

The Indiana Supreme Court Legal History Lecture Series Presents:

## “Three Generations of Imbeciles are Enough:” Reflections on 100 Years of Eugenics in Indiana

A Free CLE worth 1.3 Credit Hours, Course Number: 100639

April 11, 2007, 3:00-4:15 P.M.

Indiana Statehouse  
Indiana Supreme Court Courtroom  
Room 317  
(Light refreshments will follow)

In 1907, Indiana adopted the first eugenical sterilization law in the world, paving the way for similar laws in more than thirty other states and nearly a dozen countries around the world. The pioneering statute was overturned by the Indiana Supreme Court in 1921 (the subject of the case, Warren Smith, is pictured below), but a new law was enacted in 1927 following U.S. Supreme Court endorsement of eugenic sterilization in *Buck v. Bell* in which Justice Holmes declared, “three generations of imbeciles are enough.” From 1907 to 1974 Indiana sterilized 2,500 institutionalized patients. Attention was focused on sterilization again in 1978 when, in *Stump v. Sparkman*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld judicial immunity for an Indiana judge whose *ex parte* order led to the sterilization of a 15 year old girl. This CLE course will involve a lawyer, a bioethicist and a physician who will discuss the still controversial topic of involuntary sterilization in historical context and also reflect on how the new insights from the Human Genome project have affected it.



### Panelists



Paul Lombardo, J.D., Ph. D, Professor of Law, Georgia State University

Eric M. Meslin, Ph. D, Center for Bioethics, Indiana University School of Medicine

Peter Marcus, M.D., M.A., Indiana University School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

For more information contact::

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