

*SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE UNITED STATES
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
40 FOLEY SQUARE-ROOM 2904
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007*

ROBERT A. KATZMANN
CHIEF JUDGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**80 New Citizens Join National Celebration of Constitution and Citizenship Day in
September 17th Naturalization Ceremony at Historic Manhattan Courthouse**

New York—On September 17th, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit will join with other federal courts nationwide in an historic coast-to-coast celebration of Constitution Day and National Citizenship Day, by hosting a Naturalization Ceremony for 80 immigrants at the historic Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse in downtown Manhattan.

The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. in Courtroom 506 on the fifth floor. The building is at 40 Foley Square, also known as Centre Street.

Constitution Day and National Citizenship Day is a combined annual event that commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787. It also recognizes all who, by birth or naturalization, are U.S. citizens.

This year the federal Judiciary will sponsor more than two dozen naturalization ceremonies from New York to Alaska, including ceremonies at the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse in downtown Manhattan, the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas and the National Archives' Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom in Washington, D.C. These events are part of a daylong program launching the Civics Renewal Network, a unique collaboration among 26 groups, including the U.S. Courts, the National Archives, the National Constitution Center, the Library of Congress and the Annenberg Public Policy Center and other institutions dedicated to elevating the importance of civics education.

In New York, Second Circuit Chief Judge Robert A. Katzmann will administer the Oath of Allegiance to 80 immigrants at a ceremony hosted at the landmark historic Courthouse in downtown Manhattan named for Associate Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

The ceremony will feature students from the Harlem Educational Activities Fund

(HEAF) taking the “Preamble Challenge” and reciting the 52 words of the Preamble to the Constitution; the National Anthem and patriotic songs sung by the New York City Housing Authority Youth Chorus under the direction of Carmen Roman and a color guard from the New York Field Office of the U.S. Customs & Border Protection. Phyllis Coven, Director of the New York District Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will serve as master of ceremonies.

“Naturalization ceremonies are a living testament to both Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, as they represent the active efforts of immigrants to become educated about our governmental system, and having been so educated, to pledge allegiance to our country’s laws. These ceremonies remind us of our collective responsibility, as citizens, to promote civic education, so that our Constitution and government remain vital for generations to come,” said Chief Judge Katzmann.

“In the Second Circuit, we are seeking new and innovative ways to engage the public in learning about our government, particularly the importance of the federal courts to securing our independence now and in the future. We want to bring all our constituencies, both legal and non-legal, into the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse and all our courthouses throughout the Second Circuit for programs on civic education and the importance of an independent judiciary to our republic,” said the Chief Judge.

Naturalization Ceremonies Come Home to Historic Courthouse

The September 17th, in recognition of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, represents a return to the historic Thurgood Marshall Courthouse, for the first naturalization there in 18 years. Until 1996, the historic Courthouse was the only federal courthouse in Manhattan, and it provided the formal entry to citizenship for generations of newly naturalized Americans in a city whose population is one-third foreign born.

According to the New York City-based office of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), prominent Americans who were naturalized at the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse, possibly in Courtroom 110, including PBS commentator and author Alistair Cooke, architect I.M. Pei, author W.H. Auden, NYC Ballet founder George Balanchine, ballet and modern dance star Mikhail Baryshnikov and fashion designer Oscar de la Renta.

September 17th Naturalization Ceremony at the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse

Starting Time: 8:00 a.m., Courtroom 506, 40 Foley Square

Presider: Chief Circuit Judge Robert A. Katzmann
United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

MC & Welcome: Phyllis Coven, Director, NY District

U.S. Office of Citizenship & Immigration Services

No. of Applicants 80 plus family members/friends/guests

Color Guard: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (NY Field Office)

Chorus: New York City Housing Authority Youth Chorus
Carmen Roman, Youth Chorus Coordinator

The NYCHA Youth Chorus will lead the attendees in the singing of the National Anthem and sing “God Bless America” at the conclusion of the event.

Preamble Challenge: High School students, grades 9-12, from the Harlem Educational Activities Fund (HEAF) will read the preamble to the United States Constitution during the ceremony.

HEAF is a Harlem-based not-for-profit organization that seeks to transform the lives of under-served young people beginning in middle school and continuing in college and beyond, through a youth development approach that includes rigorous year-round academic enrichment, social and cultural exposure and constant individual attention.

Sully Diaz, Coordinator, HEAF

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Media: This event is open to the media. Interested media representatives should contact the Circuit Executive’s Office at 212-857-8700 no later than Tuesday, September 16th to make the necessary arrangements to attend the ceremony and pass through security.
