

In “The Spotlight” with: Judge James L. Kimbler, Medina County Common Pleas Court

By Kate Feeks

In June watch for the next episode of *Law Talk*, hosted by John Celebrezze. This episode features Judge James L. Kimbler of the Medina County Common Pleas Court. Judge Kimbler will discuss juries. This show can be viewed on Wadsworth Cable (WCTV) Public Access, Channel 15, Brunswick Area Television (BAT) Public Access, Channel 21, Armstrong Cable Access, Channel 37 and You Tube.

In the United States a jury consists of a sworn group of citizens that hear testimony in legal disputes and then determine the truth. The idea originated in England, with the size of a jury decided based upon a fair representation of the community.

States are free to have juries as small as six, but any number below six is considered unconstitutional. A jury with less than six members would be too small, making it an unfair representation of the community.

The essential function of a jury is to ensure that trials are resolved using common sense judgment through community participation. Not all individuals who are qualified to serve on a jury duty are necessarily required to serve. There are a number of reasons people could be excused from serving. The most common groups excluded include: doctors, firefighters, politicians, and sole caregivers of young or incompetent children or adults. People can also be excused on religious and/or ideological grounds.

While serving as a juror, a person plays an essential role in the judicial system, making it an extremely important obligation. As a juror, there are certain responsibilities required. Jurors may not conduct their own research, or allow television, radio, or newspapers to influence their decisions. Jurors are not permitted to discuss the case with family or friends, until a verdict is rendered. Jurors also cannot discuss the case amongst themselves until they deliberate, and they must base their verdict only on the facts of the case presented to them in the courtroom.

Violating any of these rules is punishable by fine and/or imprisonment, and could result in a mistrial. “There is a standard instruction in my court room that you may not do your own research, you may not go on the internet, you may not speak to another party and so on. When I explain to them that they might get information that will not give them the whole picture, or both sides of the story, they understand why it can be unfair” Kimbler explained.

To learn more about juries with Judge James Kimbler, watch for his interview with John Celebrezze on *Law Talk* throughout the month of June.