

PREFACE

Have you ever found yourself discussing with fellow students the outcome of a highly publicized criminal jury trial? Does the name O. J. Simpson ring a bell? During that conversation did you ever think that the result would have been different if only you could have sat on that jury? After all, how difficult can it be for an intelligent person such as yourself to listen to the lawyers, study the evidence, listen to the instructions on the law read by the judge, and then make the simple decision of “guilty” or “not guilty”?

I, along with the many kind individuals who gave of their time and talents to assist me in creating this project, would like to put this widely held belief to the test.

It is my pleasure to present to you for viewing the trial of State of Indiana vs. Patricia L. Martin. Mrs. Martin has been charged with the criminal offense of Operating a Motor Vehicle While Intoxicated/Endangering a Person, a Class A Misdemeanor. Mrs. Martin has invoked her constitutional right to have her case tried to a jury.

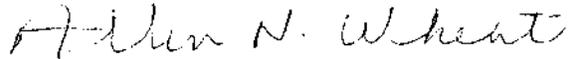
If you are viewing this trial in a classroom you will have had written materials distributed to you to assist you in becoming better oriented as to how a criminal jury trial progresses from start to finish. It would be beneficial to divide the class into groups of six or seven people. View the trial, without comment, from jury selection to when the jurors exit the courtroom to begin their deliberations. Now, you be the jury. Each group should conduct its own deliberations in an effort to arrive at a unanimous verdict of “guilty” or “not guilty.” Without announcing the verdict, watch the remainder of the trial to see if the verdict reached by the jury in the trial you are viewing matches the verdict of your group.

The primary goals of each of us who have had a role in completing this project were (1) to educate our younger citizens about the mechanics of how jury trials are conducted, and (2) to make our younger citizens better prepared to perform their civic responsibility when called upon to serve on a jury.

“The strength or weakness of a civilization is measured in no small part by the manner in which it dispenses justice for its members.”

– Anonymous

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen N. Wheat".

Allen N. Wheat, Judge
Steuben Circuit Court