

The Sun

**Judges get a peek at high-tech justice
3-D views, holograms may be used in trials**

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Maryland's judges put on 3-D glasses yesterday for a light-hearted look at future justice -- and it came flying at them in an orange hologram.

The judges, meeting as part of a two-day annual Maryland Judicial Conference at the Sheraton Baltimore North in Towson, used the glasses to watch the conclusion of a mock trial deciding whether lawyers should be allowed to use computer enhanced photographs, videos and holograms to sway juries.

"We want you to see graphically what's out there and what you may be dealing with in the years ahead," Court of Appeals Judge Alan M. Wilner told the judges.

They must weigh the fairness of using the same computer-assisted graphics now being used to teach in medical schools, train airline pilots and sell construction equipment, said Wilner.

The group watched "The Trial of the Future," in which a fictitious softball player for the "Baltimore County Intellectuals" gets hit with a cast iron weight that flies off the end of a softball bat during a game with the "Carroll County Liberals" and sues.

The "trial" takes place in the year 2001.

Anne Arundel Circuit Judge Clayton Greene Jr.-- decked out in a futuristic robe with angel wings -- presided over the mock trial. He maintained order with a batonlike "phaser" that electronically zapped the overly talkative lawyer.

"I wish I had one of those in my court," one judge remarked.

Baltimore Circuit Judge Gary I. Strausberg, playing the plaintiff's lawyer, won a \$564,000 verdict by using computer-enhanced photos of his client's broken jaw. He also used stark, computer-enhanced images of a human skull projected on a television monitor to illustrate medical testimony.

Strausberg wound up his case with a holographic re-enactment of the accident. An orange weight came spinning off the end of a holographic bat -- and into an audience of bespectacled jurists.

"I thought it was pretty effective," Glen Burnie District Judge Vincent Mulieri said later.

Richard K. Herrmann, a Wilmington, Del., lawyer, said that actual use of such technology is about a year away.

"I think in the next year or so you'll be seeing some jury somewhere being asked to put on 3-D glasses," said Herrmann, who teaches technology law at Widener Law School.

"We can't get away from it. Lawyers want demonstrative aids in the presentation of their cases and it's only a matter of time," Greene said.

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Caption:
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Caption: Exhibit A: Marsha F. Rasin, chief judge of the District Court, portraying a medical expert at a mock trial, points to a screen view of the skull of an imaginary injured plaintiff. Video view: Baltimore County Circuit Judge Thomas J. Bollinger Sr. portrays a plaintiff testifying from out of state at a mock trial.

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