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Boston College Law School

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U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit Visits BC Law

10/11/02--The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit heard four cases yesterday in the Henry E. Foley Moot Court Room on the Boston College Law School campus, as part of a series of special sittings during a tour of the Boston area.

"We were honored to have the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit sitting here at the Law School," said BC Law Dean John H. Garvey. "It was a unique opportunity for our students, who were able to observe first-hand how the court does its work."

The sittings drew a large crowd for most of the morning that spilled over into East Wing room 120, which had been set up to provide closed-circuit television viewing. Audience members observed that the three judges often made a special effort to question the opposing counsels on a number of fine points, which seemed to be intended to provide a higher level of information and to educate the students who were watching.

The first case, Michael M. Johnson v. United States, presented the question "whether a district court’s appointment of a receiver to ensure compliance with a consent decree constituted a taking under the Fifth Amendment." In the second case, Old Town Canoe Co. v. Glenwa, Inc., Old Town (which manufactures and distributes "sit on top" kayaks) contended that Glenwa’s manufacturing, marketing and selling of some of the Glenwa self-propelled watercraft infringed on Old Town’s patents. In the third case, In Re William F. Sauber and John Montgomery, Jr., the Court was asked to determine whether the Board of Patent Appeals and Interfaces erred in concluding that the claimed invention for a downloadable image printer system was obvious in light of an earlier patent. The fourth and final case, John Farrell v. Department of the Interior, presented the question of whether the Department of Interior abused its discretion in demoting John Farrell, a member of the U.S. Park Police Force, from the rank of Lieutenant to that of Sergeant, for the charge of conduct unbecoming an officer.

Following the morning sessions, the judges attended a luncheon in the Law School Barat House facility. At the luncheon, the judges expressed their appreciation for being able to visit the Law School and for the hospitality of the staff and students who helped coordinate the sittings.

View photos of the Court’s visit