs.

jobs.
"it's nice to know we can come here anytime,"
said Julia Lupp, touring with Addison Township
Senior Citizens.

OAKLAND COUNTY Circuit Court held the open house to mark Law Day. The event was a first for the court, which usually just contributes to programs set up by the Gakland County Bar Association.

In 1961, May 1 was designated by congressional resolution as a "special day of celebration by the American people in appreciation of their liberties and the reaffirmation of their loyalty to the United States."

States."
"The court are proud of what we do. We feel we have something to show you," Circuit Judge Gene Schnelx told one of the four groups.

In a sectious tone, Schnelx told his young listeners that "the very reason you're here is because of the force of the law."

With a smile, he added: "Also you get a day off from school and a chance to harass your teachers."

from school and a chance to harass your teachers."

OAKLAND COUNTY Bar Association president Sheldon Larky explained that Law Day isn't a day for judges or attorneys.

'It's a day set axide for people to learn the distinction between our country and others.

'Our might is not with machine guns or missiles but the pen," he said. 'Our courts exist to bring freedom rather than enslavement to our citizens."

All morning four groups visited offices and courtrooms, where actual trials were taking place. Among the stops were the largest county law library in the state and the first computerized courty system; said county clerk Lynn Allen, who added that 24,000 new court cases are started in Oakland Country each year.

FOR A GROUP of Rochester High School stu-dents enrolled in a Practical Law class taught by Mike Metevier, it was a chance to see the legal system in action.

system in action.

Altha sure you have no gum in your mouth.
We'd hate to have to stop a trial because of that,"
cautioned deputy probate register Cathy Harrison,
leading them into a courtroom where an insurance
case was being heard. During a recess, Judge
George LaPlata told them not to be surprised by
seeing some empty courtrooms.

"If a case finishes, we have to find another quick.
Sometimes a courtroom is empty because we're

going crary trying to find a case," said the West Bloomfield resident. Labor High School toucher Detail

Bloomfield resident.

Labber High School teacher Beth Brown's students acted out mock trials in their Personal Law and Business Law classes. But visiting Chief Judge Francis X. O'Brien's courtroom made their studies more real.

"The judge was very fair," said Brett Ackerman, 17, of Bloomfield Hills.
"He questioned the afterneys and found boles in their arguments."

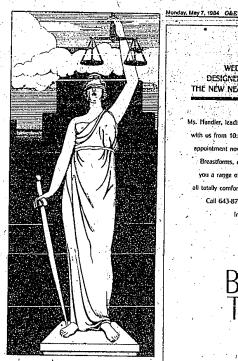
their arguments."

WHILE VISITING Clark J. Adams-Philip Pratt
Oakland County Law Library, director Richard
Beer invited young visitors to use some of the
\$3,000 volumes for term-paper research.

"We hope to see you do your papers here. We'ra
open to the public 23 hours a week," said Beer.
Friend of the Court mediator Don Slagle explained his job is necessary because "sometimes
when people get divorced their feelings are so
strong they don't nuction well as parents."

at the control of the court mediator between the
challenge of the court of the court of the
Could you do their play the
"Could you do the court of the course!" one sealor citizen asked. "A simple estate,"
answered a court employee.

"Lady Justice," a lithograph by Pamela Harrington. The blindfolded woman holding the scales of justice has long been a symbol of the legal system.



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