EIGHTH CIRCUIT PUBLIC OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

3rd Quarter - 2026

Summertime Ceremonies From Around the Circuit

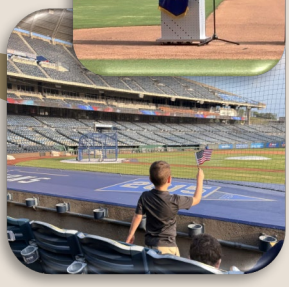
On September 5, a naturalization ceremony was held at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln, Nebraska, following a University of Nebraska football game. Chief U.S. District Judge Brian Buescher presided over the ceremony that welcomed 20 new citizens from 14 countries. The Cornhusker Marching Band opened the ceremony by performing the national anthem. Also in attendance were Senior U.S. District Judge John Gerrard and U.S. Circuit Judge L. Steven Grasz.

Photo courtesy of the District of North Dakota

On July 29, a naturalization ceremony was held prior to a Moorhead-Fargo RedHawks game at Newman Outdoor Field in Fargo, North Dakota. U.S. Magistrate Judge Alice Senechal presided over the ceremony that welcomed 26 new citizens from 15 countries. To kick off the game, Chief U.S. District Judge Peter Welte threw out the first pitch.

Photo courtesy of the District of Nebraska

Photos courtesy of the St. Louis Cardinals



Photos courtesy of the Western District of Missouri

On August 25, a naturalization ceremony was held at Busch Stadium prior to the start of a St. Louis Cardinals game. U.S. Circuit Judge Justin D. Smith presided over the ceremony that welcomed 18 new citizens from 14 countries.

The Western District of Missouri hosted a naturalization ceremony on August 12 at Kauffman Stadium, home of the Kansas City Royals. U.S. District Judge Beth Phillips presided over the ceremony that welcomed 104 new citizens from 46 countries.

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... and more!

District of Minnesota

Court Camp

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge William Fisher, along with volunteers from the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, led another year of *Court Camp*. Nearly 40 Twin Cities area high school students attended the week-long workshop at the Diana E. Murphy U.S. Courthouse in Minneapolis. Lessons included the rule of law, career exploration, a mock trial competition, observing a naturalization ceremony, and a visit to the Justice & Democracy Centers of Minnesota.

Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association

Summer Teacher Institute

The District of Minnesota held its 5th annual Summer Teacher Institute at the Warren E. Burger Federal Building in St. Paul, Minnesota. The theme was *America 250: Colonial Grievances to the Modern Judiciary*. The day-long workshop was held for two dozen middle and high school social studies teachers. Participants listened to judicial panels, law school professor panels, activities from the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals educational staff, classroom simulations, a courthouse tour, and a visit to the Justice & Democracy Centers of Minnesota.

Photos courtesy of the District of Minnesota

Supreme Court and My Hometown

Photo courtesy of the District of Minnesota

The District of Minnesota hosted its second year of the *Supreme Court and My Hometown* program, in partnership with the Supreme Court's Historical Society and the Annenberg Foundation. The week-long program included 30 high school students from across the Twin Cities and southern Minnesota. The students focused on the 1930s landmark Supreme Court case *Near v. Minnesota*. The week included exposure to the federal courts, rule of law, career exploration, the federal appeals process, granting certiorari, and a visit to the *Minnesota Star Tribune* for a journalist panel. The students' capstone project will be formally unveiled this fall.

Photos courtesy of the District of Minnesota

District of North Dakota

Student Essay Contest

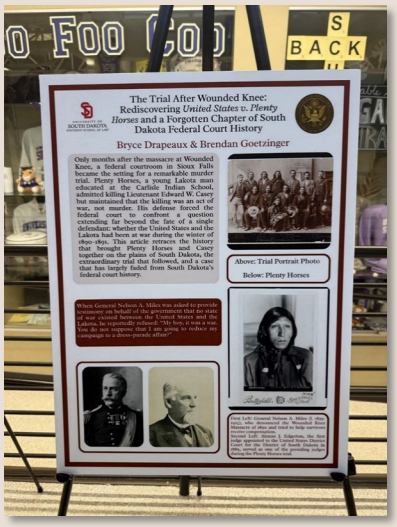
The District of North Dakota's Federal Practice Committee hosted a local essay contest to celebrate America's 250th. The contest invited North Dakota students in grades 6-12 to submit an essay addressing either a North Dakota specific prompt or a national prompt. Jake Hausmann, a 7th grade student from North Star School in Cando, was the middle school winner. Fatima Diaby, a 9th grade student from Sheyenne High School in West Fargo, was the high school winner. The Federal Practice Committee's Civic Engagement Subcommittee provided each student with a $250 prize. The students were also invited to tour their local federal courthouse to learn more about the federal court system.

Patrick Sinner, Chair of the Civic Engagement Subcommittee, presenting the students with their prizes and certificates. Photos courtesy of the District of North Dakota.

District of South Dakota

Historic Cases Symposium

On September 25, the District of South Dakota and the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law hosted the Law Review Fall 2026 Symposium, focused on the history of the District of South Dakota and historic cases. Topics included: the American Indian Movement trials in the 1970s, the farm crisis of the 1980s, and the trial of Jack McCall from 1876. U.S. District Judge Lawrence L. Piersol presented his article about the history of *Ex Parte Crow Dog* (1883), that gave rise to the Major Crimes Act and federal jurisdiction over major crimes in Indian country. The Law Review plans to publish the articles prepared in connection with the symposium in Summer 2027.



Photos courtesy of the District of South Dakota.

Public Bankruptcy Seminar

The State Bar of South Dakota and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of South Dakota held a seminar in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on September 18. The seminar covered a wide range of bankruptcy topics and also included a session presented by paralegals and legal secretaries. The seminar was open to attorneys, law clerks, law students, and members of the public.

Photos courtesy of the District of South Dakota.

Southern District of Iowa

Federal Courts for Future Lawyers

The Southern District of Iowa held an “Introduction to the Federal Courts” program on June 30, for approximately 65 law firm summer associates and government agency summer interns at the U.S. Courthouse in Des Moines. The participants heard from Chief U.S. District Judge Stephanie Rose, observed a live-action court reporting, received tips from U.S. Magistrate Judge William Kelly and a law-clerk panel, as well as presentations from the U.S. Probation Office and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Photo courtesy of the Southern District of Iowa.

District of Nebraska

Teachers Law School

The U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Omaha Political Science Department, and the Iowa and Nebraska Chapters of ABOTA hosted their annual Teachers Law School on July 23-24. This intensive program is designed to provide educators with a comprehensive crash course in civics led by seasoned lawyers, law professors, and members of the judiciary. Senior U.S. District Judge Joseph Bataillon welcomed participants on the second day, and U.S. District Judge Robert Rossiter gave a presentation titled *The State and Federal Courts*.

Western and Eastern Districts of Arkansas

Naturalization Ceremony Held in Hot Springs

On July 17, Magistrate Judge Spencer G. Singleton presided over his first naturalization ceremony. The ceremony was held at the U.S. Courthouse in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and welcomed 33 new citizens. The Hot Springs High School NJROTC presented the colors and Dr. Cane West, Interpretation and Education Program Manager with Hot Springs National Park, was the guest speaker.

Photos courtesy of the Western District of Arkansas.

History Tour

On September 4, the Richard Sheppard Arnold U.S. Courthouse was a featured stop on the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program’s 2026 Sandwiching in History Tours. The tours provide an opportunity to learn about Arkansas’ most unique properties. The Eastern District of Arkansas welcomed 90 visitors from the program to the courthouse, where they toured three different courtrooms and engaged with court staff and a deputy U.S. Marshal.

Photos courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Western District of Missouri

Student Law Academy

Student Law Academy (SLA) Scholars returned to the Charles Evans Whittaker U.S. Courthouse. They participated in a mock trial, presided over by U.S. Magistrate Judge Lajuana Counts. The mock trial marked the conclusion of the Student Law Academy's advanced Legal Pathway program, designed for SLA graduates who have completed the Academy's foundational curriculum.

Photos courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Summer Teacher Institute

The Missouri Bar held its annual Teacher Summer Institute in Jefferson City with 40 educators from across the state participating. U.S. District Judge Stephen Bough spoke to the educators about the impartiality of federal judges, the federal judicial nomination and confirmation process, and the role that judicial independence plays in maintaining public confidence in the courts.

Photo courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Constitutional Democracy Academy

Photo courtesy of the Western District of Missouri.

Students from the Kinder Institute's Constitutional Democracy Academy visited the courthouse in Kansas City, as part of an immersive week focused on exploring the history, theory, and design of the U.S. Constitution. The students met with U.S. District Judge Beth Phillips about her experience on the federal bench.

Eighth Circuit/Eastern District of Missouri

Educator Programs

This summer, 40 educators attended the annual Summer Teacher Institutes at the federal courthouses in St. Louis and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, that focused on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Participants observed court proceedings, met federal judges, and attended multiple sessions connecting the themes of the Declaration to the work of the judiciary today. Speakers included U.S. District Judges Sarah E. Pitlyk, Catherine D. Perry, Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr., Audrey G. Fleissig, and U.S. Magistrate Judges Noelle C. Collins, Abbie Crites-Leoni, and John M. Bodenhausen.

Photos courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri.

Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Noelle C. Collins and the Courts' education staff presented at the annual back-to-school professional development day for the social studies teachers of St. Louis Public Schools. The teachers learned about resources available through the Courts and the Judicial Learning Center, participated in classroom activity demonstrations, and had the opportunity to chat with Judge Collins.

Summer Scouts Programs

The annual Scout Merit Badge events for the Citizenship in the Nation badge were held on June 30 in St. Louis and on August 4 in Cape Girardeau. A total of 59 scouts earned the badge. The Scouts toured a place on the National Register of Historic Places and the federal courthouse, observed court proceedings, met with federal judges, and participated in mini-classes about the U.S. government and the Constitution.

Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri.

Constitution Week Highlights

Constitution Week Naturalization Ceremonies in Arkansas

Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas

Eastern District of Arkansas Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Phyllis M. Jones presided over a naturalization ceremony in the Richard Sheppard Arnold U.S. Courthouse in Little Rock. Students from the Catholic High School Marine Corps JROTC Senior Color Guard and a civics class from North Little Rock High School also participated in the ceremony. After the ceremony, the students received a tour of the courthouse and participated in a forum with U. S. Bankruptcy Judge Phyllis Jones and U.S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr.

The Western District of Arkansas held a naturalization ceremony at the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville on September 15. Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Christy D. Comstock presided over the ceremony that welcomed 100 new citizens. Stephanie Orman, Mayor of Bentonville, gave remarks and the Bentonville Police Department provided the color guard. Also in attendance were students from Fayetteville Christian School.

Photo courtesy of the Western District of Arkansas

Vashon High School Participates in Constitution Day Event

Vashon High School Students Participating in Constitution Day Event.
Photo courtesy of the Eighth Circuit/Eastern District of Missouri

The Eighth Circuit and the Eastern District of Missouri welcomed students from Vashon High School in St. Louis for a Constitution Day event on September 18. The students met with Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark, observed court proceedings, visited the Judge McMillian exhibit (Judge McMillian was an alumnus of Vashon High School), and participated in the national Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions program with U.S. Magistrate Judge Rodney H. Holmes and five volunteer attorneys.

U.S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr. Speaks at Constitution Day Event

University of Central Arkansas Students Participating in a Constitution Day Event.
Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Arkansas

In honor of Constitution Day, the University of Central Arkansas invited U.S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr., Eastern District of Arkansas, to speak to students and faculty on September 17. Judge Marshall spoke about the 1787 sequestration of delegates as they debated and compromised on what would be included in the U.S. Constitution. Each student was provided a pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution.

Constitution Week Naturalization Ceremonies in Iowa

Photo courtesy of the Northern District of Iowa

The Northern District of Iowa held a naturalization ceremony at Western Iowa Tech Community College on September 18. Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Kelly K.E. Mahoney presided over the ceremony that welcomed 58 new citizens from 17 countries. The ceremony was part of the college's civic engagement week events.

On September 18, U.S. Magistrate Judge Helen C. Adams, Southern District of Iowa, welcomed 41 new citizens at Living History Farms.

Photo courtesy of the Southern District of Iowa

Constitution Day (September 17) Naturalization Ceremonies from around the Circuit

A naturalization ceremony was held at the Old Courthouse at the Gateway Arch National Park in St. Louis. It was presided over by U.S. District Judge Henry Autrey, Eastern District of Missouri, and welcomed 20 new citizens.

Photo courtesy of the Eastern District of Missouri

Photo courtesy of the District of North Dakota

A naturalization ceremony was held at the University of North Dakota. It was presided over by U.S. Magistrate Judge Alice Senechal and welcomed 49 new citizens from 25 countries.

A naturalization ceremony was held at Papillion Downtown Historical Portal Schoolhouse. It was presided over by U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael Nelson, District of Nebraska, and welcomed 24 new citizens.

Photo courtesy of the City of Papillion, Nebraska

Photo courtesy of the District of Minnesota

The District of Minnesota held three naturalization ceremonies at the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in St. Paul, to celebrate Constitution Day.