

# LESSON 4 – Lecture Notes

Grade Level & Subject: High School Social Studies (History or Government)

Unit: Discovering the Rich History of the Michigan Supreme Court

Lesson: Faces of the Bench

## I. Eugene Black

A. Born in Marine City, MI

B. Served the Court from 1956 -1973 after election as a Democrat in 1955

C. Career

1. World War II veteran
2. Attorney General for State of Michigan
3. Circuit Court Judge

D. Philosophy/Personality

1. Critical of the Court
2. Critical of colleagues on the Bench
3. Opinionated and outspoken

E. Education

1. One year of law studies after high school at Detroit College of Law
2. Became a student in a Circuit Court judge's office
3. Completed a brief one-year program at University of Michigan and was admitted to practice law

II. Thomas M. Kavanagh

- A. Born near Carson City, MI
- B. Educated at University of Detroit
- C. Career
  - 1. City Attorney and City Clerk in Carson City
  - 2. Attorney General
- D. Served on the Court from 1958-1975 (elected in 1958 and re-elected in 1966)
- E. Selected as Chief Justice 3 times
- F. Personality/Involvement
  - 1. Family was very important to him
  - 2. His faith and church were of the utmost importance
  - 3. He loved sports and played on the Attorney General's Office bowling team
  - 4. Died while still working for the Court
  - 5. Sought to maintain the independence of the Court and make it the best in the country

III. Edward Cahill

- A. Born in Kalamazoo
- B. His mother was the niece of Epaphroditus Ransom, who had been a Michigan Supreme Court Justice and Governor of Michigan
- C. Education

1. Kalamazoo College
  2. Apprenticeship in a private practice in Kalamazoo
- D. Raised the first African-American Infantry Unit in Michigan and served in the Civil War with these men from 1863 until the end of the war
- E. Moved to Chicago and set up a law practice
- F. After the Great Fire displaced his office, he returned to Michigan
- G. Served on the Court in 1890 when he was appointed to replace Thomas R. Sherwood. He lost the subsequent election but his reputation was impeccable amongst his peers

#### IV. Today's Justices

- A. Michael F. Cavanagh
1. Served on the Court since 1983 after election in 1982 and re-elections in 1990, 1998, and 2006. Justice Cavanagh's current term expires January 1, 2015.
  2. Served as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court from 1991-1995
  3. Educated at University of Detroit
  4. Worked in private practice
  5. Worked for the Court of Appeals
  6. Involvements
    - a. Various community organizations

- b. Numerous bar associations
- c. Numerous judicial committees

B. Robert P. Young, Jr.

- 1. Born in Detroit
- 2. Educated at Harvard
- 3. Appointed by Governor Engler on December 30, 1998.
- 4. Elected in 2000, 2002, and 2010.
- 5. Chief Justice 2011-current
- 6. Career
  - a. AAA of Michigan
  - b. Private practice
  - c. Court of Appeals

C. Stephen J. Markman

- 1. Appointed by Governor Engler, effective October 1, 1999.
- 2. Elected in 2000, 2004, 2012.
- 3. Formerly US House of Reps Legislative Assistant, US Assistant Attorney General, MI U.S. Attorney Eastern District of MI, MI Court of Appeals

D. Mary Beth Kelly

- 1. Elected in November 2010.
- 2. Formerly Chief Judge of the Third Circuit

E. Brian K. Zahra

1. Appointed on January 14, 2011, by Governor Snyder.
2. Elected in 2012.
3. Formerly a judge of the Michigan Court of Appeals.

F. Bridget Mary McCormack

1. Elected in November 2012.
2. Formerly a dean at the University of Michigan Law School

G. David Viviano

1. Appointed by Governor Snyder on February 27, 2013.
2. Formerly a judge of the Macomb County Circuit Court.