

California Courts News Transcript

Title: Art Reception: 4th District Court of Appeal

Date: May 11, 2010

The recently completed 4th District Court of Appeal courthouse in Santa Ana is extraordinary. Besides its award winning beauty and utility, the project came in on time and under budget in September 2009.

But certainly its most remarkable feature is in the lobby: the collection of art work by students in Orange County. On this day family and friends gathered to honor the artists. No one was more thrilled than Justice Eileen Moore, who inspired the partnership between the court and the schools.

Justice Eileen Moore, 4th District Court of Appeal *"This is incredible, It's just such a gathering of the community and I've never been so proud of children and teachers especially."*

All but one of the canvases commemorates cases resolved here – details are described next to the paintings. The largest display was created by students in juvenile hall, a mural depicting a 1947 federal case: Mendez versus the Westminster School District – which ended school segregation in California.

Sylvia Mendez was a guest of honor at the reception. She was 9 years old when she was at the center of the drama.

Sylvia Mendez *"Yes. Oh, they caught it beautifully."*

Bill Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts *"I think the idea of how they went about expressing art to express the values and the principles in each of these cases really explains what the rule of law is in a way that can't be explained in just a few words but in these pictures it expresses it better than any mountain of books can."*

Students are excited to see their work on permanent display in the courthouse.

Rachel Mai Le, Bolsa Grande Senior *"I feel great. I never had anything like this before happen to me."*

Thanh Nhan Tran, Bolsa Grande Senior *"I feel really proud that I had this opportunity to work as a group. It was a lot fun."*

Educators say it was also a rich learning experience for the students, honing their critical thinking skills and expanding their knowledge of the courts. And the project will have an impact on the curriculum.

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Bill Habermehl, Orange County School Superintendent *“It has changed the way we look at art projects in the future. We will do much more collaborative and cooperative art projects where you have a bigger theme.”*

The theme today was celebration, with students and their teachers receiving certificates of appreciation from the court and from the Board of Education. There was special thanks for the art teacher who coordinated the effort for the school district.

Voice of Justice Eileen Moore, 4th District Court of Appeal *“If it were in my power to recommend somebody for canonization I would recommend it; Ruth Rosen.”*

It was a huge amount of work – done on a shoestring – but well worth it.

Justice Eileen Moore, 4th District Court of Appeal *“It’s just been so wonderful to watch all this come to fruition.”*

And lessons learned here may have application in many courthouses to come.

I’m Leanne Kozak reporting in Santa Ana for *California Courts News*.

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