

Knollwood goes before the bar

By David Super

"That's the judge..." a young girl whispered. Before the customary "all rise" could be ordered inside Judge Jeff Davis' small hearing room at the juvenile Justice Center, fifth graders from the Knollwood School were starting to their feet.

Armed with cameras, tape recorders and pencils that were attached to makeshift clipboards with string, these students became the first ever elementary school pupils in Rapid City to tour juvenile and adult courtrooms. They displayed their best behavior and sat attentively while three alleged juvenile defendants were given hearings before the judge.

just a bit slow to all accept his invitation to raise their hands. What they didn't know, is that earlier the Seventh Circuit's youngest judge admitted that questions from school children were among the most difficult he's asked to answer. Fearless, without the usual inhibitions that color polite questions from adults who might tour the courtroom or have occasion to visit with the Judge, he noted the students could put him on the spot.

"Why do you wear a black robe...; why must everyone stand up when you come in...; what happens when a witness doesn't show up...; what's been the toughest case you've ever heard...; do you do adoptions ('Yes,' was Davis' cheerful response; 'I

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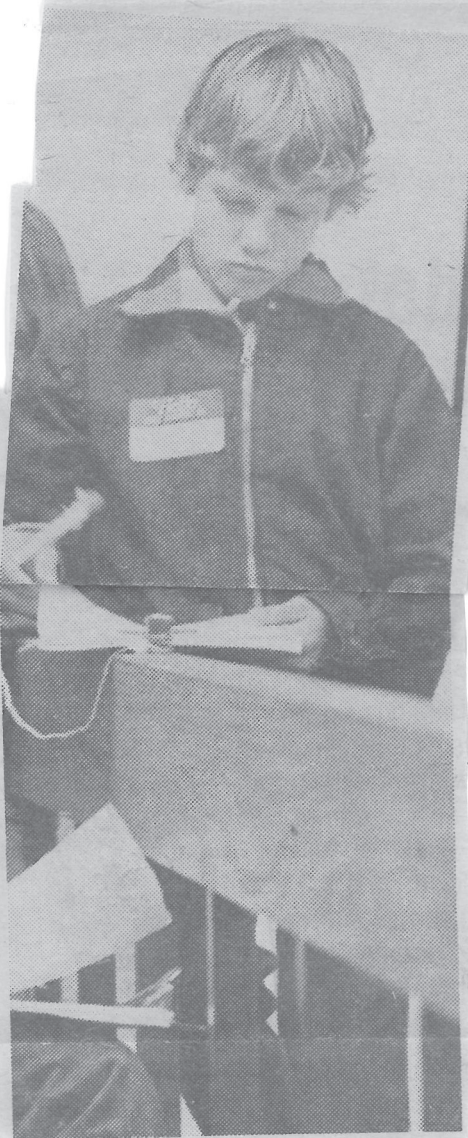


Students from the fifth grade at Knollwood School toured juvenile and adult courtroom facilities. In the courtroom with Judge Jeff Davis are, from left, Roxie Payne, Alysone Warren, student teacher, Lisca Strong and Michelle Hopperdietzel.

Cameras and recorders
ed away and all was quiet as
be for fifth graders as Judge Davis
quizzed the alleged young offenders
about the charges against them and
the possibility of their serving time at
the State Training School at Plank-
ington.

A few pencils were dropped, some
wiggled a bit in their seats, but these
pupils of Elsie Kephart and student
teacher Alyson Warren paid close
attention to the subdued pro-
ceedings.

During a recess, Judge Davis
returned to the hearing room, his
black robe removed, to field ques-
tions from the youngsters who were



Garth Stephens uses the bar of
justice as a platform for listening
and note-taking at the Juvenile
Justice Center.



Listening to the proceedings are, from left, Lee Perrigo, Jenny Fleming, Antonette Martin, John Killis Spotted, Dawn Young, Laurie Myers, Jaime Clark, Brenda Rau and Garth Stephens.

Jaime
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Knollwood field trip

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know,' blushed a young girl, 'you did mine. J...; do you like your job?'

Once, after the Judge offered an answer to a student's question, the fifth grader next to the questioner must have sensed his fellow pupil was not satisfied with Judge Davis's response. "I think I can answer that," the young lad boldly interrupted, and then offered his version of what the Judge had just said.

After finishing their tour of the Juvenile Justice Center on 7th St., the students were driven downtown to the Pennington County Courthouse where court services representative Don Holloway continued to lead the tour, this time through the adult court system and all of its facilities that one class member could-only describe as, "so much bigger!" The students were also show a slide-tape presentation about jury duty.

Now that the field trip is finished, the students are back in the classroom preparing segments of an assembly they will present to other fourth, fifth and sixth graders, and their parents, Wednesday, Oct. 21. The assembly will enact many of the roles the students saw during their trip. Miss Kephart and Ms. Warren's students are also writing thank you letters to everyone who assisted with the tour.



Miss Elsie Kephart stands at the sidelines with court administrator Don Holloway who helped arrange the special tour.