



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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For more information contact:  
Brian Tyson at (800) 932-2682  
briant@abota.org

**EDUCATORS NATIONWIDE TO GET  
A CRASH COURSE IN THE LAW**

*National Teachers Law School to tackle issues affecting educators, students;  
federal judges, professors and lawyers to share their knowledge*

PHILADELPHIA (Sept. 26, 2016) — In a time when teachers may shy away from controversial topics and student interest in government can be lackluster, 45 leading educators from across the country are gathering in Philadelphia this weekend to do something about the problem. They are attending a first of its kind National Teachers Law School at the National Constitution Center, Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

Program organizers will provide new, thought-provoking insight on a variety of civics education topics covered by judges, historians, professors, lawyers and education experts.

Candid discussions will be held on topics will include how teachers deal with civic participation in the wake of tragedy; constitutional issues that impact the classroom, such as freedom of expression as it pertains to social media; why the jury trial is the last guardian of our rights; and what students need to know about the Constitution.

“Our schools have strayed far from their early fundamental role in transmitting the skills of responsible and engaged citizenship. Public understanding of how our government works is at an all-time low,” said Michael P. Maguire, a former criminal prosecutor in Orange County, California, who later served as president of the ABOTA Foundation and is one of the organizers of the event.

Mr. Maguire wants to equip teachers with the tools to foster an appreciation among their students for the value of the American civil and criminal legal systems and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Judge Marjorie Rendell agrees.

“We have forgotten that our Founding Fathers realized that civics education was central to our democracy. Thomas Jefferson believed the people to be the ‘safe depositories of government...and to render them safe their minds must be improved.’ We must educate our youth about their role as citizens so as to insure their safety. Nothing could be more important to the future of our communities and the nation,” added Rendell, who now serves in senior status on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

While ABOTA Foundation has a number of programs to directly help students and has partnered with Scholastic, Inc., engaging teachers creates the opportunity to increase that reach exponentially.

Holding the law school in Philadelphia at the National Constitution Center is an important element of the two-day program. The events that took place in Philadelphia 229 years ago when the Constitution was created add a historical significance and an inspirational element to this program.

“We are proud to partner with the National Constitution Center to foster this meeting of passionate social studies educators with the goal of strengthening their role as ambassadors for civics education,” said Carlyle H. Chapman, Jr., president of the ABOTA Foundation.

The ABOTA Foundation, one of the founding sponsors of the National Constitution Center when it was built, is the educational arm of the American Board of Trial Advocates, an organization of plaintiff and defense lawyers and judges that promotes the American civil justice system.

The teachers and faculty members will participate in a welcome reception at the historic Union League, founded in 1862 in support of policies of President Abraham Lincoln. Other opportunities include a private reception and tour of Independence Hall and dinner at the City Tavern Restaurant, a popular meeting place of many of the Founding Fathers.

“We want the teachers to experience the law in a variety of different settings and cover a number of helpful topics,” said Charles H. Baumberger, ABOTA national president. He described the Teachers Law School as a mini-college for teachers that focuses on collaborating with top lawyers, professors, and state supreme court, appellate and federal judges.

Attendees will receive curriculum-related materials, including the book, “Dissent: The History of an American Idea” by Temple University professor and American historian Ralph Young. Dr. Young will be one of the program’s speakers, along with Judge Marjorie Rendell, a senior federal judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; Judge William G. Young, a U.S. federal judge for the District of Massachusetts; and Erwin Chemerinsky prominent scholar in constitutional law and dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law.

## **Featured Sessions and Speakers**

- **Keynote Speakers:**
  - Hon. Marjorie O. Rendell, Senior Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
  - Hon. William G. Young, U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts
- **Fostering Civic Participation in the Wake of Tragedy**  
Moderator: Michael T. Callahan, 2013 ABOTA National President  
Panelists:
  - Mary Beth Tinker, Lead Plaintiff in Tinker v. Des Moines
  - Scott Warren, Chief Executive Officer, Generation Citizen
  - Dr. Sherrilyn A. Scott, Supervisor of Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- **The Bill of Rights in Action and Civil Dialogue in the Classroom**  
Damon Huss, Senior Editor and Curriculum Specialist, Constitutional Rights Foundation
- **The American Jury: Guardian of Our Rights**  
Lewis R. Sifford, 2007 ABOTA National President
- **Dissent: The History of an American Idea**  
Dr. Ralph Young, Historian and Professor, Temple University
- **What Students Should Know About the Constitution**  
Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of the University of California Irvine School of Law
- **Do We Check the Constitution at the Classroom Door?**  
Sara Leon, Attorney, Powell & Leon, L.L.P.

### **About the 2016 National Teachers Law School educators**

ABOTA initiated a nationwide search and application process to select 45 educators from diverse backgrounds and varying experience in education, but all with the common passion for civics education in our schools. The attendees are comprised of scholarship recipients who will participate in the all-expense paid program. Funding for the law school was made available by the generous donations from the State Farm Companies Foundation, Texas Bar Foundation, ABOTA Chapters, the ABOTA Foundation, a number of law firms, and multiple individual donors. A full list of the 2016 National Teachers Law School educators is available at [www.NationalTeachersLawSchool.org](http://www.NationalTeachersLawSchool.org).

### **History of the Teachers Law School**

In 2009, Austin became the founding location of the Teachers Law School, which provides teachers with a crash course in the legal system. The law school is designed for any educator with an interest in infusing more civics instruction into their schools. It exposes teachers to presentations on topics aimed at giving teachers the tools to help their students better understand and appreciate the value of the American civil and criminal legal systems and the role those systems play in students' lives and society. The Teachers Law School has spread to multiple states. In partnership with the National Constitution Center, this is the first time the program has been offered nationally.

### **About the National Constitution Center**

The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia inspires active citizenship as the only place where people across America and around the world can come together to learn about, debate, and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution. A private, nonprofit organization, the Center serves as America's leading platform for constitutional education and debate, fulfilling its Congressional charter "to disseminate information about the U.S. Constitution on a nonpartisan basis." As the Museum of We the People, the Center brings the Constitution to life for visitors of all ages through interactive programs and exhibits. As America's Town Hall, the Center brings the leading conservative and liberal thought leaders together to debate the Constitution on all media platforms. As a center for Civic Education, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire, excite, and engage citizens about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call (215) 409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](http://constitutioncenter.org).

### **About the American Board of Trial Advocates**

The American Board of Trial Advocates, founded in 1958, is an organization dedicated to defending the American civil justice system. With a membership of more than 7,500 experienced attorneys representing both the plaintiff and defense bars in civil cases, ABOTA is uniquely qualified to speak for the value of the constitutionally-mandated jury system as the protector of the rights of persons and property.

The ABOTA Foundation was established in 1992 to provide education to the American public about the right to trial by jury and to promote the professional education of trial attorneys.