

# JUSTICE TEACHING AND MARTIN COUNTY JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE PROJECT REACHES OUT TO OUR SISTER STATES

Vermont Bar Association  
52nd Mid Year Meeting  
March 12 & 13, 2009



Judge Roby and Richard Levenstein in front of the State Capitol-Montpellier, Vermont

The Vermont Bar Association recently invited Judge Roby, Richard Levenstein, and Annette Pitts from the Florida Law Related Education Association to Vermont to present issues related to judicial independence and teaching techniques for educating the public regarding the Third Branch. The program addressed the special responsibility that members of the bar have to educate the public about the critical importance of the rule of law. The focus was on lawyers ensuring that the public understands the need for a strong, fair, impartial, and independent judicial branch of government. The program engaged the participants in an interactive discussion of this important responsibility and provided instruction and practical applications as to how to carry out that responsibility. Vermont attorney Kevin F. Ryan, Esq., was the panel moderator.

The three were panelist along with the Chief Justice of Vermont Hon. Paul L. Reiber, and Michael Palmer, Chair, VBA Public Education Section. Mr. Palmer is a Vermont attorney who has been assisting foreign governments on the issue of establishing systems of jurisprudence. The topic was entitled:

Plenary Session: Professionalism - Our Responsibility as Lawyers to  
Educate the Public About the Courts and the Rule of Law... and How to Do It!

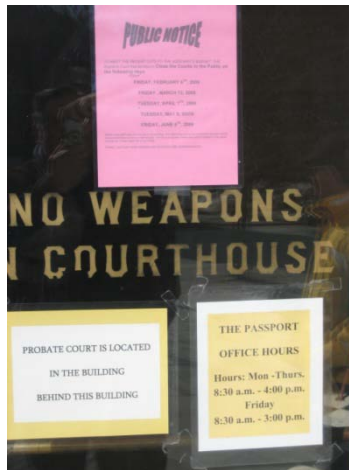
The Martin County Jury Assembly DVD was presented as an example of tools that the Vermont Bar could use regarding educating the public as to the necessity for a strong and coequal third branch of government. Ms. Pitts spent more than one hour going over teaching techniques and lesson plans available through Florida Justice Teaching. The 240 plus attendees actively participated in questions and answers and in learning techniques for future teaching to Vermont school students and to local civic groups.

The courts in Vermont are also struggling with funding issues and have even resorted to issuing furloughs for state court employees. These furloughs have resulted in court closing, both at the trial and appellate levels. The pictures that accompany this article speak volumes of what we could be facing here in Florida if the current level of funding is not maintained or even increased. The best method of staving off further damage to the branch is educating the public (adults and children) about why we need strong courts, judges, and lawyers working in those courts to assure a strong and fair means of dispute resolution.

Richard Levenstein and Judge Bill Roby received much positive feedback on the video and on teaching the public about the importance of strong, fair, independent, and impartial courts.



County Courthouse in Montpelier, Vt.



The Courthouse was closed on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> due to furloughs (see larger version below)

# PUBLIC NOTICE

TO MEET THE RECENT CUTS TO THE JUDICIARY'S BUDGET, THE Supreme Court has decided to **Close the Courts to the Public on the following days:**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2009

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009

TUESDAY, APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2009

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2009

FRIDAY, JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2009

While some staff may be working on those days, the telephone will not be answered, the door will be locked and there will be no mail delivery. For filing purposes, these days will be treated in the same manner as if these days fell on a holiday.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANTICIPATED PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

A scary sign of the times...hopefully not in Florida!



State Supreme Court closed on some Fridays and some Tuesdays-See below

COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE  
AND THE  
VERMONT SUPREME COURT

WILL BE CLOSED STARTING THE WEEK OF  
OCTOBER 6, 2008  
ON FRIDAY MORNINGS  
8:00 AM TO 12:30 PM

SUPREME COURT DOCUMENTS CAN BE  
FILED AT THE WASHINGTON SUPERIOR COURT  
LOCATED AT 65 STATE STREET  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT  
DURING THOSE TIMES  
OR  
FILED AFTER 12:30 PM AT THE  
VERMONT SUPREME COURT

PUBLIC NOTICE

To meet the recent cuts to the Judiciary's budget, the Supreme Court has decided to **close the Courts to the public** on the following days:

Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>

While some staff will be working on those days, the telephone will not be answered, the Court's voice mail system will be on, there will be no mail delivery, and the doors will be locked. For filing purposes, these days will be treated in the same manner as if these days fell on a holiday. Emergency orders will be handled by calling: 802-828-3278

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be no half-day closings during the same week in which these closings occur.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANTICIPATED PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING