



## **Most Americans Can't Name Any Supreme Court Justices, Says FindLaw.com Survey**

**Washington, DC, January 10, 2006** - In spite of broad, high-profile news coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court in the past year, 57 percent of Americans can't name any current U.S. Supreme Court justices. According to a new national survey conducted by FindLaw.com, the leading legal Web site, only 43 percent of American adults can name at least one justice who is currently serving on the nation's highest court.

In any given year, the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments to a broad range of high-profile legal and constitutional issues. But in this past year, even greater attention was focused on the Court following the announced retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist and President Bush's subsequent nominations of John Roberts, the new chief justice; Harriet Miers, who eventually withdrew her nomination; and Samuel Alito, whose confirmation hearings began this week. Interest groups have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to sway public opinion on the nominations.

Still, the FindLaw.com survey finds a majority of Americans cannot name even one U.S. Supreme Court justice. The survey results represent a slight improvement over an identical survey conducted in 2003 that found only 35 percent of Americans could name any of the Supreme Court justices who were serving at that time.

Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court, was the justice most frequently identified in the latest survey. O'Connor announced in July 2005 that she will retire from the Court as soon as a replacement justice is seated.

The percentages of Americans who could name each current justice were as follows:

27% Sandra Day O'Connor

21% Clarence Thomas

16% John Roberts

13% Antonin Scalia

12% Ruth Bader Ginsburg

7% Anthony Kennedy

5% David Souter

3% Stephen Breyer

3% John Paul Stevens



**Additional results:**

More men than women (46% to 39%) can name at least one Supreme Court justice.

The ability to correctly name Supreme Court justices rises with increases in age, education and household income.

Five percent of Americans believe William Rehnquist still serves on the Supreme Court. The former chief justice died in September 2005.

Two percent of Americans believe Samuel Alito is a Supreme Court justice. Alito was nominated for a seat on the Supreme Court by President Bush in October 2005, but has not yet been confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

The percentage of Americans who can name all nine current Supreme Court justices, statistically speaking, is zero.

The percentage of Americans who can name eight or more of the nine current Supreme Court justices also statistically rounds to zero.

The publicity surrounding the appointment of new Chief Justice John Roberts appears to have made an impression. Sixteen percent of those surveyed identified Roberts as a current member of the Court. In the 2003 survey, only 10 percent of those surveyed identified then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist as a member of the Supreme Court.

Incorrect responses from those surveyed as to who is currently serving on the U.S. Supreme Court included George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton, Thurgood Marshall and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"In a way it's not surprising that most members of the public can't name a single Supreme Court justice," says constitutional historian Stephen Presser, a professor at Northwestern University Law School. "The average citizen probably doesn't view the judicial role as being as important as the role of Congress, which in effect makes the laws, or the president, who administers the laws. The reality is that who sits on the Supreme Court makes a big difference as to what happens to us as a nation. As such, the public ought to be paying more attention to the Supreme Court and the battles over the nomination of justices."

Information including U.S. Supreme Court decisions dating back to 1893, profiles of justices, court calendars, briefs and listings of current cases can be found at FindLaw® ([www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)). Detailed results of the survey can be found <http://public.findlaw.com/ussc/122005survey.html>

*The national survey used a representative sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, and was conducted for FindLaw.com by Ipsos Public Affairs.*

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