EIGHTH CIRCUIT PUBLIC OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

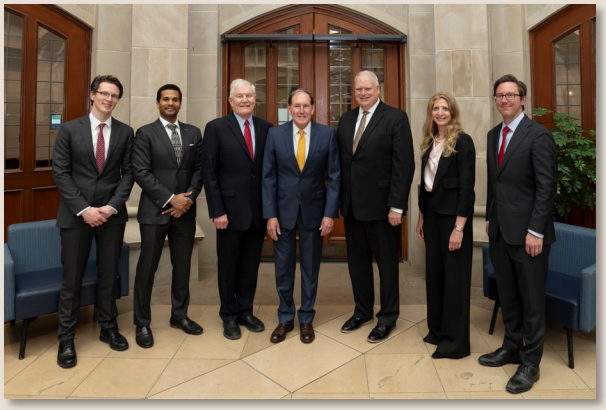
2nd Quarter - 2026

Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals Holds Arguments at Washington University School of Law

On Wednesday, April 15, the Court sat at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Missouri. The three-judge panel included U.S. Circuit Judges Raymond W. Gruender, Duane Benton, and Ralph Erickson.

Images courtesy of Dan Donovan Photography

Following oral arguments, the judges participated in a Q & A conversation with the law students, moderated by Susan Bindler, Clerk of the Court for the Eighth Circuit. WashU Law published an article about the session. To read the article, please click here.



Images courtesy of Dan Donovan Photography

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Social Studies Teachers Visit The Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse

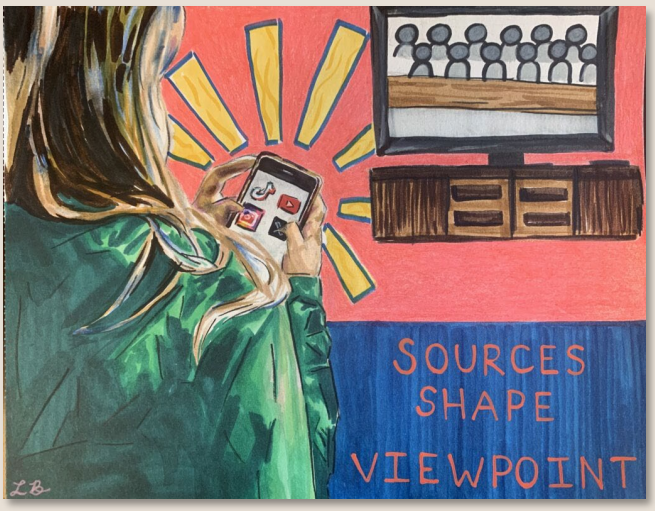
In April, social studies teachers from the Pattonville School District visited the Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse for their spring professional development day. The teachers were given resources for teaching about the federal courts and participated in a half-day program that included a courtroom observation and chat with U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Pitlyk.

Pattonville School District social studies teachers.
Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri.

Fifth Annual Spring Art Contest

The fifth annual spring art contest – Juries: Through the Eyes of Students – was held in early 2026. The contest asked students in grades 1-12 to submit artwork about the American jury system, with a special focus on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Winning entries are displayed in the jury assembly room of the Eagleton Courthouse for one year.

You can view the 2026 winners on the website of the Judicial Learning Center by clicking here.



First Place High School: "The Media's Influence" by Lizzy Butler

First Place Lower Elementary: "A Juror's Decision" by Joshua Troup

First Place Middle School: "Justice at the Hands of the People" by Sophie Turkowski

Eastern District of Missouri Visits Brookdale Senior Living

Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri.

In May, U.S. Magistrate Judge John M. Bodenhausen spoke about the federal courts and the role of judges to a group of residents at Brookdale Senior Living.

Western District of Missouri Courthouse Visits

High School students from Hogan Preparatory Academy visited the Charles Evans Whitaker U.S. Courthouse, observed court, toured the Bell Room Historical Gallery, and had lunch with lawyers from the Federal Defender's Office.

Photo courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Middle School students from Immaculate Conception School visited the Christopher S. Bond U.S. Courthouse in Jefferson City. The group observed court, toured Heritage Hall, and met with officers of the court.

Photo courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Naturalization Ceremony in Eastern District of Arkansas

On May 1, U.S. District Judge Lee P. Rudofsky, Eastern District of Arkansas, administered the Oath of Allegiance to 42 new citizens at a naturalization ceremony held at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. President Bill Clinton delivered the keynote remarks. Other participants included the Little Rock Catholic High School Marine Corps JROTC Senior Color Guard. The courthouse choral group Judicial Harmony sang the National Anthem. Girl Scout Troops 6224 and 6879 wrote hand-written welcome notes to the new citizens and presented the notes and flags to each new American citizen.

Photos courtesy of the William J. Clinton Presidential Library

America-250 Workshop for Teachers by Economic Arkansas

Photo courtesy of Eastern District of Arkansas

On June 4, a group of Arkansas teachers convened at the Richard Sheppard Arnold U.S. Courthouse as part of the America-250 Workshop for Teachers by Economic Arkansas. The event included a special tour of the courthouse and concluded with a visit to the 1957 Era-Faithful Courtroom led by U. S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr.

Eastern District of Arkansas Hosts Batesville High School Mock Trial Team

On May 11, students from Batesville High School mock trial team visited the Richard Sheppard Arnold U.S. Courthouse and participated in a roundtable discussion with representatives from the Clerk's Office, the U.S. Marshal Service, and the U.S. Probation Office before receiving a tour of the 1957 Era-Faithful Courtroom. Chief U.S. District Judge Kristine G. Baker invited the students to attend a criminal hearing where they had the opportunity to engage with various court personnel during the hearing recess, including Assistant United States Attorneys, Assistant Federal Public Defenders, case agents, and the court reporter.

Photo of Batesville High School students courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas

Naturalization Ceremonies in Western District of Arkansas

On April 10, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark E. Ford presided over a naturalization ceremony for 49 new citizens, held at the Judge Isaac C. Parker Federal Building and Courthouse in Fort Smith. The ceremony was held in the third-floor historic courtroom, and the National Anthem was performed by one of the applicants for citizenship – Barbara Padilla, trained opera singer, and 1st runner up on the television show America's Got Talent.

Photo courtesy of Western District of Arkansas

Photo courtesy of Western District of Arkansas

On June 12, Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Christy Comstock welcomed 98 new citizens at a naturalization ceremony held at the Fayetteville Public Library.

Naturalization Ceremony at Iowa Cubs Minor League Baseball Game

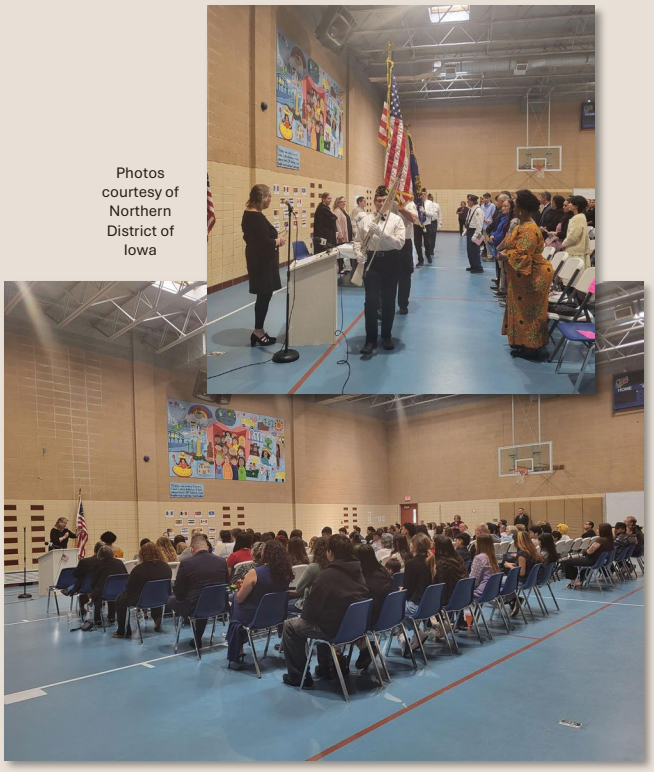
On June 25, U.S. District Judge Stephen H. Locher presided over a naturalization ceremony for 29 new citizens, held at Principal Park in Des Moines, before the first pitch of the Iowa Cubs Minor League baseball game.

Photo courtesy of the Southern District of Iowa

Naturalization Ceremony in Northern District of Iowa

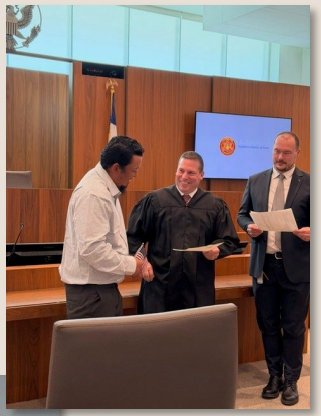
On May 1, Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Kelly K.E. Mahoney, presided over a naturalization ceremony for 25 new citizens, held at the Mary J. Treglia Community House in Sioux City. Father David Esquiliano gave remarks, and color guard was provided by American Legion Post 64. Remarks from Representative Randy Feenstra, Senator Joni Ernst, and Senator Chuck Grassley were also shared.

Photos courtesy of Northern District of Iowa



Naturalization Ceremonies in Southern District of Iowa

On May 15, U.S. Magistrate Judge William P. Kelly presided over a naturalization ceremony for 40 new citizens at the U.S. Court house in Des Moines, IA.



Photos courtesy of the Southern District of Iowa

On April 17, Chief U.S. District Judge Stephanie M. Rose presided over a naturalization ceremony for 36 new citizens, held at the Harkin Institute at Drake University.

Passport Day Naturalization Ceremony in the District of Minnesota

On Saturday, April 11, U.S. Magistrate Judge Elsa Bullard presided over a naturalization ceremony as part of Passport Day, a national initiative of the U.S. Department of State to offer passport services outside of regular hours and locations. Minneapolis was one of only nine locations across the country to offer special weekend processing on this date.

Photos courtesy of District of Minnesota

District of Minnesota and Minnesota Humanities Center Co-Host *Project Citizen*

The Court partnered with the Minnesota Humanities Center to co-host *Project Citizen* in the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in St. Paul. The event brought in middle school and high school students from around the metro area to practice advocacy and policy work and included presentation boards and spoken remarks and demonstrated how youth can participate meaningfully in democracy.

Photos courtesy of District of Minnesota

District of Nebraska Courthouse Visits

- May 5, Chief U.S. District Judge Robert F. Rossiter, Jr. provided a tour of the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Courthouse to Omaha Christian High School students who are involved in a law class and trial team.

- Officers from the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office represented the Court at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Career Fair and the Elkhorn Public Schools Career Exploration Fair. In addition, officers spoke to the criminal justice class at Doane University and hosted student groups from Creighton Prep High School, Omaha Marian High School, and Omaha Christian High School.

Naturalization Ceremony at the Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska

On June 12, U.S. Magistrate Judge Jacqueline M. DeLuca presided over a ceremony at the Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska.

Photos courtesy of District of Nebraska

Mock Trials at the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota

U.S. District Judge Eric C. Schulte and members of the U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Public Defender's Office, and private bar traveled to the Rosebud Indian Reservation on May 4 and performed four mock trials for grade school students.

Photos courtesy of District of South Dakota

The group performed the Trial of Goldilocks at the Rosebud Elementary School and Todd County Elementary School. The students were also given an opportunity to ask questions about the trial, and the important roles of juries, lawyers, and judges in the court system.

Photos courtesy of District of South Dakota

District of North Dakota Hosts West Fargo's Sheyenne High School

In April, Chief U.S. District Judge Peter D. Welte and U.S. Magistrate Judge Alice R. Senechal welcomed students from West Fargo's Sheyenne High School. The group participated in the Civil Discourse and Difficult Conversations program at the Quentin N. Burdick U.S. Courthouse in Fargo. Judicial law clerks and attorney volunteers assisted in presenting the program.

Photos courtesy of District of North Dakota

District of North Dakota Student Essay Contest to Celebrate America's 250th Birthday

The District of North Dakota's Federal Practice Committee's Civic Engagement Subcommitteee hosted a local student essay contest to celebrate America's 250th Birthday. Winners included Jake Hausmann from North Star School in Cando and Fatima Diaby from Sheyenne High School in West Fargo. Each will receive a $250 prize, be invited to their local federal courthouse, and have their essay published in the magazine of the State Bar Association of North Dakota.

District of North Dakota Visits Shanley High School

U.S. Circuit Judge Ralph Erickson, Assistant Federal Public Defender Christ Bellmore, U.S. Probation Officer Meghan Nelson, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Lori Conroy spoke to Shanley High School students in Fargo in May. They explained the process of a criminal case, and their roles in the process.

Photo of the speakers along with the teacher Kari Sornsin
Photo Courtesy of District of North Dakota