



## Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan

COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER • 2 WOODWARD AVE, SUITE 711 • DETROIT, 48226-3413



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Pathways to Law club from Cass Tech High School visits Third Circuit Court following an invitation from the Hon. Chandra Baker-Robinson

Detroit, MI, March 9, 2026 – In mid-February, more than 20 students from Detroit Cass Technical High School walked through the doors of the Third Circuit Court of Michigan not as spectators, but as possible future legal professionals.

The students are members of *Pathways to Law*, a new club formed at the start of the 2025 school year. Created as a pilot initiative and currently limited to 25 Cass Tech students, the group was designed to give them hands-on exposure to the legal profession while building skills that will prepare them for college, law school, and careers in the judiciary and broader legal community.



Their visit came at the invitation of the Hon. Chandra Baker-Robinson, a proud Cass Tech graduate and member of the Third Circuit Court Bench. For many of the students, the experience marked their first time inside an active courtroom.

Throughout the day, the group observed multiple proceedings in the court's Criminal Division, including trials and motion hearings, gaining firsthand insight into courtroom procedure, judicial decision-making, and the daily operations of the most active court in Michigan. Students watched attorneys present arguments, saw litigants navigate complex legal issues, and observed how judges manage their dockets with discipline and deliberation.

Following the courtroom observations, students engaged in a candid question-and-answer session with Judge Baker-Robinson and other members of the Third Circuit Court Bench and fellow Cass Tech alums, including Judge Charise Anderson, Judge Wanda Evans, Judge Tracy Green, Judge Michael Hathaway, and Judge Regina Thomas.

**Our Mission:** *We serve the community by providing accessible and equal justice for all.*

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The discussion ranged from educational pathways and professional challenges to the personal responsibility that comes with serving on the bench. Students asked thoughtful questions about law school preparation, courtroom decorum, and what it takes to build credibility in the legal field.

Judge Baker-Robinson said the visit by the students marks the beginning of a new annual program she will plan at Third Circuit Court. That program will give inner-city students the chance to experience the legal profession in person.

The trip for the *Pathways to Law* club required a collaborative effort to make it possible. Cass Tech did not have funding for transportation, so the students organized a fundraiser to cover the cost of the bus, while members of the Third Circuit Court Bench provided lunch for the students and teachers.



According to Mr. Donald Hightower, a teacher at Cass Tech and faculty advisor to *Pathways to Law*, the club was formed to provide students with direct exposure to the legal profession rather than limiting their understanding to textbooks and classroom discussion. He noted that the program launched at the beginning of the 2025 school year and, because it remains in a pilot phase, participation has been capped at 25 students to ensure meaningful engagement and mentorship opportunities.

*Pathways to Law's* mission is to facilitate experiential learning through partnerships with judges, attorneys, and law students. In addition to courtroom visits, the club plans to host guest speakers, coordinate mentorship connections, conduct mock trials, and expose students to a broad range of legal careers. Club members also are responsible for raising money to pay for activities. As Mr. Hightower explained, the long-term objective is to transition the club into a school-approved, sustainable program that becomes a permanent staple at Cass Tech.

Early momentum in building the club has been strong. The group recently organized a Double Good popcorn fundraiser to support club expenses and plans additional fundraising efforts to sustain programming. The club also maintains an active presence on Instagram at @ct\_pathwaystolaw to share updates and build community interest.

Third Circuit Court is pleased to have hosted these Cass Tech students and hope to have members of *Pathways to Law* back in the near future. Congratulations to all club members are already demonstrating initiative, curiosity, and a clear interest in understanding the rule of law.

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### *About the Third Judicial Circuit*

The Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan is the largest circuit court in the state, with 59 judges and three operating divisions. It has jurisdiction over civil, criminal, and family matters arising in Wayne County. Learn more at [www.3rdcc.org](http://www.3rdcc.org).

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