*“The case of Ed Johnson leading to U.S. v Shipp impacted the country by allowing the message to be that the Supreme Court cares and will work to correct injustice, the Constitution is colorblind, and that you cannot disrespect and fail to acknowledge the authority of the Supreme Court…”* -Mackenzie Gula, 2024 Hometowns Student

For two weeks, the Chattanooga Hometowns students were immersed in Chattanooga history, state and federal judicial procedures, Constitutional law, and the importance of Rule of Law. They toured their federal courthouse and attended a live court proceeding in Judge Collier’s courtroom. They also visited local sites linked to Chattanooga’s early history as well as the *Ed Johnson* case.

Applying their new understanding of the judicial branch, the Hometowns students investigated the historic *Tennessee v. Ed Johnson* criminal trial. Mr. Johnson was a Black man accused of attacking a white woman and his case was somehow both typical and unique. After a speedy trial and questionable conviction, the Supreme Court intervened and stayed his execution due to the heroic efforts of two Black attorneys, Noah Parden and Styles Hutchins. Sadly a vengeful mob lynched him before the Court could hear the appeal. The mob’s actions, and the inaction of the sheriff and his deputies, led to the only criminal trial in Supreme Court history, *United States v. Shipp* (1909).

*“I found the Ed Johnson case itself to be the most important information I’ve learned.”* -Kathryn Mikel, 2024 Hometowns Student

Legal and historical experts from throughout the Eastern District of Tennessee led the students through sessions and discussions on the Reconstruction era, criminal trials and the rights of the accused, the procedures and functions of the Supreme Court, the Fuller Court and Justice John Marshall Harlan, and media literacy. As a program capstone, the students designed a five-panel exhibit on the cases and their impact. The exhibit will open in the Joel W. Solomon Federal Courthouse this fall.

*“I would recommend this program to others because it was very interesting, and I think even if you aren’t interested in law you can get a lot out of this program regarding the history of Chattanooga and gaining a better understanding of our court system.”* -Hayden Clements, 2024 Hometowns Student

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