



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Students from Arizona, California and Guam Win 2016 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest

SAN FRANCISCO – Young people from Arizona, California and the United States Territory of Guam have been selected the winners of the 2016 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an educational outreach effort organized by the federal courts of the western states.

The contest, which was open to high school students in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions, focused on the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miranda v. Arizona. The 1966 ruling requires that persons in the custody of law enforcement officers be informed prior to questioning of their constitutional rights to remain silent and to have an attorney present during interrogation.

Students were challenged to write an essay or produce a short video on the topic. Teams of up to three students were allowed for video production. All told, more than 700 students entered the contest, which offered cash prizes and a chance to meet some of the nation’s preeminent jurists and legal practitioners.

Winners in the essay competition were:

- 1st place – Daniela Mirell, a junior at Harvard-Westlake High School in Studio City, California;
- 2nd place – Jeri Raizel Yu, a sophomore at St. John’s School in Tumon, Guam; and
- 3rd place – Caroline Frieders, a senior at Walden Grove High School in Sahuarita, Arizona.

Winners in the video competition were:

- 1st place – Ivan Skvaril, a sophomore at St. John’s School in Tumon, Guam;
- 2nd place – Daniel Considine, a sophomore at San Pedro Valley High School in Benton, Arizona; and
- 3rd place – Mariela Gandara, a senior at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts in San Francisco, California.

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Many of the 15 federal courts in the Ninth Circuit held local competitions with winners advancing to the circuit-level contest. In all, 36 essays and 25 videos were selected for final consideration by the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee, which organized the contest. Blind judging was employed in both the preliminary and final rounds.

“We are very pleased to have had so many students from so many different places in the circuit participate in the contest. All of the entrants are to be commended for their efforts,” said U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino of San Diego, who chairs the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee.

At the circuit level, prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500 will be awarded to first-, second- and third-place winners in both the writing and video competition. In addition, first-place winners along with a parent/guardian will be invited to attend the 2016 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, a major gathering of the federal bench and bar in the western states which this year is being held in Big Sky, Montana. The winning essay will be read and the winning video shown at the opening session of the conference on July 11, 2016.

Prize money and travel costs for the winners to attend the circuit conference are funded through attorney admission fees collected by the federal courts to fund educational programs for the bar and community. Contributions were received from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the federal courts in Alaska, Arizona, California, the U.S. Territory of Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Washington.

The Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee, established in 2000 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, the governing body for federal courts in the West, seeks to promote public understanding of and confidence in the judicial system. The committee includes federal judges, lawyers, court staff and media members,. This is the third consecutive year in which the committee has organized a civics contest in conjunction with the circuit conference.

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