



EIGHTH CIRCUIT PUBLIC OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

3rd Quarter - 2024

Naturalization Ceremonies in the Northern District of Iowa



U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Roberts congratulating one of 35 new citizens at the naturalization ceremony at the Field of Dreams. Image courtesy of Erin LaBelle, Dyersville Commercial. Image used with permission.

On July 6, 2024, 35 new citizens from 15 different countries were welcomed during a naturalization ceremony at the iconic [Field of Dreams](#) in Dyersville, Iowa.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Roberts presided over the hour-long ceremony, before Ghost Players emerged from the field to entertain the crowd.

“We come from 15 nations of the world, bringing our talents, traditions, and spirit to America. It’s been a unique journey of resilience, determination, and hard work for many men and women who are starting a new life in another country.”

Jean-Michel Choquet, New American citizen

In a near-yearly tradition since 2012, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum welcomed 56 new citizens from 24 different countries.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Roberts presided over the hour-long ceremony on September 20, 2024, with remarks from Museum and Library’s Director Tom Schwartz.



Tom Schwartz, Director of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, offers opening remarks at the ceremony. Image courtesy of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum. Image used with permission.

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...and more!

District of Nebraska Partners With Step-Up Omaha for Career Immersions Program

United States Probation for the District of Nebraska partnered with Step-up Omaha to welcome 30 students for the 2024 Career Immersions Program on July 8th and 9th. Participants met with 33 volunteers from various court departments. Additionally, five volunteers were from the Omaha Reentry Network, including Urban League of Nebraska, Persevere, Heartland Workforce Solutions, and the Nebraska Department of Corrections.

Students learned about the federal judicial system and participated in a re-entry simulation. Chief U.S. District Judge Robert F. Rossiter Jr. offered a welcome message and U.S. District Judge Susan Bazis and U.S. Magistrate Judge Mike Nelson presided over mock hearings regarding a criminal case. The judges performed detention hearings, sentencing hearings, and revocation hearings.

The Career Immersions Program is a coordinated effort with the United States Attorney's Office, the Federal Public Defender's Office, and federal judges to expose youth to careers within the federal judicial system.

University of Iowa College of Law Students Visit St. Louis During Court Week

During September court week from September 23rd-27th, a group from the University of Iowa College of Law visited the Thomas F. Eagleton Courthouse in St. Louis, Missouri. The group was able to observe Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals arguments and proceedings in the District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. Later, they met with Senior Eighth Circuit Judge Morris S. Arnold, Eighth Circuit Judge Duane L. Benton, and Eighth Circuit Judge Jonathan A. Kobes in the Judicial Learning Center.



The group meeting with Eighth Circuit Judges (above). The group with Senior Eighth Circuit Judge Morris S. Arnold, Eighth Circuit Judge Duane L. Benton, and Eighth Circuit Judge Jonathan A. Kobes (bottom). Images courtesy of the United States Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Naturalization Ceremony in the District of North Dakota



New citizens taking the Oath of Allegiance at the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks' game. Images courtesy of the District of North Dakota.

On August 1, 2024, the District of North Dakota hosted a naturalization ceremony before the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks' game with 25 individuals being welcomed as new citizens. Eighth Circuit Judge Ralph Erickson threw the ceremonial first pitch of the game.

Second Teacher Institute Held in St. Paul

The court held its second ever Summer Teacher Institute in St. Paul at the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and United States Courthouse. Twenty middle and high school social studies educators from across Minnesota attended the day-long workshop, which focused on free speech.

Attendees heard from U.S. District Judge Eric Tostrud, University of Minnesota Law School Professor Charlotte Garden, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Hillary Taylor on the history and nuance of landmark cases involving the First Amendment and their impact on students and teachers.

Participants also had classroom activity simulations, attended a judicial lunch and learn session, observed criminal duty, met with the court's newest district judge to learn about the path to becoming a federal judge, and toured the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals courtroom and the Justice and Democracy Center of Minnesota.

Federal Bar Association Hosts Civics Day

Approximately 800 Kansas City, Missouri, students participated in the fourth annual Federal Bar Association's Civics Day on September 4, 2024. U.S. Magistrate Judge Lajuana M. Counts from the Western District of Missouri spoke to students about the judiciary.



U.S. Magistrate Judge Lajuana M. Counts speaking to students during Civics Day. Image courtesy of Western District of Missouri.

Six Week Summer Initiative Held in the Eastern District of Arkansas

On June 26, 2024, the Eastern District of Arkansas kicked off a six-week summer initiative to promote community within the Richard Sheppard Arnold U.S. Courthouse by providing law clerks and externs an opportunity to meet weekly to learn more about the Court system.

Chief U.S. District Judge Kristine G. Baker organized the Brown Bag Learn at Lunch Series and established the docket of presenters. The speakers included Eighth Circuit Judges Morris S. Arnold and Lavenski R. Smith, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Richard D. Taylor, Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Jerome T. Kearney, Clerk of Court Tammy H. Downs, and Chief U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Officer G. Edward Towe.

Throughout the six-week series, law clerks and externs from the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the District Court, the Bankruptcy Court, and the Probation Office met during the noon hour each Wednesday and brought their favorite 'brown bag' lunch.



Senior Eighth Circuit Judge Morris S. Arnold (left photo) presenting. Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Jerome T. Kearney (right photo) with participants in the series. Images courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Boy Scouts Hold Mock Trial in Des Moines



Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Helen C. Adams. Image courtesy of Southern District of Iowa.

Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Iowa Helen C. Adams presided over a mock trial with the Des Moines Boy Scouts troop on September 30, 2024. The Scouts were working on their law merit badge.

Federal Justice Fellows in Cape Girardeau

U.S. Magistrate Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni hosted the annual Federal Justice Fellows at the Rush Hudson Limbaugh Sr. United States Courthouse in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Established in 2020, undergraduate college students are selected to spend the summer learning about the judicial system. The four-week program includes courtroom observations, interaction with staff from various departments and agencies in the courthouse, legal writing instruction and practice, and a final project.

The program concludes with presentations by the fellows and an alumni luncheon for past and present fellows.



2024 Federal Justice Fellows. Image courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri.

District of Minnesota Hosts 10th Annual Minority Judges Reception

The District of Minnesota held its 10th annual Minority Judges Reception, which honors the racial, ethnic, gender, and ability diversity of the judges in the Minnesota Federal, State, and Tribal Courts. This year's honorees were U.S. District Court Judge Michael Davis, for his trail-blazing work as one of the first Black state or federal judges in Minnesota, and current Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Natalie Hudson, the first Black woman to hold that position. Co-sponsors of this event included:

- Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association
- Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers
- Minnesota American Indian Bar Association
- Minnesota Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- Minnesota Disability Bar Association
- Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association
- Minnesota Lavender Bar Association
- Minnesota Women Lawyers
- Hmong American Bar Association
- Somali American Bar Association
- Twin Cities Diversity in Practice



Participants of the Minority Judges Reception in the District of Minnesota. Images courtesy of the District of Minnesota.

Eastern District of Arkansas Hosts Mock Trial for Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

On September 11, 2024, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas hosted graduating Class E 1-24 of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Enforcement Division.

Their 18 weeks of training culminated in real life scenarios with veteran wardens acting as "law breakers" for the cadets to enforce state game laws by issuing mock tickets. The cadets came to court to experience the prosecution of those tickets. U.S. Magistrate Judge Joe J. Volpe served as the trial judge and his law clerks, Courtney Umeda and Steven Benson, represented the State of Arkansas and the defendant.

The mock trial provided the cadets an opportunity to experience testifying as a trial witness. Following the trial, the cadets participated in an open session with Judge Volpe and his law clerks where they assessed the case, provided feedback on their peer's testimony, and voted on the trial outcome. The cadets also received a tour of the courtroom and learned about the roles of court staff.



Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Enforcement Division cadets participating in the mock trial. Images courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas.



Eastern District of Missouri and Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals Host Summer Teacher Institutes

The Eastern District of Missouri and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals hosted two Summer Teacher Institutes. The program, entitled *Equal Protection Under the Law: The Evolution and Impact of Brown v. Board of Education*, celebrated the 70th Anniversary of this landmark case. Over 25 middle school, high school, and homeschool teachers participated in either the two-day session in St. Louis or the one-day session in Cape Girardeau.

With the guidance of judges and legal experts, they explored the strategy and the cases that paved the way for *Brown* and its companion cases, analyzed the United States Supreme Court opinion, and applied their hand to modern day equal protection scenarios. Most importantly, they collaborated to build lessons and activities to take back to their students.



Educators participating in the Summer Teacher Institute in St. Louis, Missouri. Images courtesy of Eastern District of Missouri.

2024 Constitution Day Naturalization Ceremonies



On September 17, 2024, Chief U.S. District Judge Peter Welte presided over a ceremony that welcomed 50 new citizens in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Image courtesy of the District of North Dakota.



The District of Minnesota welcomed nearly 1,000 new citizens from over 100 countries on September 17, 2024 at St. Paul Union Station. U.S. Magistrate Judge Leo I. Brisbois and U.S. Magistrate Douglas L. Micko presided over the ceremony, with special guests St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey.

Image courtesy of the District of Minnesota.



On September 17, 2024, Eighth Circuit Judge Lavenski Smith presided over the ceremony welcoming 19 new citizens at the home of the St. Louis Cardinals, Busch Stadium

Image courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri



On September 12, 2024, 602 new Americans from 94 different countries were sworn in by Western District of Missouri Court Executive Paige Wymore-Wynn at the Kansas City Royals baseball field with U.S. Magistrate Judge Jill A. Morris presiding.

Image courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Constitution Day is a federal observance that recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become United States citizens.

It is observed annually on September 17th, the day in 1787 that delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document in Philadelphia.