

## *A Perfect Time*

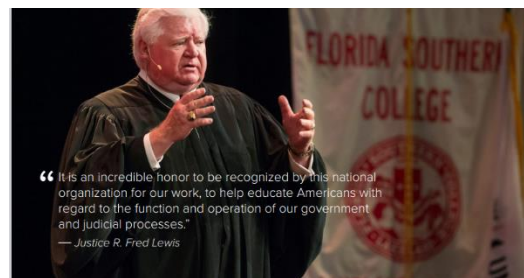


This is the perfect time of year for attorneys and judges to visit K-12 classrooms and partner with teachers to expand student understanding of our founding documents, governmental institutions, and constitutional design. From kindergarten through high school, students in Florida must engage in specific content-based standards and required instruction aligned with civics and government benchmarks at all grade levels. Constitution Month, Founders' Month, Celebrate Freedom Week, Bill of Rights Day, and Law Week are prime opportunities to engage with students and teachers and create yearlong partnerships with schools. Research and annual surveys provide evidence of the need for such involvement. This year's national Constitution Day survey addressing public knowledge of the U.S. Constitution (University of Pennsylvania Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2023) revealed only a basic understanding of rudimentary civic concepts, but demonstrated deficits in public understanding of key constitutional content. One in six adults were not able to name any of the branches of government and only one in 20 could name the five freedoms in the First Amendment.

Justice Teaching provides materials and training to help attorneys and judges share their constitutional and legal knowledge and create partnerships with the education community. Justice Teaching was founded in 2006 by then Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis of the Florida Supreme Court following years of school visits and civics presentations. Now retired and teaching undergraduate students, Justice Lewis continues his commitment to K-12 education with the creation of the Justice Teaching Center for Civic Learning located on the campus of Florida Southern College. We invite you to become a Justice Teaching volunteer and work with Florida teachers and students to advance civic knowledge and understanding of our courts and the Constitution. We provide training and materials to support your participation with local schools.

Volunteers work with civics, government, or law classes in public, charter, and private schools throughout Florida. Florida students at the middle school level are required to take a standalone Civics course and are tested on a variety of content-specific benchmarks. High school students must take a semester-long American Government course as a graduation requirement. Even undergraduate college students have civic literacy requirements in Florida. Opportunities to deepen students' knowledge and help teachers as resource persons are available locally and state-wide. Giving back to your community through education is a critical responsibility of the legal profession.

We hope you will consider working with an elementary, middle, or high school to present a civics, government or law-related activity aligned with Florida state standards from our Justice



*Figure 1 Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis, Retired*

Teaching collection. Volunteers predominantly visit schools during Constitution Month (September and October), Bill of Rights Day (December), and Law Week (May), and more often as their schedules permit. They may also serve as a resource person to teachers outside of the classroom to help them understand legal or constitutional concepts and processes.

Justice Teaching has several new activities that are available for use now and throughout the year. Materials are aligned with new state standards in civics and government. One of our newest presentations addresses the right to trial by jury, obligations to serve on juries, and landmark jury cases. We also have presentations on the steps in a trial, the Bill of Rights, What's Not in the Bill of Rights, Civics Match Up, and a host of materials that can be used in elementary, middle, and high school.

We encourage you to sign up on our website and select a school and grade level that you feel most comfortable working with. You can reach out to a school in your community to offer your service as a Justice Teaching volunteer or request assistance from our office in identifying a school. Training is scheduled monthly for new or returning volunteers.

Justice Teaching Website

[About - Florida Southern College in Lakeland, FL \(flsouthern.edu\)](https://www.flsouthern.edu/justice-teaching)

Justice Teaching Partnership Registration

[Partnerships - Florida Southern College in Lakeland, FL \(flsouthern.edu\)](https://www.flsouthern.edu/justice-teaching/partnerships)

Zoom Justice Teaching Awareness and Training

Topic: Justice Teaching

Link for Zoom training scheduled for EVERY FRIDAY at 3 pm ET

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81473652747?pwd=S2hQMytkUUE0QkYxRENKMHdwQlFwdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 7365 2747

Passcode: 354010

Thank you for helping improve public understanding of our governmental processes, institutions, and constitutional design.

For additional information, contact the Justice Teaching Center at 863.680.4664 or email [apitts@flsouthern.edu](mailto:apitts@flsouthern.edu).