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Mock trial will consider free speech vs. hate speech

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Judge Carl Marlinga of Macomb County Circuit Court

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In a seemingly divided society, when does one person's free speech become another person's hate speech?

That is the question that SOAR (Society of Active Retirees) will address in a mock trial later this month at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills.

"Defending Nazi hate speech is not the purpose of the trial," said event producer Steven Steinhardt, a Mount Clemens-based attorney. "The question is whether any speech can be suppressed based upon its content, or are we compelled to allow all speech in the market place of ideas?"

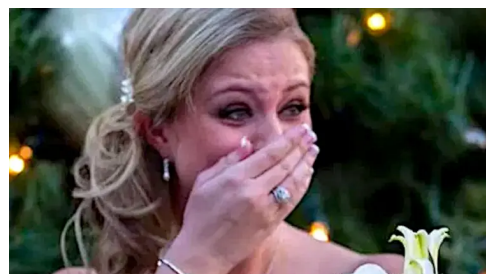
This is the third mock trial presented by SOAR in Oakland County as part of its The Harry Cook Social Justice Series and fifth involving Steinhardt. The first two mock trials were held at the Macomb Community College Performing Arts Center in Clinton Township.

A mock trial is an imitation proceeding in which real jurists use court procedures to explore an issue.

The Oct. 25 event will pit the rights and responsibilities of free speech against the risks and negative consequences of hate speech, officials said. It is inspired by events and the court case following the Nazis' quest to march on Skokie, Ill., in the 1970s. The mock trial will be held in the mythical town of Skokington Hills, Mich.

Attendees will act as the jury.

Prior topics included the Kennedy Assassination, Second Amendment, dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan and popular vote vs. Electoral College for presidential elections.



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Judge Michael Warren of Oakland County Circuit Court
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Mock-trial participants include Judge Carl Marlinga of Macomb Circuit Court, Judge Michael Warren of Oakland Circuit Court, Constitutional law professor Robert Sedler of Wayne State University Law School, Mount Clemens-based attorney Joseph Kosmala, Grosse Pointe-based attorney Christopher Nesi and Bloomfield Township Supervisor Steve Kaplan, an attorney and former assistant Macomb prosecutor.

The free event will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. Oct. 25 at the synagogue located at 29901 Middlebelt Road. No registration is required.

SOAR is a lifelong learning program affiliated with Wayne State and the Road Scholar Institute Network. It serves more than 1200 members from 54 communities in Southeast Michigan. For more information, visit SOARExplore.com or call 248-626-0296.

-- Media News Group staff

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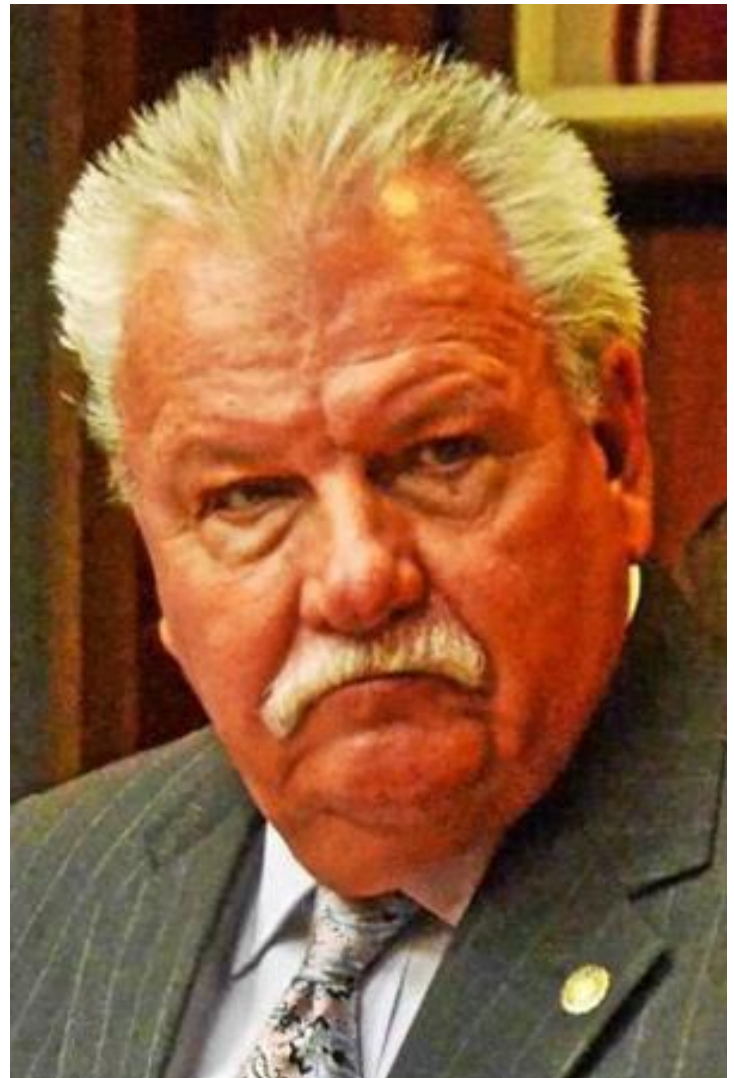
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