

SUGGESTED STUDENT PROJECTS

Open Doors has a long tradition of bringing attorneys and judges from diverse backgrounds into classrooms to work with high school students, and to tell students a bit about their own career paths. If you would like to have volunteer attorneys or judges attend your class remotely to “judge” student presentations, please get in touch.

1. If you were the attorney representing Max Mason at his trial, what evidence and argument would you want to highlight to the jury in your closing argument? Draft a closing argument for Max Mason and present it to your teacher and peers.
2. If you were the attorney representing Max Mason’s application for pardon, what evidence, facts, and policy do you think the Pardon Board would find persuasive? Draft a statement to the Pardon Board and present it in front of your teacher and peers. Explain how your argument might change if you are making this argument today (100 years after the events), or if you were arguing for Mr. Mason a year or two after his conviction.
3. The NAACP sends a telegram to Governor Burnquist asking him to provide assistance or authorize the Attorney General to assist the local prosecutors in prosecuting the individuals responsible for the lynchings. Draft a letter to Governor Burnquist with your advice on what he should do in response to the request from the NAACP.
4. If you were the Mayor of Duluth at the time of the lynchings, what would you do? Draft a 5-step community action plan that you would implement to address the inherent racism, community divide, and safety concerns that the lynchings so starkly revealed. How would your community action plan differ if it were being implemented today? Present your action plan in front of your teacher and peers.
5. Some newspapers such as the Mankato Daily Free Press and Ely Miner contained editorials that suggested while the lynchings were to be deplored, the “greater good” was served by the lynchings. Public Safety Commissioner Murnian won reelection after the report was issued by General W.F. Rhinow. How would you as an elected official in Minnesota talk about the importance of the rule of law?