



May 24, 2013

The Honorable Michael J. Davis
Chief U.S. District Judge
United States District Court
15E U.S. Courthouse
300 South Fourth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

The Honorable Donovan W. Frank
U.S. District Judge
United States District Court
724 Federal Building
316 N. Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Chief Judge Davis and Judge Frank,

On behalf of the Bloomington Human Rights Commission, I would like to thank the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota for including the City of Bloomington in the Court's outreach efforts. The Open Doors events for Kennedy and Jefferson High School 11th graders last month and the "Legacy of Courage and Freedom: Dred and Harriet Scott" event Wednesday night were great gifts to the residents of Bloomington and anyone else who had a chance to participate or attend.

Judge Frank's description Wednesday night of being able to hear a pin drop at the close of the Open Doors presentation to the 800 11th graders of Jefferson and Kennedy High Schools was exactly as it happened, and is testimony to the profound impact the presentation had on the students. The preparation of the students by Charles Cree and the attorneys who participated in the classroom sessions made the program all the more effective. The presentation brought history alive for the students and tied it to the issues of today. The preparatory sessions and the presentation also brought home the power of the Constitution and its direct impact on our lives. The program gave the students positive exposure and a direct connection to the federal and state courts and judges, all of which may otherwise seem far-off and inaccessible.

The commitment of the Court to the May 22 "Legacy of Courage and Freedom: Dred and Harriet Scott" event could not have been deeper. Your Honors were involved at every stage of the project, from its inception and its organization and planning, to full support, publicity, and its presentation on Wednesday. The program could not have happened without the tireless efforts of Becky Baertsch and



Gerri Rischel. The event was far more than a great educational moment. It promoted public understanding of the judiciary and of its immediacy and connection to our lives. But it went beyond that, too. "Legacy of Courage and Freedom: Dred and Harriet Scott" brought together, in a single place, for a single purpose, everyone from middle school children to the judiciary, people from every socio-economic status, every age, religion, race, and national origin, so that we could all celebrate and honor the struggle for human rights exemplified by the lives of Dred and Harriet Scott. It was an eye-opening experience. And as a parent, I will say that it was great role-modeling for the youth who were fortunate enough to be there. It was inspirational for all of us, and it was federal court outreach at its best.

The Open Doors program and Wednesday's "Legacy of Courage and Freedom: Dred and Harriet Scott" were significant, high impact events. The dedication and commitment of the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota (including Chief Judge Davis, Judge Frank, Chief Magistrate Judge Boylan, Magistrate Judge Graham and Magistrate Judge Rau on the organizing committee), the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association (including Rachna Sullivan on the organizing committee), Frank White, Tom Nelson, Becky Baertsch, Charles Cree, 8th Circuit Branch Librarian Andrea Wambach, Richard Josey, Jr., and key people from the City, and the participation of Lynne Jackson, Bruce Young, Dominique Jones, and Judge Kevin Ross, were a convergence of efforts that resulted in something that will long be remembered here in Bloomington.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary A. Rice".

Mary A. Rice
Chair, Bloomington Human Rights Commission