

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Questions and Answers



- Student Resource: Oral History and Your Family
- Student Activity: The Q&A in *The Post*
- Post Reprint: “When it becomes more than a T-shirt”
- Post Reprint: “For high school rifle teams, politics stays out of range”
- Discussion Questions: Covering a Niche Sport
- Post Reprint: “For first time in 10 years, Justice Clarence Thomas asks questions during an argument”

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Oral History and Your Family

Don't disappear during family visits — whether they take place every weekend, as annual holiday celebrations or at five-year family reunions. Take time to be the recorder of your family's memories, its historian to connect artifacts and data, and its reporter of daily occurrences.

Collect art, artifacts and any stories that reveal family history, culture and character. Get out the camera, capture video and audio recollections, observe the rooms and outdoor spaces in which you meet and talk to older relatives. Are there accessories, vases or older pieces of furniture that may reveal interesting family stories? Does someone wear clothing or colors that reflect your ancestry group?

Look at photographs from previous family reunions. Who are the older people pictured? Who was visiting from another state or country? Who is the person with the camera? Might

that person have albums that go back a couple generations?

Be respectful, but don't be afraid to ask questions. Show your genuine interest. The interview may be informal as you talk over potato salad or more formal with a video camera and notebook in hand.

You don't have to do family history alone. Maybe you can team with cousins to collect stories from different family members. Ask the cousin who loves research to dig into the census reports or archival records. Your retired uncle might like to go to conferences for ancestry groups to collect historic perspective. Seek out family members who are artists, digital geniuses, designers, editors and writers to help compile what everyone finds. Together you can decide whether your collective work will be a mini-documentary, printed or e-book or an online record.

Remember you are doing this for yourself, your generation and for generations to come.

Don't Let Your Family Be History

Interview Family Members

- Family sayings and words to live by
- Family stories
- Individual's stories

Collect Documents

Factual

- Birth certificates
- Business records
- Death certificates
- Deeds to property
- Diplomas and report cards
- Marriage licenses
- Military service documents
- Wills

Personal

- Blogs and e-mails
- Diaries
- Letters
- Memories
- Poems
- Recipes
- Souvenirs

Collect Visual Artifacts

Artwork:

- drawn by members of the family, specially depicting family members

- drawn by others to capture your family members

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Home movies
- Photographs

Do Research

- Ancestry/geneology
- Census records
- Church and club records
- History books
- The National Archives
- Newspaper morgues



The Q&A in *The Post*

John Kelly in his John Kelly's Washington column often has a question to be answered as the starting point for his inquiries and comments. The question may be posed by a reader or Kelly's curiosity. In one month, he sought answers to:

- In the world of reality television, it's one big recap after another. Why is that?
- Where did the FBI's embassy tunnel start?
- What does it take to move 200,000 records from a Silver Spring vinyl store? A lot of muscle.
- Did you hear the one about the journalist doing stand-up comedy?
- Remember when Corn Pops were called Sugar Pops?
- Experts agree. Everything is awful. But when did things start to go downhill?

1. What is it about a question that is so appealing?
2. Locate John Kelly's Washington column. Is there a stated question that he seeks to answer? Record it and the answer he gives. If not, what is the implied question?
3. Find the Dr. Gridlock column. Robert Thomson often answers readers' questions.
 - a. What is the focus of this Dr. Gridlock column?
 - b. Record the headline of the column. What particular issue is he addressing in this column?
 - c. Compose a question to ask Dr. Gridlock.
4. Locate three other *Washington Post* columns that answer readers' questions. For each one, a) Name the column and writer (if given); b) Type of column (advice, how-to, technical, entertainment, for example); c) Section of the newspaper where the column is located; and d) Audience for this columnist.
5. *The Post* columns are a service to readers. Although there may be an element of news included, more often they are written to help readers. Pitch a column idea that you think would interest and inform students (and teachers and school community).
 - Name of your column
 - Type of column and focus
 - Give three ideas of topics you could cover in your column.
(Can you state these as questions you will answer?)

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

ON SMALL BUSINESS

When it becomes more than a T-shirt

BY THOMAS HEATH

• Published Originally February 21, 2016

When Marc Katz started CustomInk 16 years ago, he was sleeping on an air mattress in the basement of a Fairfax County home. He's not any more. Last year, the online T-shirt company pulled down about \$300 million in sales.

Katz, a Harvard physics major who walked away from Wall Street to pursue his entrepreneurial dream, employs 1,500 “inkers” — troops

he commands from an airy office building in the upscale Mosaic District in Fairfax County. It's also the site of CustomInk's first brick-and-mortar store.

CustomInk has received big investments from Ted Leonsis's Revolution Growth and from SWaN, a Leesburg-based venture firm led by Fred Schaufield, one of Leonsis's partners in Monumental Sports & Entertainment. “Those partners have just been so valuable to moving Custom Ink along,” Katz said.

Katz, 39, talked with *The Post* about the touch-and-go finances of the early days, the sense of ownership he tries to instill in employees and the breakthrough moment when he felt the company was a real business.

How did you get started in the T-shirt business?

When I was 23, I was working on Wall Street and it wasn't really meaningful to me. I had the entrepreneurial bug. A college friend of mine was doing what you could describe as the first incarnation of CustomInk as a project and wasn't going to pursue it to turn it into a real company. We briefly talked about kind of doing it together. Ultimately, I decided to do it. Another college classmate joined me as my partner, and my friend became a passive cofounder and board member.

How much capital did you start with?

We started the company with about \$600,000 in seed capital. We raised it from probably a dozen people who weren't professional angels but not really friends and family, either. The lead investors were people that I'd worked for in my Wall Street job. Our largest investor in that first round was my college lab partner's girlfriend's father, so that gives you an idea of how random it was.

Is he still an investor?

All of our early investors are still with us.

Where was your first office?

We sublet from the lawyers that incorporated us. We met them because we were responding to the sublease opportunity, and then as long as we were subleasing from them, we thought we might as well use them to do our legal work, too.

That was in early 2000, and then around the end of that year, we moved to Fairfax City, and we were on University Drive in Fairfax City. That's where we had those first formative years of the company. It was in a little office condo there.

Why Washington?

When I was planning the business I was in Manhattan, and I guess I regarded Northern Virginia as kind



JEFFREY MACMILLAN

Employees inspect samples on the wall at CustomInk in Fairfax, Va., in 2014.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

of an Internet center. AOL was here, and UUNet. WorldCom was here. And it wasn't nearly as expensive as Manhattan, and I thought it would be a good place to do it, a good talent pool. One of my co-founders was working on the business here, but it was just him. His older sister offered to let us sleep on her basement floor while we figured things out, so that was a nice offer. I was 23. I didn't have any responsibilities beyond trying to get the business going.

So the business started on a basement floor?

Pretty much, yeah.

How big is the company now?

1,500.

How did you get the name CustomInk?

That was one of the things that I got from my co-founder. He had wanted to call the company CustomInc, spelled I-N-C, like Custom Incorporated, and that wasn't available. And I guess the idea occurred to him that it would be kind of clever and fun to say CustomInk, I-N-K.

Who came up with Inky the Octopus logo?

It emerged organically. There was always this kind of fun thing that octopuses make ink, and a few years into the company, you would notice all of these little kind of octopus illustrations everywhere. People had just started on their own volition for the company flag football team, or a training or anything like that, featuring this little octopus that

people took to calling "Inky."

Tell me about your first employees.

Our first few hires were not really good ones for us, my co-founder and I, Dave Christensen, who was the tech guy. I was like the business guy. Dave and I had about two years of combined professional experience, so neither of us had hired anyone and just didn't know what we were doing. The first couple of hires weren't a good match, either functionally or how we operate, our values as people. The good thing was within a few months, everyone kind of figured that out and left on their own. And then, through luck or skill, we also made some great hires, so there were a handful who are with the company today and have shaped who we are.

What were the biggest challenges early on?

Finding marketing programs that worked. I had all these ideas in our business plan for how we were going to market our services, and pretty much none of it worked. And we really had to adapt and be creative.

Not running out of money is, of course, I think, one of the harder things. I remember hearing an experienced entrepreneur give a little speech and he said that starting a business is like playing a video game, like one of the old-school video games where you've got to get from one level to the next. And instead of losing your life on a given level, you lose money. You have to get to the next level before you run

out of money.

We started the company and raised money at what turned out to be the peak of the dot-com mania.

We had to be sort of nimble and resourceful to get through those early years. We were often asking people to sacrifice, to defer satisfaction, defer compensation in some cases to get the company through, but everyone feels all the more ownership because of that.

What's the basic business premise?

It's evolved. When we started off, we saw ourselves as creating a better way to make custom T-shirts, and we did that for years. We've made something like 100 million T-shirts. In the process, we learned that the business was about much more than shirts, that people were ordering for things that were meaningful for them — their teams, their company, their charity — and that our business was about fostering a sense of community in those groups as opposed to just providing a physical product or a printing service.

How do you make profit?

We offer a great way to do custom apparel for your group. People come online, contact our customer support as needed via phone or chat, and use the site to create awesome shirts, sweatshirts, hats, anything they want. We've got three internal facilities of our own. One in Charlottesville, Virginia, one in Dallas, Texas, and one in Nevada. We also have contract print partners all over the country, and through that hybrid of in-house

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

and contract printing, we deal with all the orders.

What was your breakthrough?

There have been a couple of big moments. In January 2001, we had been in business for 10 months, had launched the website a few months earlier, and doing about \$25,000 in sales that month.

I remember thinking: “Twenty-five thousand dollars’ worth of shirts. That’s a real number.” That’s not my parents’ friends ordering out of pity. That’s real business.

Then it grew from there, and the next month it was 32, then 45, then 60 and 80 and it started really adding up.

If you fast-forward many years, 2008 to 2011 was really a transformational time for us. We were going from being a good kind of Web merchant, a good specialty Web merchant, to aspiring to do something bigger. We had all these insights on what the business really stood for: groups, occasion, sense of community. We had embarked on initiatives to take things to another level, because as an online merchant we were kind of plateauing. These were big undertakings: in-house production, new brand, new marketing channels. We had so much work to do internally in the organization, infrastructure, technology. And in the second half of 2011 as we started bringing these efforts to market, we saw our growth, which had slowed all the way to about 10 percent a year, pick up to 20 percent, then 30 percent and 40 percent and 50 percent.

If you look at the chart of our sales growth, it really was this kind of big second wave of growth. A lot of companies never push to have a second cycle like that.

Are you still in that cycle?

Yes. We’re working on all the things that will help give us a third cycle.

How did the big investment from Revolution Growth come about?

I met Ted Leonsis through some mutual business friends. Before we even met, I had thought of him and Steve Case and the team at Revolution as potentially great partners for us. They reached out to us, and when they did, I was excited to have that conversation. They’ve been a huge help strategically and great thought partners.

Biggest mistake you made?

I can think of some hairy technology jams that we’ve gotten ourselves into, in the early days. We made some bad technology choices that took years to extricate ourselves from.

Smartest move?

One of the best things that we ever did was take the time a few years in, before we really started growing fast, in absolute terms, to think about what made us, who we really were and who we wanted to be.

I had read “Built to Last” by Jim Collins, which is all about enduring organizations, whether it’s a company or a team, any kind of organization. He talked about knowing your core

values and then making sure that those endure but having mechanisms to constantly rethink and challenge sort of everything else, and that just really connected with me.

Is the company profitable?

Yes.

A couple of years ago, your goal was \$250 million in revenue. Did you reach that?

I can’t remember when that was when I said that, but 2015 will be 300-ish.

Do you ever get a rush order, like somebody needs everything to someone who didn’t get their shirts for their family reunion?

We’ll routinely get those last-minute emergency requests, and most of the time we’re able to meet them and deliver shirts the next day. We actually offer on the website a three-day, super-rush delivery service. So you can order on Monday or Tuesday and get your shirts by Friday.

So we have things streamlined, but nevertheless people still have those last-minute ideas. Every now and then something goes wrong and it requires heroics to deliver the shirts just in time for the party or the big game, and you always hear these glory stories around the company of someone leaving the office with a box under their arm and driving for two, three hours to deliver the shirts. People tend to do those things without being asked. It goes back to the sense of ownership and treating people as you want to be treated.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Local athletes thrive in a sport without debate, controversy

For high school rifle teams, politics stays out of range

BY ERIC GOLDWEIN

• Originally Published January 15, 2016

Hayley Carroll was in standing position, one eye closed and the other focused on the target 33 feet ahead. With the air rifle balanced by her left hand and pressing against her cheek, she moved her index finger over the trigger.

When she pulled it, there was no whiplash. No smoke and no blast. The sound more closely resembled a pen click than a gunshot, and to the untrained eye, it wasn't clear where or whether the pellet pierced the paper.

But it didn't take the binoculars provided by the onlooking coach to know that she hit the bull's-eye. Carroll, all 5 feet 2 of her, is almost always on target. And on the occasions she did miss during a late December winter break practice at the indoor air rifle range at the Arlington Fairfax Chapter of the IZAAK Walton League, it wasn't by much.

Carroll, a senior at Robinson Secondary School in Fairfax, is an atypical athlete in an atypical co-ed varsity sport. With 40-plus members, Robinson is the largest and most successful of the 11 teams competing in the Potomac High School

Rifle League (PHSRL). Though considered a varsity team, Robinson functions as a club. It doesn't receive money from the school. Its coaching staff consists of volunteers and equipment is paid for by parents.

Amid challenges both practical and of perception, the niche sport has changed to account for financial and political pressures. But as the national gun debate continues, local high school riflery participation remains as robust as it was 20 years ago. For these athletes, shooting is not political — it's an enduring outlet for competition and individualism that attracts students uninterested or unable to play for traditional high school athletic teams.

'A sport for anyone'

The story of how Carroll became involved is a familiar one among competitive high school shooters. Through middle school she had tried other activities — ballet, karate, even baseball — but wasn't drawn to any of them. Still, she wanted to be involved in something. And after attending an interest meeting in ninth grade, she realized that something was riflery.

Carroll didn't look like a shooter. Not then as a rookie freshman and not even now as a Division I recruit, dressed head to toe in rifle gear.

"She's built like a stick," said Bob Hardy, a longtime coach at Robinson, "and the first time she came to air rifle practice at IZAAK Walton I said, 'That ain't gonna work.'"

Hardy was wrong. Carroll was a natural, and when it became apparent she would stick with the sport, her parents bit the bullet; they bought an air rifle, then a small-bore rifle and all the other clothing, equipment and accessories required to shoot competitively. Her mother, Victoria Carroll, said they have paid about \$7,500. That doesn't include travel expenses, of which Carroll has accumulated plenty through her various national competitions.

Robinson is one of the 2,000-plus high school teams (including JROTC programs) enrolled in the Civilian Marksmanship Program, according to the CMP website. While JROTC teams exist all over the D.C. area, there are only a handful of high school club and varsity teams.

Other Fairfax County PHSRL members include W.T. Woodson, Lake Braddock, West Potomac and West Springfield. Arlington County, which allocates stipends for coaches, has three varsity teams in the PHSRL: Washington-Lee, Yorktown and a newly launched team at Wakefield. They practice together and share

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

The niche high school sport has adapted and survived at schools across Virginia, giving students an alternative to the traditional varsity opportunities.

coaching staffs and equipment. Equipment and practice fees are paid for by the teams, according to Jennifer Harris, director of communications for Arlington Public Schools.

St. John's (D.C.) and Landon (Bethesda) have their own indoor ranges and are the PHSRL's lone private school teams, while the Mavericks consist of shooters from high schools without rifle programs.

Robinson has dominated the league, winning PHSRL region titles in 19 of the past 26 years. The team regularly sends its top shooters to Division I programs; this year's team has a few NCAA prospects, including Carroll; Nicholas Kanellis, who plans to attend a service academy; and Zach Eisenberg, a lacrosse player-turned marksman who is considering North Carolina State.

"It takes a lot of concentration and patience," Eisenberg said. "Really it's a sport for anyone. As long as you have eyes, you can shoot."

(N.C. State has three Robinson alumni, freshman Claire Spina, sophomore Caitlyn Ford and junior Lucas Kozeniesky. They will be joined next season by Sarah Hickey, a Northwood senior from Silver Spring who competes with the Antietam Junior Rifle Club.)

As successful as Robinson riflery has been, it doesn't get the same attention as other varsity teams. That the school even had a team came as a surprise to Victoria Carroll.

"We had no idea that it even existed to be honest with you," she said.

But she's grateful it did, she said. Competing with Robinson and having the responsibility of handling

a rifle helped Hayley become more organized and more independent; she turned over a new leaf academically, Victoria said.

"She found something she was passionate about, and it changed her life in many ways," Victoria said.

That's a sentiment shared by Carroll, who shoots twice a week with her team and several more times on her own. She doesn't plan on breaking that habit any time soon. She has her sights set on a few Division I schools, including Nebraska.

At Robinson she gets weird questions from classmates, such as the time someone asked whether she shot animals and clay pigeons. But she embraces the rifle reputation. The sport has shaped her identity and become an integral part of her high school life.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

“It’s almost like an extension of my arm,” Carroll said.

A change of instruments

The Potomac High School Rifle League has been around for as long as Hardy, 81, can remember. Schools come in and out, participation waxes and wanes, rules have been adjusted and even the name has changed; it used to be the Northern Virginia High School League. But the sport and the friendly, competitive culture have for the most part remained the same, Hardy said.

Since joining Robinson’s coaching staff in 1981, Hardy said there haven’t been any safety issues. Several coaches are on hand during each practice, rarely turning their eyes away from the 25-lane range. Multiple precautions are taken to ensure there’s no opportunity for a mishap. Guns are stored in hard cases, unloaded and in safety mode; an arrow on the case indicates the barrel’s direction, so that when it’s opened, the rifle is pointed toward the range.

“This rifle becomes simply a device, like a tennis racket or a lacrosse stick,” Hardy said. “An instrument to punch a piece of paper with a 10.”

Never under Hardy’s watch has a Robinson student used the rifle as a weapon, nor has anyone been struck by a bullet, he said. That trend holds nationally, too. The CMP

reported the injury rate for air rifle marksmanship is about 0.0017 per athletic exposure per year. Amid all the issues surrounding gun control, competitive youth riflery is “a nonissue,” said Ladd Everitt, director of communications with the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

The PHSRL teams used to compete with the more powerful .22 caliber small-bore rifles and still do in some cases. But because small bores require larger ranges — with ventilation systems to reduce lead exposure — the PHSRL has become an air rifle league.

The transition began in 1999 — a few months after the Columbine High School massacre — when Yorktown’s indoor range, which served Arlington schools for three decades, was closed for a combination of political and logistical reasons. School board members said they felt it was inappropriate to have guns on school grounds and that the space from the range could be used for additional classrooms.

Other Virginia schools practiced and competed with small-bore rifles at Fort Belvoir, but the base stopped permitting high school practices after the September 11 attacks because of increased security concerns, according to Hardy.

As small-bore ranges became less accessible, schools were running out of places to shoot, and the league started to crumble; only three

teams competed regularly during the 2004-05 winter varsity season.

And so the PHSRL adapted, expanding to include air rifle competitions. That made the sport more accessible; air rifles can be shot anywhere, even in a garage, where ventilation systems and backstops aren’t needed. In June, the Arlington Fairfax Chapter launched a state of the art range — the Bucky Sills Air Rifle/Air Pistol Facility — which is home to Robinson and the other surrounding schools.

There are still .22 small-bore competitions; some teams practice at the NRA Range in Fairfax, and the competitive shooters will train there on their own as they prepare for individual competitions and NCAA riflery.

No matter the rifle, it’s the individual nature of the sport that attracts Carroll and her fellow competitive shooters. It requires strength, balance and endurance — for hours at a time, at some events. It’s taxing, both physically and mentally. But that’s what shooters — athletes in their own right — like Carroll said gets them going.

“Your heart is beating really quickly, it’s affecting the movement of the gun. If it’s hot, if I’m sweating, if I’m nervous, my heart rate will go up,” Carroll said. “It’s very individual. Yes, we compete as a team, but really it’s completely you.”

Covering Niche Sports

- Eric Goldwein begins “For high school rifle teams, politics stays out of range,” with a description of Hayley Carroll. List three benefits of this lede choice of the sports writer?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
- The fifth paragraph acknowledges “challenges both practical and of perception” and continues to call riflery a “niche sport” that changed for “financial and political pressures.”
 - A. What are the “practical” challenges?
 - B. What are the challenges of “perception”?
 - C. What is a “niche sport”?
- What is the basic cost of being equipped to shoot competitively?
- Give examples of the research done by the reporter to put the Robinson Secondary rifle team into perspective?
- Does a connection exist between high school and college riflery?
- In addition to Hayley Carroll being interviewed, Victoria Carroll is interviewed for the sports team article. What do her quotations and paraphrased comments add to the story?
- What dimension does Bob Hardy bring to the article?
- Ladd Everitt is interviewed.
 - A. For whom does he work?
 - B. What issue does he address?
 - C. What is the source of the information he provides?
 - D. How does he bring balance to the article?
- Challenges faced by area high school rifle clubs are addressed in the article.
 - A. What impact did the Columbine High School and September 11 attacks have on local clubs?
 - B. What is the relation of the facility in which teams meet and the type of rifle used?
- The Post reporter Goldwein returns to Carroll to conclude the sports team article.
 - A. Summarize the content of the last two paragraphs.
 - B. How does the writer’s decision to use this article structure influence the reader?
- What school club or teams could you cover using this article as a model?

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

NATIONAL

For first time in 10 years, Justice Clarence Thomas asks questions during an argument

BY ROBERT BARNES

• Originally Published February 29, 2016

Justice Clarence Thomas on Monday broke his 10-year streak of not asking questions during oral arguments, one of the public's most enduring curiosities about the Supreme Court.

Thomas stunned the courtroom by speaking up during a low-profile case involving a federal law that bans people convicted of domestic violence from owning a gun. Thomas asked whether conviction for breaking any other law suspends a person's constitutional rights.

Thomas stopped Assistant Solicitor General Ilana H. Eisenstein just as she was about to stop presenting her case.

"Ms. Eisenstein, just one question," Thomas said.

"Can you give me — this is a misdemeanor violation. It suspends a constitutional right. Can you give me another area where a misdemeanor violation suspends a constitutional right?"

Eisenstein replied that in implementing the gun ban, Congress

relied on studies that showed that those who had previously battered their spouses "pose up to a six-fold greater risk of killing, by a gun, their family member."

Thomas then went on to ask a number of follow-up questions.

The content of the Thomas inquiry was of less interest than it having happened at all.

Thomas last asked a question in court Feb. 22, 2006. His participation Monday might have been influenced

by the death of his closest ally on the court, Justice Antonin Scalia. Scalia died Feb. 13.

Scalia was one of the court's most aggressive questioners.

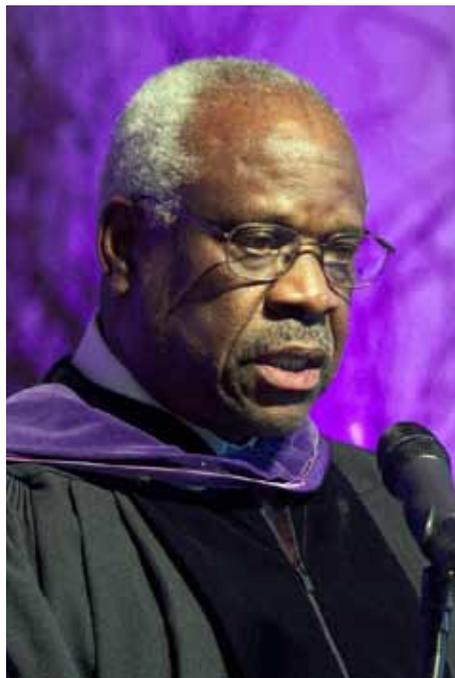
Thomas has given several reasons over the years for not asking questions. He has said that his colleagues ask too many, for instance, and that oral arguments should be a time for lawyers to present their cases.

"I think it's unnecessary to deciding cases to ask that many questions and I don't think it's helpful," he once said. "I think we should listen to lawyers who are arguing their case and I think we should allow the advocates to advocate."

He made a joke from the bench in 2013 that sent reporters and court watchers into overdrive trying to divine the exact words.

Despite his previous refusal to ask questions, Thomas has prompted his seatmate, liberal Justice Stephen G. Breyer, to ask some for him, he once confessed.

"I'll say, 'What about this, Steve,' and he'll pop up and ask a question," a laughing Thomas told a group of law students. "I'll say, 'It was just something I was throwing out.' So you can blame some of those [Breyer questions] on me."



WASHINGTONPOST.COM

For first time in 10 years, Justice Clarence Thomas asks questions during an argument.