



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **New Education Program Puts Spotlight on Judicial System**

In an effort to capture student attention and bring the importance of law and civic responsibility to the classroom, an innovative program is kicking off at Cal State San Marcos on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

Judges, lawyers and college educators have united to develop a pioneering course designed to assist local elementary and high school teachers. The program, called *The On My Honor Institute*, will provide teachers with new and interesting ways to help students understand the law and the administration of justice. The Institute will be conducted on the Cal State San Marcos campus and at the North County Superior Courthouse.

The three-day program is open to teachers K-12 and helps them learn new and stimulating ways teach a civics-related social studies program, specifically as it relates to judicial processes as defined by state academic standards. The course includes learning to bring civics-related social studies program to life through the use of simulation, visual and performing arts and language arts in a way that grabs and keeps the students' attention.

"This effort is extremely important as statistics show a dramatic decline in civic engagement by our young people, i.e.: voting, serving on juries, involvement in politics, and volunteerism. Our democracy is based on involvement, '...of the people, for the people, and by the people', so it is obviously important that we educate our young people as to the importance of our republic if we plan to keep it" says Dr. Fran Chadwick of the California State University at San Marcos.

Superior Court Judge Richard Cline, who developed student outreach program at the Vista Superior Court called "*On My Honor*," is involved the teacher outreach effort. "We would like the participants to come away with an accurate understanding of the basic function of the courts, how a trial is conducted, and the role of the judge, attorneys and jury. And more importantly, we want the participants to understand and appreciate the importance of the rule of law and respect for law to the functioning of our society."

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The Institute will be held on the Cal State San Marcos campus and will include a trip to the Vista Courthouse, where the teachers will participate in a mock trial. The ground breaking program was made possible through grant funds and contributions from the North County Bar Association, the state bar association, and Cal State San Marcos. The State's Administrative Office of the Courts also donated funds and will be observing the program with an eye on expanding the efforts throughout the state.