



A Word from the Chair



Janis L. Sammartino,
District Judge,
Southern
District of
California

This past summer brought a buzz of activity for our committee and our public outreach efforts, from seeing an ever-expanding Civics Contest, which culminated in a well-attended reception during our Judicial Conference in Spokane, Washington, this past July, to organizing naturalization ceremonies at major-league ballparks as part of a national federal judiciary initiative.

Our Ninth Circuit Civics Contest was our largest yet, with more than 1,300 essay entries and 130 video entries. With a topic near and dear to any young person's heart – The Fourth Amendment in the 21st Century: What is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age? – we saw some innovative approaches as described within this newsletter.

The 2020 contest topic promises to garner even greater interest, particularly coming in an election year. With milestone anniversaries approaching for two of the most life-changing constitutional amendments in our nation's history – the 15th, which abolished slavery, and the 19th, which granted women's suffrage – we have a subject ready-made for thoughtful reflection.

Although we expect widespread participation, we can't rest on our laurels. And that's why we ask for your help in making the 2020 contest an even bigger success than in past years. We ask each district to engage with their schools and teachers to make sure they have the information they need to excite their

(continued on page 4)



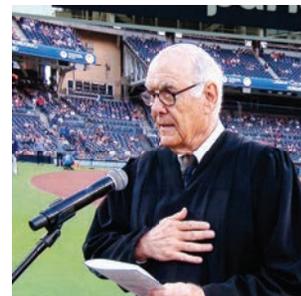
Federal Courts Welcome New Citizens at Ballparks

Two Southern California major-league ballparks played host to brand-new U.S. citizens this past summer, as our federal district courts partnered with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to naturalize applicants at the San Diego Padres and Los Angeles Dodgers stadiums.

The events were part of a nationwide initiative by the federal courts to highlight Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, September 17th – the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution and a day that celebrates native-born and naturalized citizens. The federal courts have partnered with USCIS to naturalize applicants at ballparks throughout the country, honoring two great American traditions – naturalizing new citizens and enjoying our nation's favorite pastime.

Fifty candidates from 40 countries became U.S. citizens at a naturalization ceremony held at the Padres' ballpark prior to the first pitch. And 15 candidates from nine countries were naturalized by the pitcher's mound in Los Angeles.

Senior District Judge Jeffrey T. Miller of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California administered the oath before thousands of cheering fans in San Diego, and Bankruptcy Judge Sandra R. Klein of the Central District of California did the same in Los Angeles – where the stadium was decked out in red, white and blue (see article in this issue). □



Top photo: New U.S. citizens proudly raise their American flag at the San Diego Padres stadium. **Above:** Senior District Judge Jeffrey T. Miller administering the Oath of Allegiance.

Also in This Issue:

2019 and 2020 Civics Contests

The View from Home Plate

New Public Information Officer

Page 2

Page 3

Page 4

2019 Civics Contest Addresses Fourth Amendment's Connection to the Digital Age, 2020 Contest Topic Announced

The Ninth Circuit Civics Contest celebrated its fifth anniversary this year, and it turned out to be the largest one yet, with more than 1300 essay and 130 video entries addressing its topic: *The Fourth Amendment in the 21st Century: What is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age?*

Organized under the auspices of the Courts and Community Committee and with the support of the Public Information Unit, the contest involves all 15 districts within the circuit. The contest culminated in a reception at the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in July, where close to 200 guests were present to honor the winners.

Essay contest winners were Natalie Fraser of Alaska, first place; Kellen Vu of Arizona, second place; and Jessica Chou of California, third place. Natalie's essay focused on how today's technology has evolved, from smartphones to drones, providing the government with greater ability to examine the private lives of its citizens.

The winners of the video competition were the team of Matthew Lovering, Colton Massic and Jason Mueller of Nevada, first place. The second-place winner was Raveena Lele of California. Third-place winners were the team of Jessica Chou, Maxwell Tong and Aaron Wu, also of California. The first-place video gave a historical background leading up to modern technology and how that technology has affected our society, making the Fourth Amendment more integral in safeguarding a person's right to privacy.



Top photo: Civics Contest winners joined by District Judge Janis L. Sammartino (third from left) and Chief Circuit Judge Sidney R. Thomas (fourth from left). **Above left:** First-place essay winner Natalie Fraser (center), joined left to right by District of Alaska Judge Sharon L. Gleason, Chief Magistrate Judge Debora Smith and Chief District Judge Timothy M. Burgess; Ninth Circuit Judge Morgan Christen; and District of Alaska Senior District Judge H. Russel Holland. **Above right:** Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas speaking at the Civics Contest reception.

2020 Civics Contest

Next year's topic will connect the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment and the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment:

Voting Rights: Milestone Anniversaries

In the wake of the 15th and 19th Amendments, barriers remained to prevent United States citizens from voting. Do formal or informal barriers remain today? What additional changes would you make, if any, to Americans' voting rights?

As mentioned in Judge Janis Sammartino's A Word from the Chair, we are expanding our outreach to involve even more schools and students in our effort. Everyone can play a part in spreading the word and engaging new people in this important program. To learn more, please contact Katherine Rodriguez at krodriguez@ce9.uscourts.gov. □



The View from Home Plate: Judge Presides over Naturalization Ceremony at Dodger Stadium

On Tuesday, September 3, 2019, I had a once-in-a-lifetime experience administering the oath of allegiance to 15 new citizens during a naturalization ceremony at Dodger Stadium. The ceremony was part of a nationwide outreach initiative by the United States Courts to highlight Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (September 17), which celebrates the signing of the Constitution in 1787. As part of the initiative, naturalization ceremonies are being held at seven major league and four minor league baseball parks across the country.

Presiding over naturalization ceremonies is one of my favorite things to do as a judge. I always get choked up when administering the oath of allegiance because I can only imagine the sacrifices that the applicants made to become U.S. citizens. It also reminds me how fortunate we are to live in this country, to enjoy the many freedoms that we share as Americans, and how incredible it is that I am a federal judge. Two of my grandparents were naturalized citizens—my grandfather emigrated from Lithuania when he was a teenager and my grandmother from England when she was a toddler. They were so proud to be citizens of this great nation and happy that their children and grandchildren had countless opportunities to pursue the American dream.

The naturalization ceremonies over which I normally preside are held at the Los Angeles Convention Center and are massive; approximately 5,000 new citizens are sworn in at one time. Although the ceremony at Dodger Stadium involved only 15 citizenship candidates, it felt extra special. Not only was the crowd enthusiastically cheering in the background and the ceremony displayed on the Jumbotron, but I had the good fortune to meet and spend time with all the new citizens



Top photo: Bankruptcy Judge Sandra R. Klein shares smiles with new citizens at Los Angeles Dodgers stadium. **Above:** Bankruptcy Judge Klein administering the Oath of Allegiance at Los Angeles Dodgers ballpark.

and their families, take photos with them, and hear a bit about their journeys to citizenship. Each of the applicants expressed appreciation for the freedoms that we all share as U.S. citizens, and the opportunity to pursue their version of the American dream.

Regarding my favorite baseball team, there is no need to fear that my allegiance has shifted. As most people can guess from hearing me speak, I was born and raised in Boston and I have been, and always will be, a Red Sox fan. My family went to many Red Sox games when I was young and one of my earliest memories is attending a game with my grandfather when I was five years old. I aspired to be a “bat boy” for the Sox—they did not have any “bat girls” at that time—and I took my baseball glove to every game. (I was terrible at catching things and I probably would have ducked if a ball came anywhere near me, but I had my trusty glove with me nevertheless.) As all Red Sox fans can appreciate, I have celebrated their historic wins and lamented their crushing losses. And, in the spring, when my dad’s health was declining rapidly and he had lost the ability to speak, the only thing that made him smile was when I put the TV on so that we could watch a Red Sox game. So, the Sox will always be near and dear to my heart.

But, for one balmy evening in September, as I stood behind home plate at Dodger Stadium and looked toward the pitcher’s mound at the 15 citizenship applicants holding their American flags, I very proudly “bled Dodger blue.” As the crowd cheered and applauded the 15 new citizens, I felt honored to have presided over the naturalization ceremony and grateful to be a citizen of the United States of America. □

Judge Sandra R. Klein is a Bankruptcy Judge with the Central District of California, U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit.

students about the contest. And we ask judges and lawyers to speak to students at schools and elsewhere, to talk about the importance and impact of these amendments, and to encourage them to try their hand at a contest entry.

Over the next weeks and months, please check our Courts and Community Committee web pages for more information about how you can help expand the reach of this contest, so that more and more students can gain a better understanding of the Constitution and the role that the judiciary plays in upholding it – which, after all, is our purpose in holding the contest.

Also over the summer we embarked on a new venture in honor of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, September 17th, participating in naturalization ceremonies at both the San Diego Padres and Los Angeles Dodgers ballparks. In the first year of a two-year initiative by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, this effort saw hundreds of applicants across the country take the oath of allegiance before thousands of cheering fans. Our goal is to expand our horizons next year to include additional major-league as well as minor-league ballclubs around our circuit. Read elsewhere in this publication about these ceremonies, including an inspiring article by Bankruptcy Judge Sandra R. Klein of the Central District of California.

Lastly, we said farewell to our longtime Public Information Officer, David Madden, who retired after 19 years with the Office of the Circuit Executive. In his time with us he led a high-functioning and creative Public Information Unit, and oversaw many programs to advance the public's understanding of the federal courts, including conferences connecting judges with working journalists, the creation and staffing of this very committee, and the inception and expansion of the Civics Contest. His commitment to the cause, and his work with judges and staff throughout the circuit, were greatly appreciated. Succeeding him is Amy Weitz, whom you can read more about in this newsletter.

As always, our work would not be possible without the support and guidance of our committee members, and the hard work and expertise of our Public Information Unit staff: Alex Clausen, our audio/visual specialist who designs all of our publications, including this one; Chandan Toor, our web designer; Katherine Rodriguez, our communications administrator; and Kari Kelso, Ph.D., our community outreach administrator who staffs the Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Learning Center in Sacramento, California. They continue to support the work not only of their unit but of the work throughout the OCE.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season. See you next year! □

New Public Information Officer on Board

The U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit are pleased to announce the appointment of Amy Weitz as their new Public Information Officer. She succeeds David Madden, who retired after 19 years in the position, and serves as staff to the Courts and Community Committee.



Amy Weitz, Public Information Officer

Amy comes to us with a long background in communications and government relations, with a varied career in the non-profit, public sector and legal arenas. Much of her work has been in health care and education. In the past she has directed communications and public affairs departments for organizations such as the YMCA and the American Cancer Society, and also has handled marketing communications for two law firms along the way. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Amy received her Bachelor of Arts in History from U.C. Berkeley and lives in Oakland, California.

At the Office of the Circuit Executive, she oversees a Public Information Unit that includes the Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Learning Center in Sacramento. She is responsible for media relations and leads a team that works on all aspects of communication and community outreach. One of Amy's goals in her new position is to enhance civics education throughout the circuit, helping young people and adults to gain a better understanding of government's role in a democratic society and the judiciary's role in particular. □



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