

NYC judge hears arguments on the rights of two chimpanzees

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Steven Wise, president of the Nonhuman Rights Project, answers a question outside Manhattan State Supreme Court, in New York, after a hearing, Wednesday, May 27, 2015. Lawyers for two chimpanzees went to court to argue that the animals have "personhood" rights and should be freed from the Long Island university where they are kept. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

A New York City judge has heard arguments over the rights of two chimpanzees that advocates hope to free from a state university where

they're kept.

Manhattan Supreme Court judge Barbara Jaffe didn't make a ruling Wednesday on Leo and Hercules' fate. But she did entertain nearly two hours of exchanges between a lawyer for the Nonhuman Rights Project and an assistant state attorney general.

Much of the hearing centered on the interpretation of centuries-old legal principles. The chimps didn't attend.

A lawyer hoping to free the [chimps](#) said they're "autonomous and self-determining beings," should be granted a writ of habeas corpus and be moved from Stony Brook University to a sanctuary in Florida.

A government lawyer said the case should be dismissed because, among other arguments, the venue isn't proper.

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