



Read the article below, then answer the questions that follow.

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Jury Nowhere to Be Found

WASHINGTON – Russell Dunmore couldn't believe his eyes as he stared at the empty seats along the wall. The 12 chairs remained empty as he stood before the judge and heard his name mentioned in a civil lawsuit against his carpeting company. During the entire trial, not a single person showed up to fill those seats; there was no jury to be found.

Dunmore, 43, owned a small carpet-cleaning and repair company in Dearborn, Michigan. In March 2006, he and an employee were cleaning a carpet in the house of Nina Thompson of Melvindale, Michigan, when one of their rug cleaners shorted out and caught fire. Soon, the whole house was ablaze. Thompson, Dunmore, and his employee barely escaped with their lives. A few months later, Ms. Thompson brought a civil suit against Dunmore and his company.

The two sides tried to settle out of court but could not come to terms, so the suit was brought to court. In December 2006,

Dunmore appeared before Judge Connie Brisch, prepared to defend himself in front of a jury of his peers from in and around Dearborn. He and his lawyer were surprised to see, however, that no jury had been called for his case. When Dunmore requested a trial by jury, he was denied. Judge Brisch also denied a motion by Dunmore's attorney to declare a mistrial because of the violation of the Seventh Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the right to trial by jury in civil cases. In the end, Judge Brisch ruled in favor of the plaintiff, Ms. Thompson, and awarded her a settlement of \$1.3 million. Russell Dunmore had to sell his business and house and declare bankruptcy in order to pay the damages.

Six months of legal battles have led Dunmore and his attorney to Washington and the Supreme Court. Dunmore hopes to have the ruling overturned because of the violation of the Seventh Amendment. He goes before the court on October 1 to argue his case.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of case was brought against Russell Dunmore?

2. Who determined the ruling in the case?

3. What right does the Seventh Amendment ensure?

4. Do you think the Supreme Court should have upheld or overturned the previous ruling? Why or why not?



A Curious Constitution

- The Constitution has three main parts: the Preamble, the Articles, and the Amendments.
- The Articles of the Constitution divide the government into three branches: the Legislative, the Executive, and the Judicial.
- The U.S. isn't alone: nearly 90 other countries throughout the world have their own constitutions.
- The Greek philosopher Aristotle was one of the first people in history to develop the idea of a constitution.
- Delaware was the first state to ratify (approve) the Constitution.
- Originally, in a presidential election, the person who received the most votes became president and the person who came in second became vice president!
- The Bill of Rights was originally made up of 12 amendments instead of 10, but only the 10 we know today were approved by the states.