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Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to Help Phila. School Dedicate New Mock Courtroom

by KYW's Mike DeNardo

Retired US Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor is in Philadelphia on Thursday to serve as a visiting judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

But she also planned a stop at Constitution High School, near 7th and Market Streets in center city.

Justice O'Connor (right) will preside as a new mock courtroom is dedicated at Constitution High. Freshman Jasmine Waddell (at left in top photo) is nearly speechless:



"I really don't know what I'm going to say to somebody that great. I think she's a great role model for somebody to have in the room. When you look at her, it's like 'Wow. I want to be just like that.' "

And sophomore Khalia Thompson (at right in top photo) says meeting the first woman to serve on the US Supreme Court will be an inspiration:

"Especially for the women in this school, since she was the first Supreme Court justice. It's like a warm feeling inside."

Principal Tom Davidson says federal appeals judge Midge Rendell, who is on the school's advisory board, was instrumental in landing so special a guest:

"Justice O'Connor and Judge Rendell are very close colleagues. And when she was able to put that together, I thanked Judge Rendell for making all of this happen."

Davidson says the law firm Ballard Spahr outfitted the the new mock trial courtroom with a realistic bench and witness box:

"Many of our students come to us thinking that they want to be lawyers, and preparing for college and eventually, law school. So this just makes it all the more real."

(Top photo by KYW's Mike DeNardo)

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