

# fmja bulletin

a quarterly  
publication

June  
2024

## Special Edition Civics Issue



Save the Date:  
FMJA Convention in  
New Orleans, LA  
July 15-17, 2024

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# **Civics Overview**

## President's Message

By Nancy Joseph, USMJ, EDWI  
FMJA President

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Time really flies. My term as president, which began at our annual meeting last July in Atlanta, will end at our convention in July in New Orleans. And what a great privilege and honor it has been! Whether representing the FMJA at a meeting with the Chief Justice (see photo below); at Judicial Conference Committee meetings; at the board meetings of our sister organizations, FJA and NCBJ; and at quarterly calls with the FBA and other organizations, I have never missed the opportunity to brag about how indispensable magistrate judges are to the work of the federal judiciary and all the wonderful work that the FMJA does.

As I end my term as your president, I return to where I started—a spotlight on civics. Magistrate Judges are champions of civics and this issue of our *Bulletin* is dedicated to highlighting and celebrating the numerous civics activities and outreach that we are advancing. Whether you are already engaged in civics education or are seeking to start, you will find this issue to be a great resource and inspiration. In this issue, you will find articles on innovative civics activities for everyone from school children to adults.

Additionally, as part of this initiative, we wanted to capture data on our civics engagement. So, for the first time, the Civics Education and Outreach Committee, under the leadership of **Kimberly Priest Johnson** and **Omar Aboulhosen**, surveyed our members to capture data on our civics activities. Inside you will find the results of the civics survey. We know how busy you are. So thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. We hope the survey and this special issue on civics will celebrate you, inspire you, and provide resources to you. I also thank **Caroline Gentry** and the *Bulletins* Committee for going above and beyond to bring this special issue of the *Bulletin* to fruition.

I am also thrilled to announce the revamping of our website which will go live at our FMJA Convention in July. The website has been reorganized to make it easier for you to find upcoming events, *Bulletins*, documents, resources, committee information and activities, Board minutes, and all things FMJA. I urge you to visit the new website after it goes live and let us know what you think. I



believe you will find it to be a great improvement and asset to our operation. I thank **Daniel Irick** and **Patty Barksdale** who generously contributed numerous hours working closely with the web designer to accomplish this update.

I am looking forward to seeing those of you who will be at the FJC Workshop in New Orleans, July 15-17. We have planned a wonderful FMJA Convention in connection with the FJC Workshop. On Monday, July 15 immediately after the workshop, join us for our Annual Members Meeting. Following the members meeting, stay for our Opening Reception to catch up with old and new friends. On Tuesday, July 16, join us for our Awards Lunch where we will honor **Roy Payne** (EDTX) with the **Founders Award** and **Karen Stevenson** (CDCA) with the **Diversity Committee Award**. Our **2024 FMJA Fellows** will also be in attendance and are looking forward to meeting you. On Wednesday, July 17, immediately after the workshops, you are invited to stay for our **Robes in Schools**. (Please contact Sarah Cave (NYSD) if you wish to participate in *Robes*.) Also, what's New Orleans without some fun? On Sunday, July 14, join us for a tour on the Creole Queen Historic Cruise. On Monday, July 15, join us for a delicious Cooking Demonstration. [Register Here.](#)

We will also be sponsoring **Global Entry Enrollment** during the workshop. To participate in the enrollment during the workshop, please see the instructions [here](#). We hope you will find this to be a valuable convenience. Please contact me if you have questions.

Finally, I thank each member of the Executive Committee, each member of the Board, and each Committee Chair and Co-chair who made my presidency a labor of love. I also thank each member for all the wonderful work you are doing on the bench, in your communities, and for the FMJA.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your number one fan, ambassador, and President.  
Nancy Joseph

## FMJA Civics Resource List



Chief Justice Roberts met with the Executive Committee of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association in March to discuss the important judicial work performed by United States Magistrate Judges across the nation.

# The Vital Role of United States Magistrate Judges in Civics Education

By Omar Aboulhosn, USMJ, SDWV & Kimberly Priest Johnson USMJ, EDTX  
Co-Chairs of the FMJA Civics Education and Outreach Committee

In the tapestry of a democratic society, the threads of civics education weave together to form the fabric of informed citizenship. The United States federal government, along with the fifty individual state governments, form an intricate system of laws and governance that relies on an educated populace to uphold its principles and ensure the preservation of democracy. In this context, United States Magistrate Judges have a pivotal role in civics education to help shape the understanding and engagement of communities across the nation.

Civics education encompasses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for individuals to actively participate in civic life. It empowers citizens to comprehend the structure of government, the rule of law, and their rights and responsibilities within the democratic framework. At its core, civics education fosters critical thinking, promotes civic virtues, and cultivates a sense of civic duty.

United States Magistrate Judges occupy an integral position within the federal judiciary and possess a unique vantage point to impart civics education. As judicial officers appointed to assist United States District Judges, we possess a wealth of legal knowledge and firsthand experience in interpreting and applying the law. By leveraging our expertise, we can serve as authoritative voices in explaining complex legal concepts and procedural intricacies to the general populace.

Several benefits flow directly from Magistrate Judges engaging in civics education in their respective communities. First, civics education by Magistrate Judges serves as a conduit for enhancing legal literacy within communities. By educating the public, particularly students, of the foundational principles of the Constitution,



**USMJ Aboulhosn (SDWV) speaks to high school students about civics.**

the structure of the federal judiciary, and the rights guaranteed by law, citizens will be better equipped to navigate legal complexities with confidence. This heightened awareness will help foster a culture of compliance and respect for the rule of law.

Second, informed citizens are empowered citizens. Civics education empowers individuals to actively engage in the democratic process, from voting in elections to participating in civic advocacy. By demystifying legal procedures and providing avenues for civic participation, Magistrate Judges can help generate grassroots activism and community involvement, enriching the fabric of democracy.

Third, the judiciary serves as a bulwark of



justice and a safeguard of individual rights. However, public perception of the judiciary can be marred by misconceptions and distrust. Civics education initiatives led by Magistrate Judges bridge this gap by fostering a deeper understanding of the judiciary's role, functions, and impartiality. Through educational outreach programs, Magistrate Judges can humanize the judiciary, dispelling myths and fostering trust in the administration of justice.

Finally, in a pluralistic society like the United States, diversity is both a strength and a challenge. Civics education by Magistrate Judges transcends cultural and socioeconomic barriers, reaching diverse segments of society. By tailoring educational initiatives to resonate with different communities, Magistrate Judges can help foster inclusivity and bridge societal divides. This proactive engagement nurtures a sense of belonging and ownership in the democratic process.

As co-chairs of the Civics Education and Outreach Committee of the Federal Magistrate

Judges Association, we have had the privilege of seeing the impact that many Magistrate Judges can have in promoting civics education in their respective communities. From inviting schools to the courthouse, to taking the show on the road to meet the students where they are, Magistrate Judges are fostering the kind of community involvement that helps to educate the next generation of leaders regarding the importance of understanding our governmental structures and their future involvement in that governance. Twice a year, at the conclusion of our Federal Judicial Center conferences, the Civics Outreach Committee and the Diversity Committee work together to go into the communities where our conferences are held and spread civics education to various student groups, including economically disadvantaged and minority communities. Please consider joining us next year as we do our part in making sure all students have an equal ability to learn about civics education. ⚖️



USMJ Johnson (EDTX) poses with guests invited to a naturalization ceremony.

# The Civics Survey: A Snapshot of Magistrate Judges' Civics Activities

By Caroline H. Gentry, USMJ, SDOH and  
Nancy Joseph, USMJ, EDWI

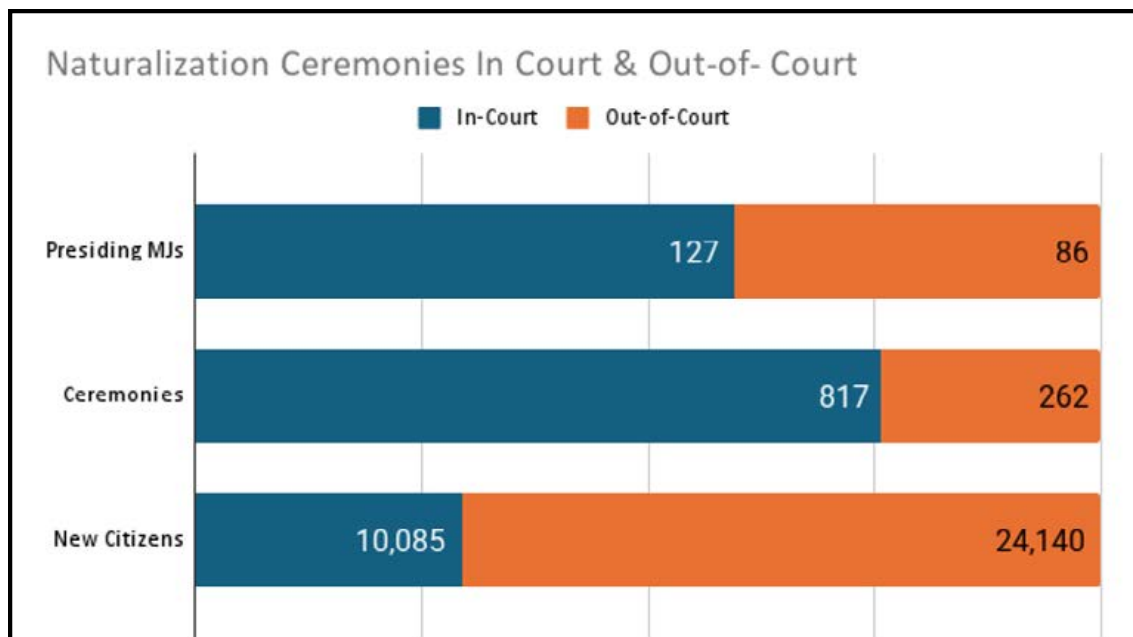
Magistrate judges are leaders in civics education and outreach. Although many magistrate judges generously devote their time to civics activities, there has been no effort to capture the data. This FMJA civics survey attempts to fill this gap. The civics survey covered the period from January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 (the "reporting period"). It asked magistrate judges to report their civics activities in several broad categories: naturalization ceremonies, mock trial and moot court, civics holidays, civics programs for children, civics programs for adults, and civics innovations. The survey also asked the judges to report the total number of hours spent on civics activities. A total of 178 members completed the survey. Here are some highlights from their responses.

## Naturalization Ceremonies

We asked judges to report naturalization ceremonies they presided over both in and outside of their courthouses. We also asked

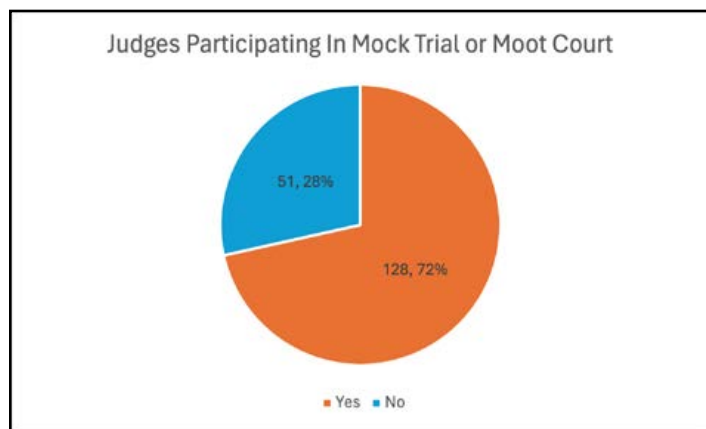
the judges to approximate the total number of new citizens they naturalized. For ceremonies conducted in the courthouse, 127 magistrate judges reported officiating over a total of 817 ceremonies, naturalizing 10,085 new citizens. For ceremonies conducted outside the courthouse, 86 judges reported officiating over a total of 262 ceremonies, naturalizing 24,140 new citizens.

For the ceremonies conducted outside of the courthouse, magistrate judges reported officiating ceremonies in many types of places, including stadiums, museums, libraries, parks, schools, military bases, outdoor memorials, convention centers, shopping malls, theaters, statehouses, state fairs, and festivals. Some magistrate judges conducted ceremonies before or during sporting events, including major league baseball games and the Kentucky Derby. One magistrate judge even conducted a ceremony at a casino.



## Mock Trial & Moot Court

We asked judges whether they participated in mock trials and/or moot courts. A total of 128 magistrate judges reported judging approximately 524 mock trials and/or moot courts.



## Civics Holidays: Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Law Day, and Bill of Rights Day

For Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, 45 magistrate judges reported participating in a Constitution Day and Citizenship Day activity. Approximately 3,150 individuals attended these activities.

For Law Day, 52 magistrate judges reported participating in a Law Day activity. Approximately

3,795 individuals attended those Law Day activities.

For Bill of Rights Day, 8 magistrate judges reported participating in a Bill of Rights Day activity. Approximately 395 individuals attended those Bill of Rights Day activities.

## Civics Programs For School Children

Magistrate judges reported participating in a variety of civics programs for kids as follows:

A total of 91 magistrate judges reported visiting schools and speaking with students. These magistrate judges spoke to approximately 317 classes. Also, 23 magistrate judges reported hosting and presenting to students during visits to the courthouse.

A total of 20 magistrate judges reported speaking to 38 Scout groups, while 8 magistrate judges reported participating in writing or video contests.

Finally, 4 magistrate judges reported participating in the Civil Discourse & Difficult Decisions program.

## Civics Programs for Adults

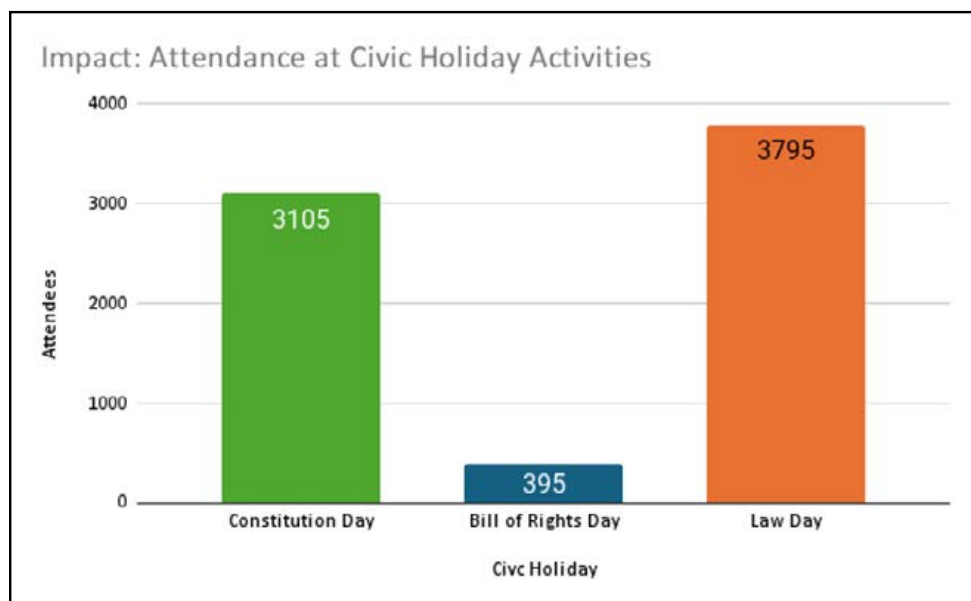
Additionally, magistrate judges have been innovating and reaching out to more than school children. A total of 32 magistrate judges reported that their courthouses have civics programs for adults and 24 magistrate judges reported that they participate in these adult civics programs.

A total of 27 magistrate judges reported speaking to bar associations, law schools, or community groups.

## Civics Innovations

In recent years, there have been innovations in civics outreach where judges and courts are investing in the

[\*continued on page 12\*](#)





### Survey Results from page 11

creation of, and participation in, long term high impact projects such as Learning Centers, immersion programs, and Teachers' Institutes. For the reporting period in this category, the judges who completed the survey reported as follows:

As to Learning Centers, 39 magistrate judges reported having a Learning Center in their courthouse while 20 magistrate judges reported participating in Learning Center activities.

As to immersive learning programs/summer camps, 33 magistrate judges reported that their courthouses host youth summer camps and 21 magistrate judges reported that they participate in these summer camps.

The creation of the Teachers' Institutes is particularly worth noting given the number of

students that teachers reach. Eleven magistrate judges reported participating in the Teachers' Institutes.

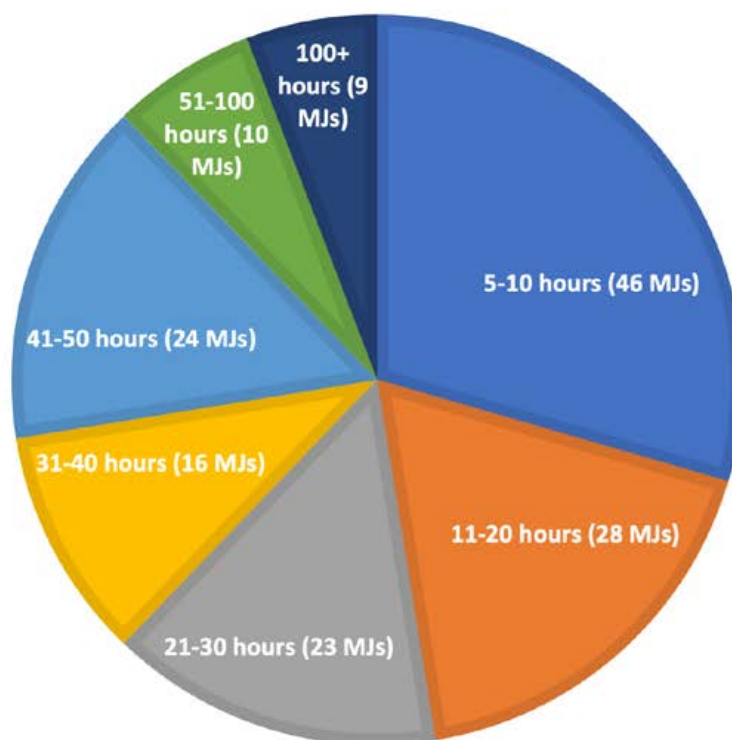
### **Hours Spent on Civics**

Finally, the survey attempted to capture the approximate number of total hours magistrate judges spent on civics during the reporting period. Magistrate judges were asked to choose from the following categories:

- 5-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- 41-50 hours
- 51-100 hours
- more than 100 hours

A total of 156 magistrate judges responded and the chart below shows the results:

**HOURS SPENT ON CIVICS (156 MJS RESPONDED)**



# Involve, Inform, Inspire, and Ignite!

## Get to Know Rebecca J. Fanning, the AO's Civics Champion

Submitted by Nancy Joseph, USMJ, EDWI

### How long have you been with the AO?

I was hired as the first National Educational Outreach Manager at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in 1998.\* I moved to Washington, D.C. from Minneapolis where I was the court information officer for the Minnesota Supreme Court. The first time I visited the nation's capital was when I was 10 years old. My dad, a prosecutor in Idaho, was sworn in at the U.S. Supreme Court. This experience was a pivotal moment for me. I wrote an essay about it that I still have. I want every young person to have the same positive experiences I had growing up in the courtrooms of Idaho because I know how powerful and life-changing interactions with judges and lawyers can be.

### What is your role and the focus of your job?

My role is to create a unique niche in civics education for the federal judiciary with easy-to-implement national initiatives and locally adaptable programs, activities, resources, career-exposure opportunities, and how-to information for judges, lawyers, and teachers. These outreach efforts are designed to fulfill the mantra in the signature block on my e-mails: *Involve, Inform, Inspire, and Ignite*. They further the public's trust, confidence, and understanding of the judiciary as stated in the [2020 strategic plan](#).

My focus is on producing memorable experiences that bring courts and their communities together by putting a human face on the judiciary. These courtroom and classroom

programs expose students in high schools, community colleges, universities, law schools, and adult education programs to the role and function of the courts in a democratic society. I keep raising the bar for myself to:

- Develop national initiatives that support 1) law-related observances: Law Day, Constitution Day, Bill of Rights Day, and 2) our law-related programs, e.g., Candid Conversations, and Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions.



USMJ Zia Faruqui (DDC) and Rebecca Fanning after a court event, joined by a little boy Rebecca met at a grocery store whom she invited to observe the program with his parents.

[continued on page 14](#)

### *Involve, Inform, Inspire from page 13*

- Create, update, and share on [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov) courtroom-ready and classroom-ready programs and activities that require minimal preparation by judges, court staff, lawyers, and teachers.

- Maintain on [JNet](https://jnet.uscourts.gov) how-to information and examples of locally initiated programming that can be replicated by other courts to avoid reinventing the wheel.

- Partner with outside nonprofit, non-partisan civics education organizations including the Civics Renewal Network; bar associations; and such pipeline programs as Just the Beginning, Mikva Challenge, and Urban Debate League, among others.

### **How do you help judges who want to participate in civics?**

Civics education is personal, not only for me but for the judges who reach out to me. When judges contact me to say they want to get involved in civics, I interview them about what they see as the civics education needs in their schools and communities. I ask them why they feel drawn to teaching about the courts, what is important to them to convey to the public, and what age group is in their comfort zone. I work with judges to identify the right pre-packaged program and customize it to make it their own. If they have something specific in mind, or if their interests aren't reflected in our offerings, we create a program together that also can be replicated in other courts. That process is the origin story for [Candid Conversations](#) and [Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](#), and other programs.

### **What services and resources do you provide?**

Specific services I provide include identifying topics, resources, formats, and learning objectives for specific audiences; developing agendas and activities; creating feedback forms; offering tips for recruiting teachers and schools; and communicating about successes within the larger court community.

On [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov) judges will find a portfolio of programs from which they can choose. I say that the programs are “just add a judge and stir” because they require only 30 minutes of reading the downloadable materials and a 15-minute orientation meeting among the attorney volunteers and the judge before they walk out into the courtroom to do the program. The agendas are designed to be easily modified so that judges can put their own signature on them.

On [JNet](https://jnet.uscourts.gov), judges will find how-to information that includes best practices, a national catalog of what other courts are doing, time-blocked activities from 15 minutes to 3+ hours that are ready for immediate use; a civics showcase series of judge-created programs; presentation materials; and student activities on sentencing and mediation. The federal judiciary's [YouTube channel](#) has a library of educational videos that are used as discussion starters.

### **What role do magistrate judges play in civics leadership?**

Magistrate judges are at the forefront of civics education in the courts. Here are a few examples. Candid Conversations was piloted by Judge Zia Faruqui in the District of Columbia. He meets virtually with students at the base on Guantanamo Bay and in-person with a cross-section of inner city and suburban students in his courtroom and their classrooms. Judge Shaniek Maynard in Fort Pierce, Florida, and Judge Bruce Macdonald in Tucson, Arizona, were two of the first judges to pilot Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions in their respective districts.

Magistrate judges are also proactive in reaching out for customized programs and specific needs. Judge Jose Almonte in Newark, New Jersey, asked for my help in creating a program for fifth graders. Our program was so well received that he was asked to be the commencement speaker at the eighth graders' graduation ceremony. Judge Diana Song Quiroga, in Laredo, Texas, asked for

*[continued on page 15](#)*



### Involve, Inform, Inspire from page 14

assistance in spreading the word about the high school and middle school programs in her court.

### **Judges are very busy. What is the best return on their investment of time?**

Candid Conversations are the best way to get started with a low-investment, but high-impact activity. It is a Q/A session with a twist that is effective with audiences from middle school through adult education. Participants brainstorm the questions and issues they want to discuss with the judge. The judge opens the session by recounting her reasons for choosing the law and for joining the judiciary. The judge talks about the life adversities faced on the way to the bench. A judge's candor breaks the ice and creates a welcoming environment that opens up the audience and sets the stage for asking meaningful questions.

Teachers institutes are more involved but they are the best return on investment. Educators are the first to say that they need help teaching about the Third Branch. They are eager and receptive. A teachers institute can range from a half-day to four days and the impact is lasting because it reaches a generation of students in classrooms. The most effective programs for professional development include courtroom simulations that teachers can bring their students to participate in during the school year. Educators respond very positively to small-group discussions with judges, attorney volunteers, and professionals in the justice system that give them a behind-the-scenes feeling. A half-day event is accessible and highly rated by a selective national program for teachers from every state who come to D.C. every year.

### **Are there best practices in civics that you want judges to know about?**

Best practices can be found on JNet, but I would summarize them this way.

1. Start by contacting the national educational

outreach manager who can find or create programs and resources and who can bring visibility to your successes.

2. Capitalize on the courts' unique niche in civics education: judges, lawyers, court staff, justice system professionals and the most attention-getting venue possible -- courtrooms.

3. Keep programs interactive and career oriented. Avoid lectures. Students need to be active throughout the program as participants. They want to interact with people who look like them who have jobs in the justice system.

4. Be proactive in reaching out to communities of all kinds. Ask court employees to contact their schools and community groups, e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H, Scouts, to participate in courtroom and classroom programs.


5. Take advantage of programs on uscourts.gov and JNet that require only 30 minutes of preparation and a 20-minute orientation meeting among the attorney volunteers and the host judge. The programs are easy to modify and make your own.

6. Collect feedback from the participants and the volunteers and incorporate the feedback into the next program. Feedback forms are available.

### **How can judges reach you?**

The best way to reach me is by e-mail so that I can track the requests and my responses to them.

My parting advice about seeking assistance: Don't hold back because you think I'm too busy. A colleague once said: "Rebecca has never seen work she didn't want to do." And that is because I don't see it as work; I see it as opportunities – opportunities to give students positive, personal experiences with the human face of the judiciary like the ones that gave me lifelong confidence in the courts when I was a little girl in Idaho.

\* Rebecca J. Fanning can be reached at [Rebecca.Fanning@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Fanning@ao.uscourts.gov). 



# **Summer Programs**

Teacher Institutes

Summer Opportunities for Students



# Western District of Washington Judicial Institute

By S. Kate Vaughan, USMJ, WDWA

*"I would highly recommend this program because it changed my life. This institute inspired me to be more informed about civic engagement in my local community. This program has given me a new lens to examine justice in the community. Furthermore, the professionalism and expertise of the judges and staff give me hope that our city is deeply cared for by invested non-partisan individuals. In the short time I was here I learned a tremendous amount, that I will go back and share with my colleagues and students."*

High School Social Studies Teacher, Seattle

Since its inception, the Western District of Washington's Judicial Institute has provided an interactive and unique training opportunity to more than 500 civics and government teachers from schools all over the District. The three-day summer program focuses on the United States Constitution, the federal court systems, and the administration of justice. Sessions include presentations by judges on the Federal Judiciary and the Fourth Amendment, court observations of new arrests and sentencing, and interactive sessions on voir dire, appellate argument and student free speech. Mary Beth Tinker, the then-13-year-old plaintiff in the groundbreaking 1969 U.S. Supreme Court student free speech case, *Tinker v Des Moines School District*, presents each year to inspire the teachers and inform them about free speech issues in schools.

The first Institutes were held in 2012. The agenda was designed to provide middle and high school teachers first-hand knowledge and practical curriculum training to advance their teaching techniques and content about the court system and thereby advance their students' understanding. The Court pays, with funds from the District's bench-bar resources, for the Institute to be coordinated by Margaret Fisher, a Seattle



**USMJ Mary Alice Theiler speaks to attendees of the WDWA Judicial Institute.**

University School of Law professor. The Court also covers the teachers' hotel costs and hosts a dinner where all judges from the District are invited to spend the evening with the teachers. The Institute is approved for free continuing learning credits required for teacher licensing in the State, a considerable draw for the teachers.

The creation of the Institute was inspired by the call from then-U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for courts around the country to utilize the web-based resources of iCivics to expand civics education in the schools. Magistrate Judge Mary Alice Theiler volunteered to represent the Court in planning and presenting the program in the Western District of Washington, and Magistrate Judges Dave Christel, Kate Vaughan, and Grady Leupold later joined the planning team.

The Institutes have, by any measure, exceeded all expectations. Through 2023 we have held 16 summer Institutes with over 500 teachers participating from schools located throughout the District and reaching exponentially thousands of students.

Each year the teachers provide an extensive evaluation of the Institute. We have used the evaluations to refine and improve content, format, and teaching modalities. Typical responses are summarized here:


*"The Judicial Institute rocked my summer! I have a greater knowledge of the judicial branch of the government. I am inspired by the judges to connect with my students more deeply, and I feel privileged for being able to attend. Thank you for this opportunity! You have made me a better teacher."*

*"Hearing directly from the judges was extraordinary. The Voir Dire simulation as well as the Moot Court experience is very relevant to my teaching - I'm starting a Mock Trial team at my school next year and I also teach criminal justice. Hearing from the Probation Officers really got me thinking about changes I want to make to both my criminal justice curriculum as well as how I can better support my students who have been incarcerated. The session about civility and preserving people's dignity during difficult conversations is something I will be thinking about for a long time. It deeply resonated with me and will influence how I work with students."*

*"The academic resources and content will definitely be an asset in my classroom, but the experience of being in court and hearing from the people who work in the judicial system gave me a level of understanding that all my years of academic study had failed to do. It also showed me just how valuable those same experiences are for my students, which will have a significant impact on how I teach the judicial system going forward."*

We have learned from the teachers that schools have suffered in these more recent days with polarization and increased incivility. Social studies teachers have commented that they are exhausted and discouraged. Additionally, teachers

readily admit that they know the least about the third branch of government. This plays itself out in the classrooms with students. Since the primary goal of this program is to increase students' knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, federal courts, and the legal processes, this program takes great pride for reinspiring teachers and equipping them with real knowledge about the federal courts and Constitution. Teachers regularly report that their faith in our system of government is restored by what they experienced and learned at the Institute. It is not unusual for teachers to cry at the Institute, as they are so moved by the dedication to the rule of law and the compassionate concern for defendants. This year the Institute will be held in Tacoma, with 40 teachers participating.

If you are interested in developing a similar Institute in your District, or have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Judge Vaughan or Judge Leupold. 



**USMJ Brian Tsuchida speaks to attendees of the WDWA Judicial Institute.**



**Chief USMJ Willie J. Epps, Jr. (WDMO) instructs participants in the annual Street Law Teacher Workshop sponsored by the Western District of Missouri and the Missouri Bar.**



# Teacher Institute Supplement

USMJ Debora Grasham (DID) reports that her court and the University of Idaho College of Law provide an Institute for Secondary School Teachers. See <https://www.uidaho.edu/law/outreach/teacher-ed>.

The Northern District of Illinois and the American Bar Association provide the Judge John F. Grady Summer Institute for Teachers. See <https://abateacherportal.org/programs/summer-teacher-pd/judge-grady-institute/>.

USMJ Kellie Barr (SDIN) has participated in her court's two-day Federal Court Teacher Institute. See <https://www.insd.uscourts.gov/teacher-institute>.

The District of Minnesota presents a Teacher Institute that will focus this year on free speech and the First Amendment in the classroom. See <https://justicedemocracycentersmn.org/event/summer-teacher-institute-2024/>.

The Eastern District of Missouri partners with the St. Louis Judicial Learning Center to offer a Summer Teacher Institute. See <https://judiciallearningcenter.org/summer-teacher-institute/>.

USMJ Kathleen DeSoto (DMT) helps to teach the 2½ day Montana Judicial Institute, which includes keynote speakers and demonstrations. See <https://www.mtd.uscourts.gov/montana-judicial-institute>.

The Eastern and Middle Districts of Tennessee offer a Teachers Law School that uses materials developed by the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA). See <https://connections.tned.uscourts.gov/participate.html> and <https://www.tnmd.uscourts.gov/teachers-law-school>.

USMJ Jared Bennett (DUT) reports that his court partners with the University of Utah to teach middle and high school civics teachers. See <https://www.hinckley.utah.edu/huntsman-seminar/>.

The Eastern District of Washington offers an annual Judicial Institute for middle school and high school teachers. See <https://www.waed.uscourts.gov/teachers>.

For more information about the WDWA Judicial Institute, see <https://www.wawd.uscourts.gov/educators-media/judicial-institute>.

## Suit Up For the Future

A Conversation with Magistrate Judge Karen Wells Roby (EDLA)  
on an Immersive 3-Week Civic Program for High School Students

Submitted by Nancy Joseph, USMJ, EDLA

### Why Does Civics Matter?

Civic education, when done right, can uplift and empower students. It can help us find our voices and use them effectively. Civics is the language of the citizenry used to communicate, plan and execute change citizens desire. When people aren't prepared to find this voice, ask these questions, and learn their role in a democratic community, they miss out on a major opportunity to be part of something meaningful—and they surrender that power to someone else.

### Tell us about SUIT UP FOR THE FUTURE. What is it?

Suit up for the Future began in 2011 when the Louisiana State Bar Association, in partnership with the Louisiana Supreme Court, Just the Beginning, and Louisiana law schools, began hosting an annual internship program.

In reflecting on the lack of diversity in the profession, I wanted to introduce high school students to the profession an immersive way. Many students are unaware of the role that lawyers play in society. Nor do they consider practicing law as a possible career choice. Some students are exposed to the profession only

as a result of a negative experience through a loved one charged with a crime. But they do not appreciate a lawyer's role in the structure of government and how government affects their lives. Yet, lawyers are an important part of history in every community. Lawyers were instrumental in the founding of our nation and played a major role in drafting the governing documents that still shape our government, our laws, and our way of life. Lawyers have played major roles within every civil movement that arose within our country, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Equality Movements. Lawyers often make the best problem solvers and the best leaders because of the critical thinking and analytical skills learned in law school and developed in practice. So when we launched the program in 2011, we launched it as a five-week summer program and accepted 30 students. But given the nature of the immersion, administering the program was exhausting so we reduced it to a three-week program beginning in June each year.

### What is the curriculum or general itinerary during the three weeks?



USMJ Karen Roby and State Circuit Judge Paula Brown with participants.



USMJ Karen Roby with participants.

Inside the “Suit Up classroom,” students experience the Socratic teaching method and gain exposure to specified law school courses, including, criminal law, and legal research and writing. Students also receive a mock trial problem, which will serve as the basis for the legal writing assignment and oral argument that the students will present to a panel of judges at the end of the program.

In a second component of the “Suit Up classroom,” students are provided advice and substantive information from guest speakers, and receive instruction in creating competitive resumes, preparing for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), professionalism, ethics, and workplace etiquette and attire. The time inside the classroom provides students with ample time to work as a group on assignments and seek feedback from various legal mentors throughout the course.

This program is available to incoming high school juniors, seniors, and recent graduates who are interested in the legal profession. During the program the students attend an abridged law school session, tour law schools and courts, and participate in an internship consisting of job shadowing at area law offices and courts. Students provide their own transportation and housing.

A second facet of the course allows Suit Up participants to step outside the classroom and see first-hand what it means to be a “lawyer.” They “job-shadow” a practicing attorney in order to provide students with the following experiences: a tour of a law firm/agency, including all departments, so that students gain an understanding of all of the support staff that comprise a law firm/agency; the opportunity to join the attorney on outings (such as depositions, hearings, and trials); lunch with the attorney; and the benefit of mentoring and support for the oral argument and legal memorandum they will be crafting.

Students are also required to prepare a list of questions to ask attorneys whom they job-shadow so that the student gains an appreciation of the day-to-day schedule of an attorney, as well as the role that lawyers play in society and in the


administration of justice. Students must have transportation to and from the job shadowing assignment.

Finally, the Suit Up students attend several tours. The students tour two area law schools, the Louisiana Supreme Court, the Court Museum, and federal court buildings. During the tours, students hear from several guest speakers and also have the opportunity to view proceedings at several state and federal courts.

**In 2013, Suit Up for the Future received the ABA Partnership Program Award as an exemplary pipeline program. Who runs this program? What is your role in it?**

The program is administered by the Louisiana State Bar Association. I serve as the coordinating judge of the program. When I started my role was designing, planning and implementing the program. Since it has been in operation for a long time, my role has changed and the State Bar Association is now administering the program. My role has evolved to coordinating the students’ federal court day and final oral argument at the end of the program. Best oralist and brief writer awards are given.

**What have been keys to the success of the program?**

The keys to success are (1) getting the support of the bar association who delegated the running of the program to its diversity staffer (2) securing the support of the judiciary both state and federal; (3) enlisting professors from area law schools to volunteer their time by teaching during the program and (4) enlisting the support of area law firms and lawyers to allow students to shadow them at depositions and court in their day to day life. We also have a loop back system in which graduates of the program return and volunteer their time coaching the next class of Suit Up Participants. Additionally, we receive funding from the Louisiana Bar Foundation to assist with funding of the program. This allows us to offer a \$250 stipend to students who complete the program. 



## EDMO Federal Justice Fellowship Submitted by Abbie Crites-Leoni, USMJ, EDMO



USMJ Abbie Crites-Leoni started a 4-week college fellowship program in the EDMO Cape Girardeau courthouse in 2020. She describes it as “a law school boot camp for rising college juniors and seniors who are interested in attending law school.”



During an alumni luncheon held in August 2023, past and present Fellows posed for a group photo in the Rush Hudson Limbaugh, Sr. United States Courthouse.



USMJ Mario Garcia spoke about his work in the legal profession with students from Just the Beginning Foundation's Middle School Law Camp at the McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis, Indiana.





USMJ Robert Spector (DCT) with campers in the Future Law Enforcement Youth Academy (FLEYA) program following a mock sentencing held in the New Haven federal courthouse.



USMJ Rodney Holmes (EDMO) poses with participants in the Eastern District of Missouri's mock sentencing summer camp.

# Summer Opportunities Supplement

The District of Connecticut provides a free five-day high school summer camp in its Hartford courthouse. See <https://www.ctd.uscourts.gov/attend-hon-warren-w-eginton-justice-institute>.

The District of Delaware provides a paid stipend to high school juniors and seniors who are accepted into a 4-week summer fellowship program. See <https://www.ded.uscourts.gov/high-school-fellowship-program>.

The Southern District of Florida invites law students to visit its courthouses during the summer, have lunch with magistrate judges, and discuss their role in federal court. See <https://www.flmd.uscourts.gov/summer-events-students>.

USMJ Judith Dein (DMA) helps to supervise her court's summer programs. In the five-week Nelson Fellowship program, 12 high school students are based in judges' chambers and attend a public speaking class, civil rights class, and various educational programs. At the end, they participate in a mock trial. In the nine-week Lindsay Fellowship program, eight college students study legal research and writing for one month, work for the USAO, Public Defender or Probation Office for one month, and conclude with a moot court argument. See <https://www.mad.uscourts.gov/outreach/outreach.htm>.



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9<sup>TH</sup> - WARE THE BILL OF RIGHTS  
10<sup>TH</sup> - To Give the Government the Money  
But Not Excess  
1<sup>ST</sup> - PROTECTS THE GOVERNMENT  
5<sup>TH</sup> - LIFE, LIBERTY & PROPERTY  
ARE SACRED AND SHOULD  
NOT BE FAULTY DEPRIVED

③  
1<sup>ST</sup> Amendment  
- broad rights  
- speech, religion, association  
assembly → process  
speech, expression, petition, assembly  
6<sup>TH</sup> Amendment  
- fair judgment  
- speedy trial  
- impartial jury  
- ability to defend yourself  
9<sup>TH</sup> Amendment  
- catch all  
- pairs with right to redress  
of grievances  
ability to create for additional  
rights

④  
1<sup>ST</sup> - freedom of speech  
6<sup>TH</sup> - trial by jury  
14<sup>TH</sup> - right to privacy / freedom of movement

# **Visits to Schools**

Classroom Visits  
Formal Programs



## Robes in Schools, April 17, 2024

By Michael Hegarty, USMJ, DCO & Steven Locke, USMJ, EDNY

As part of the FMJA Diversity Committee's Robes in School program, fourteen magistrate judges extended their stay in Seattle following the April Federal Judicial Center workshop to hold programs for students from two high schools. Following the outstanding presentation by Erwin Chemerinsky, which capped a wonderful workshop, we walked a few blocks (in beautiful weather) to the federal courthouse in downtown Seattle. After a box lunch and a short briefing, we split into two groups—four of us to travel to Ballard High School, and ten of us to stay at the courthouse with students from The Downtown School. Judges Brian A. Tsuchida (WDWA), Diana Song Quiroga (SDTX), and Grady J. Leupold (WDWA) organized the programs.

At Ballard, Judges Christina A. Bryan (SDTX), Dena H. Palermo (SDTX), Daniel J. Stewart (NDNY), and Steven I. Locke (EDNY) met with students from teachers Gregory Feise's and Robin Dowdy's American Government classes. The program began with brief introductory remarks from each of the judges, followed by break-out sessions where we spoke with the students about the role of the Third Branch, both nationally and in their

community, and answered various questions ranging from careers in the law, the role of science in the courtroom, drug crimes, and general law-enforcement practices. It was a terrific program.

Meanwhile, Judges Stewart D. Aaron (SDNY), Panayotta Augustin-Birch (SDFL), Patricia A. Donahue (CDCA), Lee G. Dunst (EDNY), Kyle F. Reardon (DAK), Victoria Reznik (SDNY), Alice R. Senechal (DND), Stephen R. Welby (EDMO), James M. Wicks (EDNY), and Michael E. Hegarty (DCO) met with The Downtown School students. We split the students into two groups of about sixteen, with each group in a separate courtroom. In each courtroom, one of the judges led a group of three to four students through an exercise about the Bill of Rights.

In Judge Tsuchida's courtroom, we spoke briefly about our perspectives on the value of a legal career and the importance of having at least some familiarity with American law. The students sat in the jury box and at the counsel tables and listened attentively. Then, we broke up into smaller groups and found a quiet corner for each small group to engage in the exercise.



FMJA Diversity Committee, 2024 Seattle Robes in School Volunteer Magistrate Judges in front of the United States Courthouse in Seattle, Washington.



(Judges from left to right) Magistrate Judges Christina A. Bryan (SDTX), Daniel J. Stewart (NDNY), Dena H. Palermo (SDTX), and Steven I. Locke (EDNY) with teachers from Ballard High School, Seattle, Washington.



The students were given a packet of materials that included a scenario of extraterrestrial aliens visiting the United States, miraculously with the ability to speak English. The visitors intended to rule us, but benevolently. Having determined that Americans have too many rights, they decided to permit us to retain three of the rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. The task for each group was to determine which three rights to retain.

To say this was a spirited discussion would be an understatement. The students' knowledge was very impressive; they understood subtle aspects of each amendment. It was clear that they were very bright and had excellent teachers. We had approximately fifteen minutes for each small group to decide which rights they would retain.

After reaching our group decisions, we reconvened in the courtroom. Each group had a spokesperson who explained the group's selections. The First Amendment (unsurprisingly)

received the most votes (in fact, each group chose it), followed by the Ninth and the Sixth Amendments. After debriefing, we gathered for a group picture with all The Downtown School students, teachers, and judges. For the students and participant judges alike, it was a worthwhile experience. 🇺🇸



**Magistrate Judges Stewart D. Aaron (SDNY), Panayotta Augustin-Birch (SDFL), Patricia A. Donahue (CDCA), Lee G. Dunst (EDNY), Michael E. Hegarty (DCO), Grady J. Leupold (WDWA), Kyle F. Reardon (DAK), Victoria Reznik (SDNY), Alice R. Senechal (DND), Diana Song Quiroga (SDTX), Brian A. Tsuchida (WDWA), Stephen R. Welby (EDMO), and James M. Wicks (EDNY) with The Downtown School students and teachers in Judge Tsuchida's courtroom at the United States Courthouse, Seattle, Washington.**



**USMJ Kyle Reardon (DAK) brainstorms with students.**



**USMJ Victoria Reznik (SDNY) converses with students.**



AP Government students from Meridian High School in Falls Church, Virginia listen to a presentation from USMJ William Fitzpatrick (EDVA), an attorney from the Coast Guard JAG Corps, an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and an Assistant Federal Defender. Their teacher reported: "I was excited to see several students participate who had been pretty quiet all year. Your stories and experiences made an impact on the kids, and I know of at least one who is now talking about going to law school."



Chief USMJ Tu M. Pham (WDTN) and attorney Taurus Bailey visited the St. Agnes Academy in Memphis and spoke to upper school students about the Bill of Rights, with an emphasis on the First and Fourth Amendments as they pertain to high school students. Nearly 300 students attended the discussion.





USMJ Jason Robertson (EDOK), who is the first Cherokee Citizen to be selected as a U.S. Magistrate Judge, visits students at Wagoner High School, which is also his alma mater. Judge Robertson was invited to speak to a leadership class about the qualities that it takes to be an effective leader, and to give advice on pursuing one's dreams.

# Classroom Visits Supplement

Several U.S. Magistrate Judges, including Therese Wiley Dancks (NDNY), Lauren Louis (SDFL) and Kelly Pate (MDAL), read to elementary school students and discuss their role as a judge. The District of Connecticut recommends books, including *We the Kids* by David Catrow, at this link: <https://www.ctd.uscourts.gov/programs-available-year-round#host-guest-reader>.

USMJ Sharon King (DNJ) serves as a guest speaker for middle school students attending field trips at the National Constitution Center.

USMJ James Gates (EDNC) provides virtual civics presentations to middle and high school classes through the National Constitution Center. See <https://constitutioncenter.org/education/live-online-events>.

USMJ Ignacio Torteya III (SDTX) is routinely invited to preside over student council ceremonies at elementary and middle schools, where he speaks about civic engagement.

USMJ Michael Aloï (NDWV) has participated as a judge for the *We the People* program, in which teams of high school students address important constitutional issues.

## Civics Education Through University Pre-Law Programs

By Mary Stanley and R. Clarke VanDervort

We retired in 2013 and 2015 respectively and, reflecting upon our careers and futures and understanding that we were under oath to uphold the United States Constitution in perpetuity it seemed, we wondered how we might actively and meaningfully continue in service though unemployed. Considering the interplay of required minimum distributions and qualified charitable distributions, we invested in scholarship and internship programs at the colleges and universities which we had attended, Mount Holyoke College and the University of Virginia Law School, and in opportunities for travel abroad and scholarships through the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at Ohio University. Our travel abroad contributions have supported student summer study excursions in Greece and Israel. As we explored investment opportunities, we were honestly surprised to learn of participatory opportunities as well through Ohio University's Center for Law, Justice, and Culture.

Ohio University has seven undergraduate pre-law degree programs through its Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Business and an undergraduate certificate and a graduate master's program through its Center for Law, Justice, and Culture (CLJC). The CLJC is an integrated academic community of faculty from several departments and students with an emphasis on experiential learning. Students are encouraged to join and participate actively in numerous affiliated organizations, including the ACLU of Ohio University Campus Action Team, Ohio Innocence Project, Black Law Students Association, The Mock Trial Team, and Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity. Each of these organizations has strong ties in the local community and with their counterparts in other universities statewide and nationally.

The Mock Trial Team competes regionally and nationally.

The CLJC students may also participate in the Center for Student Legal Services (CSLS), a separate non-profit entity which has a student Board of Directors and employs two attorneys. Through an affiliated organization, Students Defending Students, CSLS participants advise and represent other students with respect to issues before the University's Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility.

The CLJC further offers programming and alumni-supported funding for students preparing for and applying to law schools including Social Justice Internships with the ACLU of Ohio and Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio, the Law School Application Support Fund which assists students with costs reasonably associated with applying to law school (the costs of preparing for,



Pictured above are retired USMJs R. Clarke VanDervort and Mary Stanley (SDWV) after a coaching session with the Ohio University mock trial team.





**Retired USMJ R. Clarke VanDervort poses with the winners of the Civility in Law, Justice and Culture writing competition.**

applying to take and distributing the results of taking the LSAT and applying to law schools) and the Experiential Learning Fund which supports student who take on community, leadership, internship and research projects. Ohio University's College of Arts and Sciences also offers two law-related study abroad programs: Human Rights, Law, and Justice in Northern Ireland and Law, Justice, and Transitions to Democracy in South Africa.

We have participated in two CJLC programs over the years, Pre-Law Day and the Summer Law & Trial Institute. On Pre-Law Day, faculty, students, and alumni, including attorneys, judges, professors from other universities, and others hold panel and roundtable discussions about substantive legal topics, careers in law, the versatility of a law degree, and applying to and attending law school. Additionally, students in the organizations above speak about and demonstrate their activities. The Summer Law & Trial Institute is a free two-week experiential learning program for qualifying high school students from southeastern Ohio. The program promotes a deeper understanding of our systems of justice and the development and practice of law. The students spend the first week in online sessions and the second week on the Athens, Ohio campus. They visit a number of courts and legal offices and role play as attorneys and witnesses in mock trials in a courtroom before an Ohio judge with their parents in attendance.

As we first had the opportunity to speak in informal settings with students and sometimes with their parents, we realized that we did not

know where to begin, and we continue to work on our message. We think that it is important to describe the Federal Court system, its jurisdiction and limitations. We try as well to explain how the practice, application and development of law is kaleidoscopic and how in the civil and criminal contexts federal courts are constantly applying the Constitution in new and evolving circumstances, in addition to considering many other matters which arise legally, administratively, and, sometimes, internationally. To stimulate further discussion and learning about the rule of law and the federal justice system, we established the Civility in Law, Justice and Culture Endowment last year, and a writing competition on the subject has recently concluded.

We were pleased to learn recently that, in September 2020, the federal judiciary established its Strategic Plan for Preserving the Public Trust, Confidence and Understanding in the Federal Courts encouraging, among other things, "involvement in civic education activities by judges and judiciary employees." The Plan also created the Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions initiative. We view our investment of our resources and time at our alma maters where our careers began roughly in line with the goals and objectives of the federal judiciary as stated in its Plan. We are grateful as well for this opportunity to share our experiences here. We encourage participation of Judges and judicial employees in university pre-law programming and development of internships for pre-law students in conjunction with pre-law programming like that provided through Ohio University's CLJC. If you are interested in doing so, you may be inclined to get involved at your alma maters. Otherwise, you might consult online resources. Nationally, there is the Consortium of Undergraduate Law and Justice Programs ([www.culjp.com](http://www.culjp.com)), where you will find a list of many undergraduate schools with such programs and links to them, and the Pre-Law Advisers National Council ([www.planc.org](http://www.planc.org)), which has six regional components. 🇺🇸



Each year from January through May, USMJ Robert Spector (DCT) and a local attorney help teach two classes called 'Media and the Law' at the New Haven Academy high school. They focus on the concept of false confessions, using a local criminal case in which the defendant served nine years in prison for a murder he did not commit. The semester ends with a mock trial conducted in the New Haven federal courthouse.

# Formal Programs Supplement

In October 2022, USMJ Wes Reber Porter (DHI) helped lead the Maui Nui Law and Justice Academy. Over a three-day period, twenty-four high school students learned about issues relating to law and justice, and participated in a mock trial. For more information, visit: <https://www.hid.uscourts.gov/education/programs>.

Many U.S. Magistrate Judges regularly teach law school students and speak to lawyers as part of CLE programs. Several USMJs also teach college students about law-related topics, including Hope Cannon (NDFL), David Rush (WDMO) and Cynthia Wyrick (EDTN).

USMJ Kandis Westmore (NDCA) reports: “Every summer I have incoming law students from the University of San Francisco academic support program visit my courtroom. They observe court proceedings and we discuss my path to the bench, the role of federal judges, and any other questions they may have.”

As part of the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program at the American University Washington College of Law, USMJ Gina Simms (DMD) met with judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and police officers from other countries to discuss the rule of law and the U.S. criminal justice system.

USMJ Katharine Parker (SDNY) is co-chair of the NYC Bar Association Civic Education Task Force.





# **Courthouse Activities**

Courthouse Visits

Civil Discourse & Difficult Decisions

Mock Trials & Moot Court

# U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York Opens its Doors to Local Elementary Students

Reprinted with permission from the Woodhull Elementary School



**Students pose with USMJ James M. Wicks (EDNY) and an oversize gavel.**

Recently, fifth-and sixth-grade students from Nathaniel Woodhull Elementary School in Shirley, New York, embarked on an exciting and educational field trip to the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York. There, they toured Magistrate Judge James M. Wicks' courtroom and learned more about the court processes and the duties of court personnel. As they stepped into the solemn halls of justice, the students were captivated by the grandeur of the courtroom and the significance of the proceedings that take place within its walls.

The highlight of the trip came when the students were invited to participate in a naturalization ceremony. Seated in the jury box, they watched as 125 individuals from 36 countries took the Oath of Allegiance and became citizens. The students felt pride and patriotism as they stood alongside the new citizens and led them in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the ceremony, Judge Wicks spent time speaking with the students. He shared insights into how the courts work and the role of judges in upholding the law. He also introduced



**Students prepared to take part in the naturalization ceremony.**



them to court personnel and explained what they do. Students learned that the U.S. Marshals Service protects judges, other court personnel, and jurors in the courtroom. Judge Wicks and a Deputy U.S. Marshal showed the students the jail in the courthouse, and explained the consequences of breaking the law and the importance of respecting rules and regulations in our society.

Judge Wicks and a Deputy Marshal gave the children a tour of the secure facilities at the courthouse.

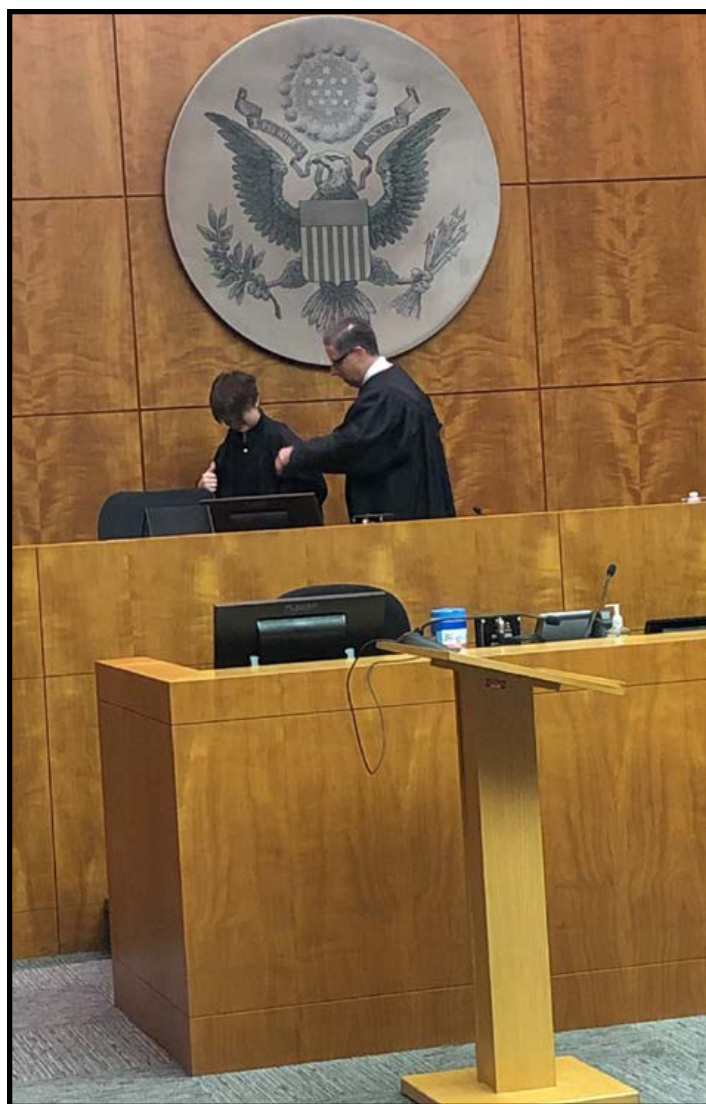
Finally, students were able to apply their new knowledge by conducting a scripted mock trial

of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." This hands-on experience allowed them to gain insight into the legal process and develop important critical thinking and public speaking skills as they played attorneys, the judge, and witnesses.

Judge Wicks and other personnel at the Eastern District of New York successfully provided the Woodhull students with an interactive experience that taught them how the court system works. The students also learned those lessons in ways that were designed to instill a sense of civic responsibility and respect for the principles of justice and democracy. ⚖️



USMJ Wicks and a Deputy Marshal gave the children a tour of the secure facilities at the courthouse.



USMJ Wicks helped a student take his seat as the presiding judge.

### Third Graders Meet An MJ, AUSA, CJA and Canine Officer Submitted by Mitchell Katz, USMJ, NDNY



Chief USMJ Therese Wiley Dancks (NDNY) presented to a class of third graders, along with an Assistant U.S. Attorney and a member of the CJA panel.



The canine unit provided a fascinating discussion on how canines do their law enforcement work, including how those big ears enhance their senses!



USMJ Charmiane G. Claxton (WDTN) speaks with students from Crosstown High School after they observed a bond hearing in her court.



USMJs Bruce Macdonald and Maria Aguilera (DAZ), along with U.S. Marshal canine officer Dexter, meet with students from the International School of Tucson.



# Courthouse Visits Supplement

Many U.S. Magistrate Judges report participating in programs that invite students to visit the courthouse, participate in or watch a mock proceeding, and speak with judges, court staff, lawyers, deputy U.S. marshals, and probation and pretrial services officers.

Some courts participate in “Take Your Kid to Work Day” for children of courthouse personnel, and typically conduct a scripted mock trial. U.S. Magistrate Judges Sonja Bivins (SDAL), Mary Kendra Klump (SDIN) and Anthony Patti (EDMI) have assisted with these activities.

The Southern District of California provides a “Court Works” program in which eighth grade students watch court proceedings and attend a presentation that illustrates “how the Constitution is the basis of what happens in the courts every day.” See <https://www.casd.uscourts.gov/judicial-learning/community-outreach/materials/Community-Outreach.pdf>.

The Northern District of Illinois provides a variety of materials for students (<https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/Pages.aspx?page=student>) and teachers (<https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/Pages.aspx?page=teacher>) planning a trip to the courthouse.

The Southern District of Indiana provides a helpful FAQ page about field trips to the courthouse: <https://www.insd.uscourts.gov/tours-and-field-trips>.

The District of New Hampshire offers full-day programs for middle and high school students. Middle school students observe a naturalization ceremony, prepare and give oral arguments on First Amendment issues (with the assistance of law students), and participate in a scripted criminal mock trial. High school students engage in a mock sentencing hearing (with the assistance of lawyers and probation staff) and observe an actual sentencing hearing. See <https://www.nhd.uscourts.gov/educational-outreach>.

USMJ Joi Peake (MDNC) reports that her court has “a robust civics program that offers high school classes the opportunity to visit the courthouse, hear from judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and others, and then participate in a mock proceeding.” See <https://www.ncmd.uscourts.gov/person-mdnc-civics-initiative>. The court also offers 50-minute virtual programs on the rule of law, separation of powers, state vs. federal courts, civil discourse, free speech, privacy, the right to remain silent, and sentencing principles. See <https://www.ncmd.uscourts.gov/virtual-mdnc-civics-initiative>.

Since 2013, USMJ Joe Webster (MDNC) has welcomed middle school students to the courthouse to learn about the criminal justice system, hear from guest speakers, and be encouraged to “persevere through life’s challenges.” For more information about CourtCares, visit [https://www.ncmd.uscourts.gov/sites/ncmd/files/JLW\\_CourtCaresWeb.pdf](https://www.ncmd.uscourts.gov/sites/ncmd/files/JLW_CourtCaresWeb.pdf).



# Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions

By the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts  
Available at [this link](#)

*This activity gives participants experience with civil discourse skills and complex decision making.*

Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions is a national initiative of the federal courts that brings high school, college, and law school students into federal courthouses for legal proceedings that arise from situations in which young people can find themselves. In these court hearings (not mock trials), students serve as attorney advocates who argue the case and as jurors who listen to the arguments, then actively deliberate in the courtroom. In some programs, judges may invite several students to sit on the bench with them and ask questions of the student attorneys.

In the activity, a relatable fictional scenario is superimposed on a Supreme Court decision. [Elonis v. U.S.](#) deals with social media issues. It is geared to high school and college students. A related case, [Counterman v. Colorado](#), deals with the same issues and can be used in addition to *Elonis* when conducting hearings with law school students. Other cases for high school and college levels are [New Jersey v. TLO](#), [Texas v. Johnson](#), and [Tinker v. Des Moines](#).

## About These Resources

Get started by downloading the [agenda and complete activity package](#). This activity can be used with any case in the [Educational Resources section](#). In this program, [Elonis v. U.S.](#) is the landmark case.

## Roles and Resources

This activity includes a tailored description and detailed guidance for each role:

- **Facilitator:** The facilitator manages the courtroom program and gives everyone an

opportunity to speak during the jury deliberations.

- **Judge:** The host judge presides over the simulation and converses with the students in the courtroom after the event.
- **Volunteer Attorney Coaches**
  - These [coaches prepare for the student attorneys](#) for the oral arguments.
  - These [coaches prepare the student jurors](#) for the centerpiece of the program – jury deliberations during which they use civil discourse skills to analyze the issues.
- **Students**
  - **Attorneys:** These students present arguments before the judge.
  - **Jurors:** These students deliberate and work toward an evidence-based decision.

## What's Different About This Activity?

The centerpiece is jury deliberations in which students practice the civil discourse skills they observe and learn from the judge and attorneys in a courtroom. The activity is different from a mock trial in the following ways:

- The Courtroom Experience is a Realistic Hearing on a Timely Issue
- The Focus is on Jury Deliberations Involving All Students and Learning Styles
- Students Observe, Learn, Practice Civil Discourse Skills with a Judge and Lawyers
- Participants Analyze Everyday Decisions That Could Have Long-Term Consequences
- Students Have a Candid Conversation with a Judge on Any Topic of Concern

## Time Commitment

Teachers' time commitment: No classroom preparation for students or teachers. All preparation is incorporated into the courtroom event.

**Courtroom Program:** Approximately three hours – from orientation to adjournment.

**Note to Teachers:** There is no reading or pre-court preparation on the part of students or their teachers. All preparation is incorporated into the courtroom event.

### Learning Objectives

- Students leave the program before lunchtime with sharpened tools for civil discourse and decision making.
- They have a heightened awareness of situations they may not realize can have legal and long-term consequences.
- They experience the differences between media portrayals and real courtroom situations.
- They interact with the human face of the justice system – judges, attorneys, and other professionals – and they gain exposure to careers in the courts.
- Their courtroom experience motivates them to serve willingly on juries when called.

### What Happens in the Courtroom Program?

#### 1. Reality Check Quiz and Discussion Starter

Students start by taking an attention-getting [Reality Check Quiz](#) that tests their knowledge of situations that can put them in legal jeopardy.

#### 2. Civil Discourse Skill Building

This activity has two parts:

- Students fill out a [civility self-reflection](#) tool to prompt self awareness and discussion.
- Participants are guided through a process for establishing [ground rules](#) and group norms for civil discussion.

#### 3. Courtroom Simulation

Student jurors are featured in the program as they decide a [contemporary Supreme Court case](#) that is modified with a scenario that applies to their lives. The abbreviated hearing gives them a realistic experience of what happens in court.

#### 4. Reality Check Discussion

The program concludes with a candid conversation with the host judge about the real-life scenarios in the [Reality Check Quiz](#) – situations in which law-abiding people can find themselves facing legal and long-term consequences.

**DISCLAIMER:** These resources are created by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts for educational purposes only. They may not reflect the current state of the law, and are not intended to provide legal advice, guidance on litigation, or commentary on any pending case or legislation.

**Editor's note:** For links and information, visit: <https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/civil-discourse-and-difficult-decisions> 



USMJ Nicholas Danella (NDAL) with Highlands students after CD3 mock proceeding on February 14, 2023.



Chief USMJ John England, III (NDAL), and court staff, with Highlands School students after CD3 moot proceeding on March 18, 2024.





**USMJ Alice Senechal (DND) led a Civil Discourse & Difficult Decisions program participated in by volunteer attorneys and AP government students from Sheyenne High School in West Fargo, North Dakota.**

## **CD3 Supplement**

Several U.S. Magistrate Judges have offered the Civil Discourse & Difficult Decisions program, including USMJ Kelly Pate (MDAL), USMJ Christy Comstock (WDAR) and USMJ Giselle Lopez-Soler (DPR).

USMJ Shaniek Maynard (SDFL) facilitated the CD3 program at the Duke University Law School with 100 1L students as part of their professional responsibility curriculum.

## The Verdict is In: Middle School Moot Court is a Setup for Success

By JD Cavalluzzi (Junior, El Dorado High School)  
Submitted by Karen Scott, USMJ, CDCA

Four years ago, I had the privilege of competing in the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Orange County's Middle School Moot Court Competition. This program would not be possible without the federal magistrate judges and other public servants of the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and Courthouse. They work to ensure programs in civics education like this one are available to teens like me.

The year before the competition, our Tuffree Middle School Law Club had a couple of meetings introducing the basics of moot court competition and evaluating precedent cases. We were planning to really kick things into gear in March, but we all know how March of 2020 turned out. So, flash forward a year, I was in eighth grade over Zoom, and I was introduced to that year's Moot Court Case. Exposure to real legal authority and arguments at that point in my education profoundly impacted the trajectory of my academics.

In the Orange County Moot Court Competition, Middle Schoolers, 7th or 8th graders, work in teams of two to form a legal argument. The teams then present their arguments before a judge, evaluating the facts of a hypothetical case against provided precedent cases, undergoing questioning from sitting federal judges volunteering their time, and preparing rebuttal arguments while competing against another team.

Because we were in the Moot Court program during online school, my partner, Mia Demonte, and I had a ton of free time on our hands, so we spent hours pouring over the case and refining our arguments and presentation styles with our coaches. We learned how to view a case and

gained invaluable public speaking skills that we have used daily ever since. Developing these skills as middle schoolers has benefitted us exponentially in high school. Mia and I are now both attorneys on El Dorado High School's Mock Trial team and are at the top of our class academically.

The groundwork of the Middle School Moot Court Competition has given me the head start I needed to better formulate arguments on objections, write high quality direct and cross examination questions, and deliver compelling oral arguments in the Mock Trial setting. But the greater benefit I gained from both programs is the ability to clearly and effectively articulate my thoughts. And even though I don't presently personally plan on pursuing a legal career, the amazing judges, attorneys, and other professionals involved in those programs showed me the importance of giving back to and providing mentorship in your community. Through their generous donation of their time and knowledge, they have instilled in me a drive to serve those around me and use my skills to advocate for a better world.

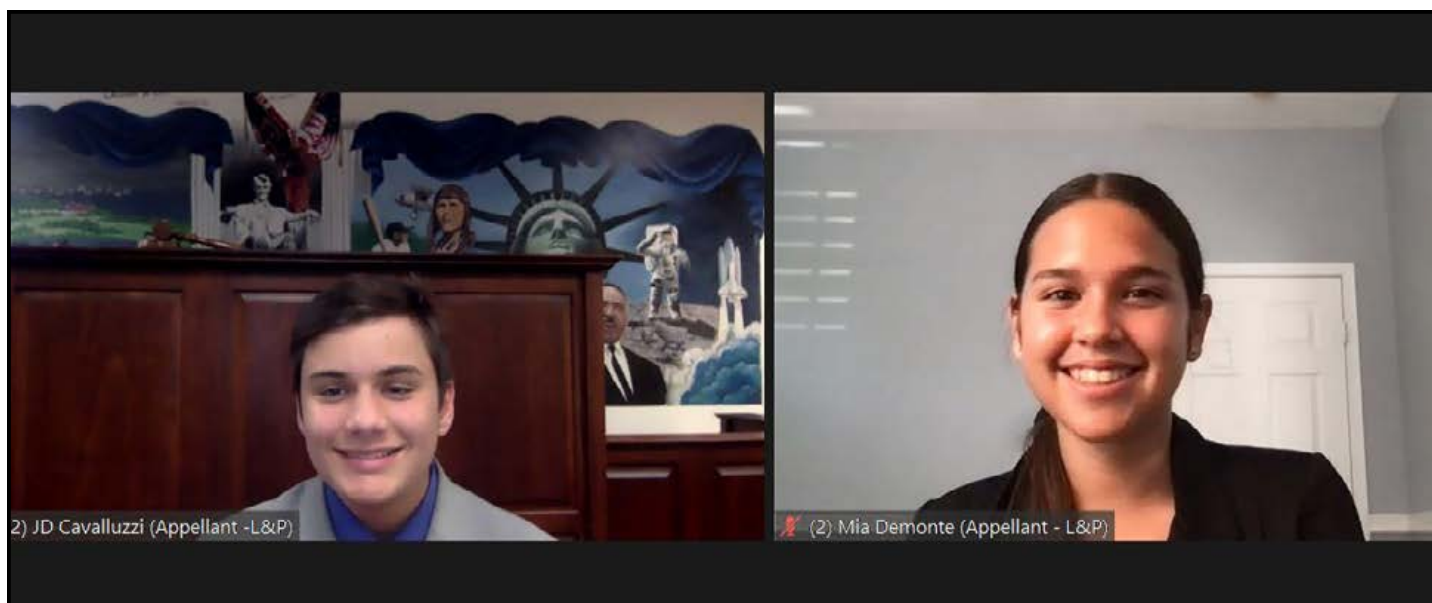
However, one of the main things I will look back on and remember most about these programs is the opportunity to appear in front of real judges. During my sophomore year, Superior Court Judge Nancy Zeltzer started our Mock Trial round by quoting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and gave a short speech about the importance of civic engagement. I remember being totally inspired and in awe at what she said (despite all the nerves I was feeling for the coming round), and it was comforting to know that someone like her was making the crucial decisions about

justice and equality that must be made. This story is just one of hundreds I could share about the amazing judges I've gotten to work with, and I'm exceedingly grateful to live in a society with such intelligent and kind people defending the promises included in our Constitution.

I know that whatever field I pursue, I will do my job better because I am a more effective public speaker; in any occupation, powerful communication is an essential commodity. When I need to make a project presentation to my colleagues, I'll know how to present myself because I've given a closing argument defending my client accused of stealing an allegedly priceless Shakespeare ring in Mock Trial. When a boss asks me important questions about that project, I'll know how to respond because I've

answered a judge's questions about how the Sleekcraft factors applied to my Moot Court Case. When I need to form collaborative connections in the workplace, I'll know how because I've gotten to work with a multitude of incredibly intelligent peers as co-counsel, as a lawyer directing a witness, and most importantly, as a teammate.

At seventeen, I've already gained tools I need to succeed in the workplace, and it is because of the high quality civics education I have received from the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Orange County, the amazing network of teachers who have given me access to it, and the local judges and attorneys who have volunteered their time and talent to facilitate it. 🙏







**USMJ Dwane Tinsley (SDWV) presided over a mock trial as part of Project LIFT, a leadership and legal education program for fifth graders at Mary C Snow Elementary. The kids developed the script, which was about a bank robbery, and played roles in a jury trial after learning about the justice system for several months. Afterwards, Judge Tinsley held a question-and-answer session. According to one observer, the kids LOVED it!**



**USMJ Hope Cannon (NDFL) with the middle school mock trial team that she helps to coach.**



**USMJ Shirley Mensah (EDMO) presides over a mock trial with fourth-grade students.**

# Mock Trials & Moot Court Supplement

Several U.S. Magistrate Judges coach high school mock trial or moot court teams.

The Eastern District of Arkansas hosts statewide and national mock trial competitions at the Richard Sheppard Arnold United States Courthouse in Little Rock. See <https://www.are.uscourts.gov/student-mock-trial-competition>.

USMJ Mark Ford (WDAR) presided over two elementary school mock trials of “the Grinch” held at the United States Marshal Museum.

The Southern District of California invites fifth grade students to participate in scripted mock trials at the courthouse. See <https://www.casd.uscourts.gov/judicial-learning/community-outreach/materials/Community-Outreach.pdf>.

USMJ Michael Hegarty (DCO) coaches a home school mock trial team that won the Colorado High School Mock Trial competition and finished in 15th place in the national competition. It was the only home school team that made it to the national competition.

The Middle District of Florida invites students to participate in scripted mock trials. Sample mock trial scripts are available at <https://www.flmd.uscourts.gov/sample-mock-trial-scripts>.

USMJ Mitchell Katz (NDNY) presided over an elementary school mock trial of “USA v. Benjamin B. Wolf,” based on the Three Little Pigs story.







# **Community Outreach**

Theme Days

Additional Civics Contests

Scouts

Historic Cases

Diversity Initiatives

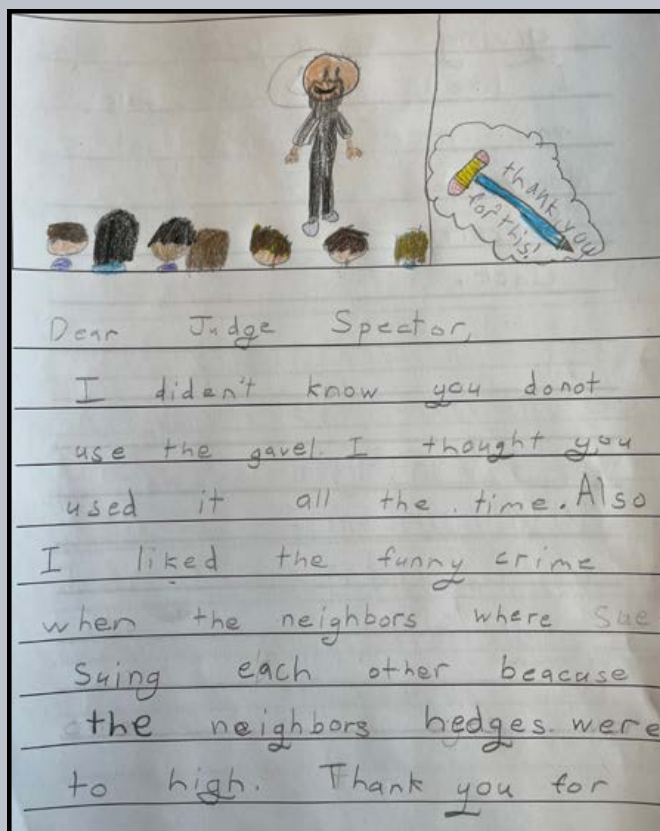
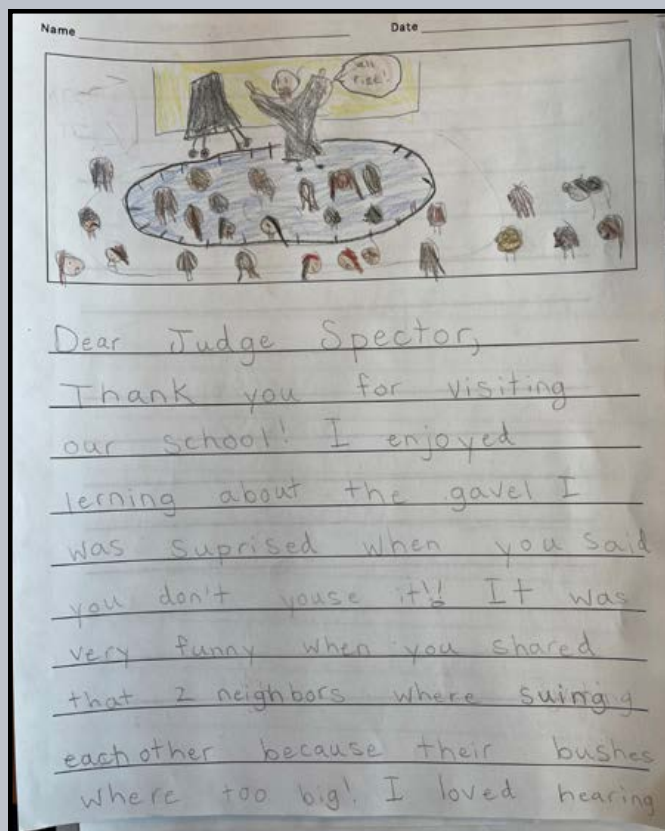
Adult Education

Civics Partnerships

Judicial Learning Centers



USMJ Robert Spector (DCT) gives a 2023 Law Day presentation at the John Martinez Elementary School in New Haven, CT.



Above are thank you letters from second graders at Buttonball Lane Elementary School in Glastonbury, CT, after Judge Spector's 2024 Law Day presentation.

# Theme Days Supplement

## Law Day (May 1)

The District of Connecticut invites elementary and middle school students to submit artwork depicting a theme selected for Law Day. The artwork is displayed in federal courthouses in New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport. The court also provides a Law Day essay contest for middle and high school students. See <https://www.ctd.uscourts.gov/celebrate-law-day>.

The Northern District of New York celebrates Law Day during the entire month of May. See <https://www.nynd.uscourts.gov/community-outreach>.

The Eastern District of Texas sponsors a Law Day Art Contest. All winning and honorable mention entries are framed and displayed at the Beaumont courthouse for twelve months. See <https://www.txed.uscourts.gov/law-day-art-contest>.

## Constitution Day (September 17)

Last September, the Eastern District of California hosted a public reading of the U.S. Constitution on the plaza of the Robert T. Matsui Federal Courthouse in Sacramento. See <https://www.caed.uscourts.gov/caednew/index.cfm/education/constitution-day1/>.

The Chattanooga and Knoxville Divisions of the Eastern District of Tennessee also held public readings of the U.S. Constitution in September 2023. See <https://connections.tned.uscourts.gov/constitution-day.html>.



# Theme Days Supplement

## Bill of Rights Day (December 15)

District courts in the Seventh and Eighth Circuits participate in a Bill of Rights Day Contest. Students in grades 5-12 submit essays, poetry, art, music, and videos on a selected theme. For more information, visit: <https://judiciallearningcenter.org/bill-of-rights-day/>. The Eastern District of Arkansas displays finalist artwork on its website (<https://www.are.uscourts.gov/bill-rights-day-annual-student-contest>):



The District of Connecticut invites students and the public to observe a panel of three judges explain “what they do and how they use the Bill of Rights every day.” See [https://www.ctd.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/BOR\\_2023.pdf](https://www.ctd.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/BOR_2023.pdf).

The Eastern District of Washington sponsors a Bill of Rights Day Photography Contest. See <https://www.waed.uscourts.gov/educational-outreach>.

# Civics Contests Supplement

Several Circuit Courts sponsor annual civics contests and invite district courts to participate. This year, the Second, Fourth and Ninth Circuits chose topics related to the 70th anniversary of Brown v. Bd. of Education. The Third Circuit asked why the right to a jury trial is important. The Sixth Circuit asked which amendment in the Bill of Rights most strongly promotes the goals set forth in the preamble to the Constitution. The Seventh and Eighth Circuits asked students to research the rights of citizens in other countries and select one that they would like to add to the U.S. Bill of Rights.

The Middle District of Florida hosts essay contests, art contests and moot court competitions “to foster civics education in a fun way.” Last year, the Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa Divisions hosted a high school essay contest on the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party. See <https://www.flmd.uscourts.gov/programs/middle-district-2023-high-school-essay-contests-jacksonville-orlando-and-tampa-divisions>. For its part, the Fort Myers division held an art contest for middle and high school students. See <https://www.flmd.uscourts.gov/programs/2023-fort-myers-federal-art-contest>.

As part of her court’s Black History Month Youth Program, USMJ Shaniek Maynard (SDFL) facilitated an essay and arts contest for 75 high school students.

USMJ Andrea Johnstone (DNH) invites high school students to write an essay about what it means to be an American citizen. She either reads selected essays during a naturalization ceremony or invites the authors to do so.

USMJ James Gates (EDNC) developed essay materials and graded essays for the Federal Bar Association’s annual essay contest.

The Chattanooga Division of the Eastern District of Tennessee partners with the local FBA chapter to offer an annual essay contest. In 2024, students were asked whether social media platforms should have a right to restrict political speech. USMJ Cynthia Wyrick (EDTN) reports that the court also recently hosted a ten-team civics quiz bowl. See <https://connections.tned.uscourts.gov/participate.html>.

USMJ Alistair Newbern (MDTN) serves as an informal advisor for Kidizenship, a youth civics platform that sponsors various civics contests.

## Reaching Out to the Boy Scouts

By Michael Gotsch, USMJ, NDIN

Civic education is vital to good citizenship, voter participation and a healthy democracy. Moreover, as the branch of government without “the sword or the purse,” the judiciary is also the least understood. Judges and clerks often toil in anonymity with little general understanding of the role of a judge or the importance of the judicial function. Civic outreach shines a light on the judiciary and on the hard-working judges who are sworn to uphold the Constitution and to

dispense justice to every litigant without fear or favor of their status, wealth, or background.

As an Eagle Scout (1974), I have continued to volunteer time to the Boy Scouts, which encourages scouts to earn merit badges in citizenship in the community, citizenship in the nation, and citizenship in the world. Below are just a few examples of my outreach efforts to the Boy Scouts. 🇺🇸



**Scouting for K-9s (Jan. 10, 2022):** As his Eagle Scout project, Cooper Reihl chose to create an obstacle and workout course for the canine officers in the St. Joseph County Police Department. The photograph shows Cooper with the canine corps at a ceremony where he was recognized by the Sheriff and me. Standing next to Cooper is Canine Officer Luna, who had been shot in the line of duty approximately 12 weeks prior to the photograph.





**Scouts & Mayor Mueller (Mar. 14, 2021):** South Bend Mayor James Mueller and I hosted a group of Cub Scouts at the Courthouse and the County-City complex. After touring the Court facilities and discussing court proceedings, Mayor Mueller hosted the Scouts in his office and discussed the workings of city government.



**Scouts in Chambers (Feb. 28, 2024):** I hosted a Scout BSA unit at the federal courthouse. We toured my chambers, the courtroom, and the scouts were given an opportunity to sit at the bench. I have conducted several of these civic outreaches with local schools and scout groups. We discuss the three branches of government at the federal and state level, and the role of judges.



**Girl Scouts lead the Pledge of Allegiance at a naturalization ceremony.** Presiding USMJ Kimberly Priest Johnson (EDTX) commented: "I always try to make a point to include a group like the Scouts to lead the Pledge in the naturalization ceremonies."

## Magistrate Judges Partner with University of the Virgin Islands to host Fireside Chat Discussing *Brown v. Board of Education*

Aesha Duval, Branch Librarian, DVI, and Ruth Miller, USMJ, DVI

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), which declared segregated public educational facilities unconstitutional. This year marks the 70th anniversary of this landmark decision. To commemorate the anniversary, the District Court of the Virgin Islands and the University of the Virgin Islands' College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences ("CLASS") and School of Education hosted

a simulcast Fireside Chat on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at UVI's Campuses on St. Croix and St. Thomas. UVI is the only HBCU in the Caribbean.

The Fireside Chat featured guest speakers in the legal field who delved into the legal, social, and educational implications of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and included the following panelists: Hon. Ruth Miller, U.S. Magistrate Judge, District Court of the Virgin Islands; Tanisha Bailey-Roka, Esq., Chief Disciplinary Counsel, Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands; and Aesha Duval, Virgin Islands Branch Librarian, Third Circuit Libraries. Hon. Emile Henderson, III, U.S. Magistrate Judge, District Court of the Virgin Islands, served as moderator for the discussion.

"This Fireside Chat was not only an opportunity for the students to learn about *Brown v. Board of Education*, the decisions that followed, and its impact on our nation, but it was also an opportunity for the students to interact with



**Panelists (from left to right) USMJ Emile Henderson, III, Librarian Aeshal Duval, and Virgin Islands Supreme Court Disciplinary Counsel Tanisha Bailey-Roka.**

the Court in a positive way to gain a greater understanding for what the court does and its importance to ensure adherence to the rule of law and the Founding Fathers' goal of striving to be a more perfect union," Magistrate Judge Henderson said.

More than 50 high school students from the St. Croix Central High School and St. Croix Educational Complex; UVI students, faculty, staff; and members of the wider community engaged in the thought-provoking discussion exploring the historical significance and ongoing impact of the landmark Supreme Court decision.

"It was truly a pleasure to discuss the important issues addressed in the *Brown* case and its progeny with these students, who will be the future leaders and educators in our community," said Magistrate Judge Miller. "The students asked insightful questions and demonstrated a deep appreciation for the issues the case embraces."



Dr. Kimarie Engerman, Dean of UVI's CLASS, said the university was honored to host this important event in partnership with the District Court of the Virgin Islands and the UVI School of Education, and to provide the community with an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education* and its enduring relevance

today. Remarks were also shared by Dr. Karen Brown, Dean of UVI's School of Education.

Magistrate Judges Henderson and Miller considered this program to provide an excellent opportunity to share in the FMJA's goal of broadening civic and community engagement. 413



Panelists (from left to right) Virgin Islands Supreme Court Disciplinary Counsel Tanisha Bailey-Roka, Librarian Aeshal Duval, USMJ Emile Henderson, III, and USMJ Ruth Miller.



Attendees at the Fireside Chat at the UVI St. Croix campus



## 32nd Annual Alvin B. Rubin Symposium

A Night at the (Courthouse) Theater: Reenacting and Reflecting on Constance Baker Motley, James Meredith, and the University of Mississippi

By Chrissy Calogero, Peter Mansfield, Alysson Mills, and Janis van Meerveld USMJ, EDLA

*"Clearly the best CLE I've ever attended"* was the sentiment expressed by an attendee of the 32nd annual Alvin B. Rubin symposium, the marquee CLE event of the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. On November 16, 2023, over 150 people packed the en banc courtroom of the Eastern District of Louisiana and an overflow courtroom across the hall, with more than 50 others joining via Zoom. They witnessed a historic courtroom theater reenactment of plaintiff James Meredith and attorney Constance Baker Motley's contentious suit to desegregate the University of Mississippi. Joining local practitioners, students, and judges were several VIPs in attendance, including: Dr. Judith and James Meredith; Dr. Jeffrey Vitter, former chancellor of Ole Miss; and relatives of the late Judges Rubin and James Skelly Wright, both civil-rights proponents and authors of important desegregation decisions.

The [two-hour program](#) delivered riveting live courtroom drama, multimedia displays of historic images, didactic discussion of ethics-and-professionalism issues, plus a first-person reflection from the plaintiff-protagonist in the historic case. Attendees also received two hours of CLE credit for ethics and professionalism.

The program was directed by United States Magistrate Judge Janis van Meerveld. The script was co-authored by United States Second Circuit Judge Denny Chin and his wife Kathy Hirata Chin. And the performers were a cast of federal judges and other distinguished guests who reenacted the historic court proceedings involved in James Meredith's quest to become the first Black student admitted to the University of Mississippi in the 1960s. Represented by Constance Baker Motley (played by Fifth Circuit Judge Dana Douglas) and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Meredith (United States Attorney Duane Evans)



**USMJ Janis van Meerveld (EDLA), who directed the play, speaks with James Meredith following his remarks.**

sued in federal court in Mississippi, alleging that the University denied him admission because of his race. The play depicted the ensuing legal battle, which involved obstructionist tactics by Mississippi's attorney Dugas Shands (Federal Public Defender Claude Kelly), questionable rulings by Judge Sidney Mize (United States Magistrate Judge Donna Phillips Currault), and repeated trips to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Using real excerpts from transcripts and accompanied by slides of historic photographs, viewers were transported back in time to what Judge John Minor Wisdom (United States Chief District Judge Nannette Jolivette Brown) described as "the eerie atmosphere of never-never land." Compelling, historic, thought-provoking, infuriating, and timely, the performance received a standing ovation, as did Mr. Meredith when he was introduced to the audience.

Next, Kelly and Judge Douglas shed their adversarial roles from the play to team up on an ethics-and-professionalism panel with fellow cast member Eva Dossier, who had an active ethics practice before her recent appointment

as Magistrate Judge in the division vacated by Judge Douglas following her confirmation to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Dossier observed that the State of Mississippi's lawyers' conduct reenacted in the script probably displeased the audience, but it did not necessarily violate an objective ethical rule. For instance, while ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) prohibits racial harassment and discrimination in the practice of law, the State of Louisiana has not (yet) adopted that provision, nor has Mississippi. Kelly agreed, finding that the cross-examination techniques of Assistant Attorney General Shands, while likely designed to intimidate and provoke, fell within the typical strategies employed in high-stakes civil or criminal litigation.

The panel tackled other thorny issues implicated in the courthouse theater. How do lawyers balance their professional obligations to acquiesce to reasonable requests for extensions of time against their duties to clients to expedite litigation? And, even more confounding, what legitimate options may a lawyer pursue if an opposing party openly defies final court orders? On that latter point, the panelists explained how the executive and judicial branches complement, and at times rely upon, each other's jurisdiction and power to enforce controversial judgments. In the *Meredith* case, the courts required executive enforcement against an intransigent party, while the Fifth Circuit's judgment gave President Kennedy cause to activate the National Guard despite contrary public opinion from Southern Democrat segregationists. Finally, the panelists also explored Motley's skillful, restrained, and persistent advocacy in the face of a hostile adversary, predisposed factfinder, and a rogue Fifth Circuit judge unwilling to allow the desegregation of Ole Miss without a fight.

The program concluded with remarks from James Meredith himself. Mr. Meredith and his wife Dr. Judith Meredith first shared a short video (part of a larger forthcoming documentary) that recounted his life's work. Mr. Meredith then addressed the courtroom from a seat at

counsel's table where, just a few minutes earlier, U.S. Attorney Evans in the role of Meredith had just intoned confident and compelling testimony from his 1961 deposition transcript. A rapt audience listened while Mr. Meredith, wearing a suit and "New Miss" cap, shared, among other things, his life's great missions: specifically helping break the bonds of white supremacy by integrating Ole Miss, and, more generally, confronting the fear Black Americans face in the exercise of their civil rights.

After the program concluded, the Merediths, along with the cast, joined the audience in the lobby of the courthouse for a post-program reception. The Merediths visited with attendees, posed for pictures, and signed copies of James Meredith's published works, including his 1966 memoir *Three Years in Mississippi* and 2012 exhortation *A Mission from God*.

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For further resources on Meredith, Motley, and desegregation, please see the following:

- Hon. Denny Chin & Kathy Hirata Chin, Constance Baker Motley, James Meredith, and The University of Mississippi, 117 COLUM. L. REV. 1741 (2017)
- JAMES MEREDITH, *THREE YEARS IN MISSISSIPPI* (Univ. Press of Miss. 2d ed. 2019)
- JAMES MEREDITH (WITH WILLIAM DOYLE), *A MISSION FROM GOD* (2012)
- WILLIAM DOYLE, *AN AMERICAN INSURRECTION: JAMES MEREDITH AND THE BATTLE OF OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI 1962* (2003)
- TOMIKO BROWN-NAGIN, *CIVIL RIGHTS QUEEN: CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY* (2022)
- JACK BASS, *UNLIKELY HEROES* (1990)
- ADAM FAIRCLOUGH, *RACE AND DEMOCRACY* (1999)
- WALK AGAINST FEAR: JAMES MEREDITH (Smithsonian Channel 2020) (documentary film)

For free information on other plays based on important civil-rights events, including the trials of the Amistad, Ethel Rosenberg, Susan B. Anthony, and Fred Korematsu, visit <https://justiceforall.ca2.uscourts.gov>. ♿

# Historic Cases Supplement

The Supreme Court Historical Society sponsors a civics program called “The Supreme Court and My Hometown.” Participating courts include the Southern District of Indiana (Hess v. Indiana), the Eastern District of Missouri (Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier), and the Eastern District of Tennessee (Ed Johnson v. Tennessee and U.S. v. Shipp). See <https://supremecourthistory.org/supreme-court-civics-resources/supreme-court-and-my-hometown-application/>.

The District of Hawaii offered programs about Fred Korematsu and his Fight for Justice, the Massie Case, and the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing. See <https://www.hid.uscourts.gov/education/programs>.

The District of Massachusetts hosted a panel discussion titled “Boston School Desegregation and Busing: 50th Anniversary of Tallulah Morgan v. James Hennigan (1974).” See <https://www.mad.uscourts.gov/general/pdf/announce/June%2020th%202024%20Event%20Flyer.pdf>.

The District of Minnesota provides online teacher materials for a program titled “A Century-Old Injustice: Remembering the 1920 Duluth Lynchings.” See <https://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/open-doors>.



## Roadways to the Bench in Houston

Submitted by Yvonne Ho, USMJ, SDTX

In April 2023, a number of Magistrate Judges, Bankruptcy Judges, District Judges, and a Fifth Circuit judge in Houston participated in an AO-led, nationwide event: *Roadways to the Bench: Who Me? A Bankruptcy or Magistrate Judge?* The purpose of the event was to promote bankruptcy and magistrate judge positions to a broad

array of young attorneys and law students, as part of a national diversity event of the Judicial Conference Committees on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System and the Magistrate Judges System. Below are some photos from the Houston chapter of this event.



USMJ Yvonne Ho (SDTX) speaks with participants at the Roadways event.



USMJ Dena Palermo (SDTX) speaks with participants at the Roadways event.

# Diversity Initiatives Supplement

USMJ Kelly Pate (MDAL) participated in a program with female judges and the Montgomery Junior League.

USMJ Maritza Dominguez Braswell (DCO) is co-chair of the Diversity on the Bench Coalition through the state bar association.

USMJ Kathryn Starnella (DCO) participates in a Java with Judges program where judges and law clerks speak to law students about paths to judgeships or clerkships.

USMJ David Keesler (WDNC) emceeds a luncheon for diverse law students who are part of the Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship program.

USMJ Vera Scanlon (EDNY) participates in courthouse heritage day celebrations.

USMJ Giselle Lopez-Soler (DPR) spoke to law students about clerkship opportunities as part of a panel discussion, and participated in the Roadways to the Bench event.

# Adult Education Supplement

USMJ Christy Comstock (WDAR) partnered with the Fort Smith Public Schools to present a civics program for GED participants.

USMJ Stanley Boone (EDCA) speaks to civic and social organizations (e.g., Rotary, Lions Club) and churches about the judiciary.

USMJ Abbie Crites-Leoni (EDMO) speaks to participants in a local Chamber of Commerce leadership program about how she became a judge and what happens in the federal courthouse.

USMJ Shirley Mensah (EDMO) participates in a Judicial Speakers Bureau that is available to civic organizations. See <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/judicial-speakers-bureau>.

USMJ Lajuana Counts (WDMO) participates in a Courtroom to Community program in which judges and local lawyers speak to civic organizations. See <https://www.mow.uscourts.gov/civic-education/courtroom-to-community>.

USMJ Alice Senechal (DND) spoke to residents of a senior living center during Women's History Month.

USMJ Douglas Miller (EDVA) has spoken about the rule of law and the judiciary to local chapters of the Rotary, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Colonial Dames.

USMJ Michael Aloï (NDWV) has spoken to citizens interested in restorative justice and how the courts, particularly treatment courts, have an important role to play.



# Civics Partnerships Supplement

USMJ Linda Walker (NDGA) speaks to youth groups and other organizations that interface with the community outreach program offered by the United States Attorney's Office. See <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga/community-outreach>.

The District of Hawaii supports the Commission to Promote and Advance Civic Education (PACE), which the Hawaii Supreme Court created in 2021.

USMJ Debora Grasham (DID) reports that her court partners with the Idaho Press Club and the University of Idaho College of Law to provide a Journalist's Institute. See <https://www.uidaho.edu/law/outreach/idaho-journalism-on-law>.

Discovering Justice is a non-profit organization supported by the District of Massachusetts, the First Circuit, and the Boston Bar Foundation. It "provides civic and justice education through innovate in-school, after-school, and courthouse field trip programs that teach elementary and middle school students about the justice system, the role of law in a democratic society, and the fundamental importance of good citizenship." See <https://www.mad.uscourts.gov/outreach/discovering-justice.htm>.

# Judicial Learning Centers Supplement

## Federal Judicial Learning Centers

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Library and Learning Center (Sacramento, CA)

<https://www.sacjlc.com/learning-center/>

Court History Museum (Chicago, IL)

<https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/Pages.aspx?page=courtmuseum>

Federal Court Learning Center (Indianapolis, IN)

<https://www.insd.uscourts.gov/federal-court-learning-center>

Historical Society Museum: The Court and Its History (Detroit, MI)

<https://www.mied.uscourts.gov/index.cfm?pageFunction=schoolVisit>

Justice & Democracy Centers (St. Paul & Minneapolis, MN)

<https://justicedemocracymn.org/>

Judicial Learning Center (St. Louis, MO)

<https://judiciallearningcenter.org/>

Justice for All: Courts and the Community Learning Center (New York, NY)

<https://justiceforall.ca2.uscourts.gov/learning-center/>

Federal Judicial Learning Center & Museum (Oklahoma City, OK)

<https://www.wdokhistory.org/aboutfjlc>





# **Naturalization Ceremonies**

## “My American Dream Has Come True” – Queensbury High School Hosts Naturalization Ceremony

Reprinted with permission of Queensbury High School

As a child in the Philippines, Marie Chin Hofileña Day walked to and from school in slippers, studied by candlelight, and dreamed of someday living in America.

“I had a dream to get myself out of poverty and help other people who struggle,” she said, holding back tears. “The only way to do that is to go to America and make my dream come true.”

She finished nursing school in the Philippines, then waited six years for her visa. During those six years she went to medical school in the Philippines and became a doctor. She arrived in America in 2017.

Marie Chin Hofileña Day stood in the Queensbury High School auditorium on March 27, 2024, held up her right hand, took the oath of allegiance, and became a citizen of the United States. She was invited to speak at the ceremony.

“My American dream has come true,” she said. “Through grit, good habits, hard work, resiliency and discipline, your American dream will come true, regardless of where you came from.”

Her speech received a standing ovation from the audience, which included high school juniors and seniors, who chanted “U.S.A.” after 32 people from 19 countries became U.S. citizens.

“I think it’s fitting to compare what you are doing today to our mission statement,” said Queensbury High School Principal Andrew Snide, “to empower all students to be lifelong learners, inspired to pursue their dreams and contribute to



the global community. It’s about helping students like you become the best versions of yourself. We want students to keep learning, dreaming big and making positive impacts on the world.”

Superintendent of Schools Kyle Gannon encouraged the students in attendance to appreciate the freedoms they enjoy by being born American citizens. He thanked the new citizens for sharing this experience with the school community.

“The Queensbury Union Free School District is honored to be a part of your journey,” Gannon said, “and we look forward to celebrating not only the milestones you have achieved but also the countless contributions you will make to the ongoing story of America.”

Queensbury High School senior Shiv Patel led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance and then read “The New Colossus,” a sonnet by American

poet Emma Lazarus written in 1883 to raise money for the construction of a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty.

This sonnet is inscribed on a plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and presents a welcoming symbol of freedom to the immigrants arriving here in America, said Patel, whose parents emigrated from India to seek a better future.

“Lazarus’ words are more than just a poem,” he said, “but a beacon of hope that emphasizes the nation’s values of inclusivity, compassion and a promise of freedom and opportunity to all.”

U.S. Magistrate Judge Daniel J. Stewart, who presided over the official proceedings, told the new citizens that they were becoming part of a 240-year experiment that was based upon equality, diversity and freedom.

“All of us, with very few exceptions, are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants,” said Stewart, who said his family emigrated from Northern Ireland in 1798. “I’m sure they arrived with all the same hopes and the same dreams that you have and with the belief that this country presents endless possibilities.”



USMJ Daniel J. Stewart (NDNY) gives a thumbs-up while posing with a new American citizen.



## JROTC Cadets Attend Naturalization Ceremony

Reprinted with permission of Lt. Col. (R) Claudia Mason

Students who are members of the Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps ("JROTC") program at the Meadowdale Career Technology Center (MCTC) recently attended a naturalization ceremony in Dayton, Ohio. The cadets sat in the jury box and watched as 47 individuals from 26 countries became U.S. citizens. Prior to taking the Oath of Allegiance, each prospective new citizen stood, introduced themselves, and shared the name of their country of origin. Several new citizens were members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Cadets heard the accents of people from many countries discussed in their Introduction to Global Awareness class, including Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Claudia Mason, who



**USMJ Caroline H. Gentry (SDOH) visited with the JROTC cadets and their instructor, Lt. Col. (R) Claudia Mason, after the naturalization ceremony.**

arranged the field trip, reported that the cadets were genuinely moved by the joy on the faces of the attendees, their families, and their friends. 🇺🇸



**USMJ Alice Senechal (DND) presides over a naturalization ceremony held during a minor league baseball game.**



USMJ Thérèse Wiley Dancks (NDNY) hosted students from the Syracuse Public Service Leadership Academy at Fowler High School for a naturalization ceremony. Some students observed the ceremony and others sang in a school choir during the ceremony. Judge Dancks met with students and teachers afterwards to discuss how immigrants become citizens, among other issues.



Local 4th grade students assist USMJ Chelsey Vascara (SDOH) with a naturalization ceremony.



## Connections that Transcend the Naturalization Ceremony

By Helen C. Adams, USMJ, SDIA

The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants from other parts of the world as naturalized citizens. During the last decade, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS") welcomed more than 7.7 million naturalized citizens to become a part of our citizenry. In fiscal year 2023, USCIS added approximately 878,500 new citizens during naturalization ceremonies held across the United States and around the world. Federal judges preside over many of the naturalization ceremonies. Those ceremonies may be held in the courthouse or in the community and are open to the public.

Most federal judges agree that presiding over a naturalization ceremony is the most joyful task that we perform. The new citizens are filled with excitement and beam with pride as they take the Oath of Allegiance. For most, the naturalization process has been lengthy, complicated, and expensive. At the naturalization ceremony, the applicants are treated with respect and welcomed as they become United States citizens. As a judge, I find the ceremony uplifting and the joy and enthusiasm contagious. For me, one of the most enjoyable post-ceremony aspects is meeting the new citizens and their families and other supporters, learning about their journey to the United States, and sharing a photograph with them. Those brief but endearing personal moments with the new citizens and their families are a highlight for me. I always walk away proud to be an American citizen and impressed by the courage and vibrancy of the new United States citizens.

Recently, I was reminded on two separate occasions that the personal connection that you make in the naturalization ceremony with a new



**USMJ Helen Adams (SDIA) with Gustavo at his Naturalization Ceremony on January 6, 2017.**

citizen, even if brief, may continue to re-appear in your life in the most wonderful of ways. I have described my two most recent examples below.

In 2017, after I had been on the bench three years, I presided over a naturalization ceremony in Des Moines, Iowa. It was a wonderful experience, as they all are. I enjoyed the ceremony and meeting the new citizens, but I did not think too much about it after the ceremony concluded. Fast forward to 2024. I was chatting with a lovely lady that I had met several years before at the gym. We were catching up on her family and her and her husband's new grandbaby. She paused



during our conversation to show me a picture that she and her husband, Gustavo, had found when they were putting together a family picture album of photos of their families most significant moments. I expected that she would show me a lovely picture of her, Gustavo, and their grandbaby. I was wrong. Imagine my surprise when she showed me a picture of Gustavo and me enjoying a celebratory moment after I had conducted his naturalization ceremony on January 6, 2017. Who would have predicted that our lives would intersect again after the ceremony.

On March 29, 2024, I presided over a naturalization ceremony for 78 new citizens at the lovely Des Moines Public Library in downtown Des Moines, Iowa. What was uniquely special about this naturalization ceremony was Nenad Garton, the Immigration Services officer who presented the 78 candidates to me. In what can only

be described as a “full circle” moment, Nenad presented the candidates to me approximately five years after I had presided over Nenad’s own naturalization ceremony in Des Moines. Shortly after becoming a United States citizen, Nenad obtained employment with USCIS, and worked his way up to being an Immigration Services Officer. After the ceremony and post-ceremony events concluded, Nenad and I enjoyed a mini-reunion and snapped a few photographs to capture the memory. Nenad and I are convinced that our lives will continue to intersect at future naturalization ceremonies.

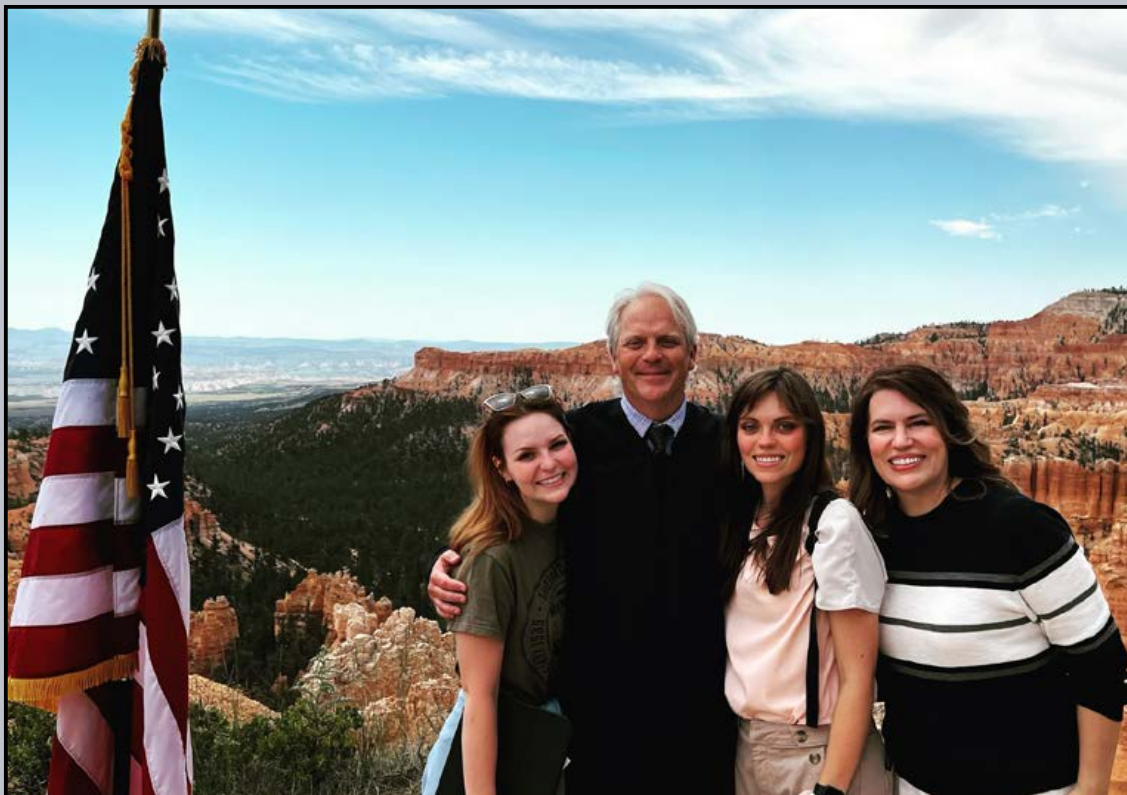
Maybe it is true that we do not meet people by accident. Maybe they really are meant to cross our path for a reason. Whatever the case, my life has been enriched by the many new citizens that I have met over the years as illustrated by my ongoing connections with Gustavo and his family and Nenad. 🙏



USMJ Helen Adams (SDIA) with Immigration Services Officer Nenad Garton on March 29, 2024.



USMJ Anthony Patti (EDMI) poses with three recently naturalized citizens who were also dressed in long black clothing. As Judge Patti quipped: "We all look good in black."



USMJ Dustin Pead (DUT) poses with his family after conducting a naturalization ceremony at Bryce Canyon National Park.

# Upcoming Events

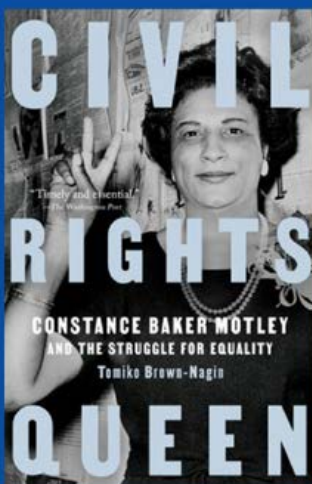


**FMJA Convention**  
*In Conjunction with the  
Summer FJC Training Session*  
New Orleans, LA  
July 15-17, 2024

[Register here](#)

THE FMJA DIVERSITY COMMITTEE PRESENTS

## **Civil Rights Queen: Constance Baker Motley and the Struggle for Equality**



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Judge Shaniek Maynard and  
Judge Sanket Bulsara

**July 24, 2024 at 4pm ET via Zoom**

Please extend this invitation to your law  
clerks and interns.

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