

THE REPORTER

Volume 16, Number 2

September 2006

Valparaiso University School of Law Library

CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY

September 18, 2006

by Maribel Nash

Is it true that today's students know more about pop culture than the United States Constitution? In a survey of 600 students released by the National Constitution Center,

- 25.5% of the respondents knew that Philadelphia is the city where the Constitution was written compared to 75.2% who knew which city has the zip code 90210.
- 21.2% knew how many senators serve in the U.S. Senate compared to 81.2% who knew how many members are in the music group "Hanson."
- 1.8% knew that James Madison is considered the father of the U.S. Constitution compared to 58.3% who knew that Bill Gates is the father of Microsoft.
- 25% knew that the Fifth Amendment protects against double jeopardy and self incrimination and guards the right to a grand jury, due process, and compensation for private property taken for public use, compared to 63.7% who knew that "The Club" protects against car theft.

Hopefully, you would have done better than these students. However, if you feel you could bone up on your constitutional knowledge, here are some great online resources:

The American Memory Project at the Library of Congress provides photographs of the original primary documents in American history, including the Constitution and the papers of George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson, at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Constitution.html>.

The Avalon Project at Yale Law School provides text of various documents associated with the Constitution



VALPARAISO
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW

The Reporter is published by
the Valparaiso University
School of Law Library.

Style Editor and Designer:
Susan Waldschmidt

in html format, from the Magna Carta to the ratification documents of each state, at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/constpap.htm>.

The National Archives has several features on the Constitution, including "A More Perfect Union," an entertaining article on the Constitutional Convention and the ratification process, a useful Q & A section, and "America's Founding Fathers," a biographical overview, with index, of the Constitutional Convention delegates. For this and more go to <http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution.html>.

Our Constitution: A Conversation, a video featuring Justices O'Connor and Breyer answering questions on the Constitution, is on law reserve and online at <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org>.

Finally, the federal judiciary offers a quick and easy explanation of "The Importance of the Constitution," developed specifically for Constitution and Citizenship Day, on its website at <http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/resources/importance.html>.

To get in the spirit of Constitution and Citizenship Day, try to match each short bio below with one of these delegates to the Constitutional Convention:

Benjamin Franklin
William Richardson Davie
Luther Martin
Nicholas Gilman

William Leigh Pierce
Elbridge Gerry
Charles Cotesworth Pinkney
Gunning Bedford, Jr.

Oliver Ellsworth
James Madison
Alexander Hamilton
William Patterson

A Named Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1796, this Connecticut delegate's notorious stinginess gave him a reputation as a poor social companion.

B Representing Delaware, this delegate was a classmate of fellow conventioner James Madison at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University).

C This delegate from Georgia left the convention early to handle a business crisis; he soon became bankrupt and died deeply in debt.

D This Maryland delegate defended Samuel Chase during Chase's impeachment and Aaron Burr during Burr's 1807 treason trial.

E This Massachusetts delegate's Federalist opponents used his name to coin a phrase describing the practice of redistricting to hold on to political power.

F The oldest of ten children, this Virginia delegate was a hypochondriac, probably because of a sickly and frail childhood.

G This junior member of the two-man New Hampshire delegation acknowledged his "ordinary abilities" by keeping a respectful silence during convention debates.

H This five-foot-two delegate from New Jersey later served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court from 1793 to 1806.

I This New York delegate was killed at age forty-nine in a duel with longtime political enemy, Aaron Burr.

J Because of his contribution to state education, this North Carolina delegate and founder of University of North Carolina was named "Father of the University."

K This South Carolina delegate was one of the American ministers who rejected French bribery efforts during the XYZ affair.

L The author of *Poor Richard's Almanack* and a delegate from Pennsylvania, he invented, among other things, the lightning rod, bifocal glasses, the glass harmonica, and the urinary catheter.

Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| L Benjamin Franklin | F James Madison |
| K Charles Cotesworth Pinkney | E Elbridge Gerry |
| J William Richardson Davie | D Luther Martin |
| I Alexander Hamilton | C William Leigh Pierce |
| H William Patterson | B Gunning Bedford, Jr. |
| G Nicholas Gilman | A Oliver Ellsworth |

To celebrate Constitution and Citizenship Day, the Christopher Center will display "In Celebration of the First Amendment," a collection of books discussing the importance of the First Amendment. The display will run September 13-30. If you find yourself on the other end of campus, be sure to check it out!