



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Federal Courts Sponsor Civics Contest

SAN FRANCISCO – A civics contest organized by federal courts in the western United States offers high school students a chance to win cash prizes while learning about their constitutional rights.

“50 Years After the Miranda Decision: How Federal Courts Defined the Rights of the Accused” is the theme of an essay and video competition open to sophomores, juniors and seniors in public, private and parochial schools or to home-schooled students of equivalent status. Individual students can compete in the essay contest, while individuals and teams of up to three students can enter the video contest. Visit <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest> for more information.

The contest is organized by the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in the West. U.S. district courts in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions are cosponsors. Prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500 will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place winners in both the writing and video competition. Winners will be announced in June.

The contest celebrates the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miranda v. Arizona in which the court ruled that someone taken into police custody must be informed – prior to questioning – of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Students are asked to consider how “Miranda Rights” came to be defined, how they are safeguarded by the federal courts and why they are so important to our system of justice.

“Civics education really begins with the Constitution,” said the U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino of San Diego, who chairs the Courts and Community Committee. “The contest will uniquely add to the student’s knowledge and understanding of the basis of our democracy.”

For more information, contact Katherine Rodriguez, coordinator of the 2016 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, at (415) 355-8973 / civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov.

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