

Connecticut Appellate Court to Visit Norwich Free Academy on Oct. 24 as Part of Its “On Circuit” Program



The [Connecticut Appellate Court](#) will visit [Norwich Free Academy \(NFA\)](#) in Norwich on Tuesday, Oct. 24, as part of its “On Circuit” program, which provides students the opportunity to hear actual court cases argued in “real time.”

Through the program, students, educators and the public gain a greater understanding of the appellate process. The Appellate Court has heard arguments at several high schools, colleges and universities since the program began in 1996.

The Appellate Court first visited NFA in 2008. During the Court’s second visit to the school on Oct. 24, Presiding Judge Bethany J. Alvord, Judge Nina F. Elgo, an NFA graduate, and Judge Ingrid L. Moll will hear one criminal case and one civil case. In addition, Superior Court Judge John M. Newson, another NFA graduate, is assisting with preparing the students for the visit.

- **When, where & what:** Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, in NFA’s Slater Auditorium, 305 Broadway. The Court will hear two cases, one criminal and one civil. Each case will take one hour, consisting of 40 minutes of oral argument followed by a 20-minute question-and-answer session with the arguing attorneys. The first argument will start at 9:15 a.m., and the second at 10:15 a.m. (Case summaries are attached.)
- **First case to be heard:** The 9:15 a.m. case is *State of Connecticut v. Joseph Bernardo*, a criminal case out of the Danbury Judicial District. The defendant is appealing his conviction on a charge of first-degree unlawful restraint. At issue is whether the evidence was sufficient to prove that the defendant had specific intent to substantially interfere with the victim’s liberty.
- **Second case to be heard:** The 10:15 a.m. case is *John Femia v. City of Meriden*, a civil case out of the New Haven Judicial District. At issue is whether the trial court erred in granting summary judgment for defendant city on plaintiff police officer’s age discrimination complaint.
- **Cameras:** If a media organization wishes to submit a camera request, please contact the External Affairs Division at 860-757-2270.
- **Quotes regarding visit:**
 - *Presiding Appellate Court Judge Bethany J. Alvord:* "Judges Elgo, Moll and I are excited to return to NFA for another ‘On Circuit’ session at the school. We are

grateful for the invitation and appreciate the efforts of all the faculty and staff at NFA for making the necessary arrangements and accommodations. We also greatly appreciate the efforts of Judge John Newson for preparing the students for this experience. The ‘On Circuit’ sessions are a wonderful opportunity for students and others to learn about the appellate process and our system of justice.”

- *Dr. Nathan Quesnel, Head of NFA:* “Norwich Free Academy prides itself on providing unparalleled learning opportunities for its students. We are thrilled to welcome back the State Appellate Court to our campus. For our students to watch arguments and be able to question the attorneys afterwards is far more unique than simply learning from a textbook.”

Contact information: External Affairs Division, Connecticut Judicial Branch, 860-757-2270.