



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Civics Contest Finalists Announced

SAN FRANCISCO – Preliminary judging has been completed in the 2017 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest for high school students in the western United States, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. All told, over 1,000 young people entered the contest, which offers cash prizes and a chance to meet some of the nation’s preeminent jurists and legal practitioners.

“Not to Be Forgotten: Legal Lessons of the Japanese Internment” was the theme of the contest, which focused on key U.S. Supreme Court decisions related to the incarceration of Japanese-American citizens at the outset of World War II. Students in grades 9-12 in public, private and parochial schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status were challenged to write an essay or produce a short video on the topic.

All of the 15 judicial districts in the Ninth Circuit held local contests with winners going on to compete in the circuit-wide competition. In all, 45 essays and 36 videos were selected for final consideration by the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee, which will announce the winners in June. The winning essay will be read and video shown on July 17, 2017, during the opening session of the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in San Francisco, a major gathering of the federal bench and bar in the western states.

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 (\$7,000 total). In addition, first-place winners along with a parent/guardian will be invited to attend the circuit conference, a major gathering of the federal bench and bar in the western states. Prize money and travel costs are funded through attorney admission fees collected by the courts to fund educational programs for the bar and community.

“Civics education helps ensure that young people become knowledgeable citizens who understand and participate in our democracy. We are extremely pleased to have had so many students from so many different places in the circuit participate,” said U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino of San Diego, who chairs the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee.

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The Ninth Circuit takes in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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District of Alaska – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska, which awarded prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 to the top three finishers.

The Alaska winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Olivia Colleen Tafs, freshman; 2nd, Anessa Feero, senior; and 3rd, Sarah Chen, sophomore, all from West Anchorage High School in Anchorage.

Video winners are: 1st, the team of Brynn Morse, sophomore, and Sarah Chen, junior, at East Anchorage High School and West Anchorage High School, respectively. There are no 2nd or 3rd place winners.

District of Arizona – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, which offered prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 to the top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions.

The Arizona winners of the essay competition are: 1st place, Maya Bose, a senior at Corona del Sol High School in Tempe; 2nd place, Jennifer Smetanick, a junior at Basis Phoenix, a charter school in Phoenix; and 3rd place, Mindy Long, a sophomore at Hamilton High School in Chandler.

Video winners are: 1st place, the team of Allison Gooch, a senior, and Jacob Staudenmaier, a junior, at Arcadia High School in Phoenix; 2nd place, the team of Aida Farrally, Caitlyn Hartman and Sydney Hartman, seniors at the Arizona School for the Arts in Phoenix; and 3rd place, the team of Anthony Jaber, Frederick Lewis and Joshua Crest, seniors at Walden Grove High School in Sahuarita.

Central District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California. The district offered prizes of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500 to the top finishers in the competition and a trip to San Francisco for the first place winners accompanied by a parent or guardian, to attend the opening session of the circuit conference.

Central District of Calif. winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Ian Xu, a senior at Arcadia High School in Arcadia; 2nd, Zachary Finkelstein a junior at Dana Hills High School in Laguna Niguel; and 3rd, Danielle LaCorte a senior at Agoura High School in Agoura Hills.

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Video winners are: 1st, the team of Ian Xu, Cathleen Huang, and Jason Wang, seniors, at Arcadia High School in Arcadia; 2nd, the team of Jennifer Ramirez, Alexandra Castillo and Kimberly Barraza, seniors at Pacific High School in San Bernardino; and 3rd, Sophia Eberlein, a senior at Palisades Charter High School in Pacific Palisades.

Eastern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California.

Eastern District of Calif. winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Kou-Lai Chang, a junior at Florin High School in Sacramento; 2nd, Kiyomi Sun, a senior at Laguna Creek High School in Elk Grove; and 3rd, Gemma Ylaria Goebel, a senior at Granite Bay High School in Granite Bay.

Video winners are: 1st, Hazel Ford, a freshman at Good Measure Academy, a homeschool and collaborative program in Auburn; 2nd, Kinsey Mason, a sophomore at Clovis West High School in Fresno; and 3rd, Roman Hernandez, a junior at Merced High School in Merced.

Northern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Winners of the essay and video competition received \$100.

Northern District of Calif. winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Iris Wu, a senior at Miramonte High School in Orinda; 2nd, Brandon Shi, a junior at Dougherty Valley High School in San Ramon; and 3rd, Lori Sarsfield, a junior at New Technology High School in Napa.

Video winners are: 1st, Brianna Chapman, a sophomore at North Coast Preparatory Academy in Arcata; 2nd, the team of Brandon Shi, Amisha Kambath and Maddie Taylor, juniors at Dougherty Valley High School in San Ramon; and 3rd, Nicholas Dillon, Hari Ambu, and Savanna Harwood, juniors at New Technology High School in Napa.

Southern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. The district offered prizes of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 to the top finishers in the competition.

Southern District of Calif. winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Lauren Mikuriya, a junior at La Jolla Country Day School in La Jolla; 2nd, Jordan Furtak, a junior at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego; and 3rd, Sonia Gu, a junior at Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego.

Video winners are: 1st, the team of Angelina Felipe, Andres Rodriguez and Shaun Tayaba, juniors at Morse High School in San Diego; 2nd, the team of Ana Little-Sana, Mia Rollins, and Alexandra

Heath, seniors, at E3 Civics Charter High School in San Diego; and 3rd, the team of Anthony Alcaraz and Jorge Borquez, juniors at Eastlake High School in Chula Vista.

District of Guam – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Guam. The district offered prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50 to the top finishers in the competition.

Guam winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Lela Yang, a sophomore at St. John’s School in Tumon; a tie at 2nd, Heera Kodiyamplakkal, a freshman, and Maylene Yeh, a sophomore, both from Harvest Christian Academy in Barrigada. There is no 3rd place winner.

Video winners are: 1st, the team of Raizel Yu and Anne Wen, juniors at St. John’s School in Tumon; 2nd Julian Villegas, a senior at Guam High School in Agana; and Travis Aguon, a senior at Guam High School.

District of Hawaii – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii. The district offered prizes of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 to the top finishers in the competition.

Hawaii winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Isabelle Rhee, a junior at Punahou School in Honolulu; 2nd, Elise Kuwaye, a sophomore at Kaimuki Christian School in Honolulu; and 3rd, Allison Ching, a junior at Punahou School.

Video winners are: 1st, Allie Marshall, a junior at Kahuku High and Intermediate School in Kahuku; 2nd, the team of Tamara Sato and Emily Wu, juniors at Punahou School; and 3rd, Stephanie Fujita, a junior at Punahou School.

District of Idaho – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho. The district offered prizes of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 to the top finishers in the competition.

Idaho winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Ben Moody, a senior, homeschooled in Kuna; 2nd, Isaac Reitz, a sophomore at Fruitland High School in Fruitland; and 3rd, Teresa Fong, a sophomore at Meridian Technical Charter High School in Meridian.

Video winners are: 1st, Braxton Smith, a junior at Meridian Technical Charter High School; 2nd, Georgette Cardiel, a senior at Blackfoot High School in Blackfoot; and 3rd, Carter Spencer, a junior at Meridian Technical Charter High School.

District of Montana – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. The district offered prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500 to the top finishers in the competition.

Montana winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Trinity Holden, a freshman at Great Falls Central Catholic High School in Great Falls; 2nd, John Davies, a sophomore at Billings West High School in Billings; and 3rd, Heidi Froelich a senior at Park City High School in Park City.

Video winners are: 1st, Alexis Giles; 2nd, Coya Nack; and 3rd, Kaitlyn Bird, all seniors at Fort Benton High School in Fort Benton.

District of Nevada – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada.

Nevada winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Annasophia Laurent; 2nd, Liara Marie Santos; and 3rd, Winona Jane Caro, all seniors from Las Vegas Academy of the Arts in Las Vegas.

Video winners are: 1st, Joshua Riel, a senior at Las Vegas Academy of the Arts; 2nd, the team of Gregory Salsman, Andrew Hurtado and Justin Lee, juniors at West Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas; and 3rd, the team of Zane Mechem, Anali Macias, and Ashanti Jake, seniors at Las Vegas Academy of the Arts.

District of Northern Mariana Islands – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Northern Mariana Islands.

Northern Mariana Islands winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Olivia Hirsh, a senior at Marianas High School in Saipan; 2nd, Stephen Carino, a junior at Saipan Southern High School in Saipan; and 3rd, Giu Hur, a senior at Marianas High School.

The 1st place video winner is the team of Jae Yeon Lee, Stephen Carino, and Guillermo Faller, juniors at Saipan Southern High School. There are no 2nd and 3rd place winners.

District of Oregon – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon. Cash prizes were offered to the top finishers, who were invited to an award presentation at the Federal Bar Association Oregon Chapter's Annual Dinner.

Oregon winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Danny Luo, a sophomore at Lincoln High School in Portland; 2nd, Allison Kirkpatrick, a junior at Cleveland High School in Portland; and 3rd, Kevin Sy, a junior at International High School of Beaverton in Aloha.

Video winners are: 1st, the team of Razan Husein and Maisha Hoque, freshmen, and Zaynab Ibrahim, a sophomore, all from Oregon Islamic Academy in Tigard; 2nd, the team of Sarah Fattom, Sofia Al-Bawani, and Maymuna Muktar, juniors from Oregon Islamic Academy.

Eastern District of Washington – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington.

Eastern District of Wash. winners of the essay competition are: 1st, Ben Read, a senior at Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane; 2nd, Daniel Beeson, a senior at Mead High School in Spokane; and 3rd, Fatimah Albaqshi, a junior at Pullman High School in Pullman.

The 1st place video winners are the team of Fatimah Albaqshi and Julia Ulziisaikhan, juniors at Pullman High School. There are no 2nd or 3rd place winners.

Western District of Washington – Finalists of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington have been selected. Ranks of the finalists in the essay competition of the local contest will be announced at a later date.

Western District of Wash. finalists of the essay competition are: Benjamin Gessner, a sophomore at Emerald Ridge High School in Puyallup; Mardy Harding, a senior at Nathan Hale High School in Seattle; and Andrew Stahl, a senior at Bainbridge High School on Bainbridge Island.

The 1st place video winners are the team of David Bernado, a sophomore, and Keisuke Sano, a freshman, both from Gibson Elk High School in Issaquah.

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