



Public Information Office  
**United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Ninth Circuit Announces 2019 Civics Contest Winners**

SAN FRANCISCO – Young people from Alaska, Arizona, California and Nevada have been selected the winners of the 2019 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an educational outreach effort to high school students sponsored by the federal courts.

The theme of the 2019 contest was “The 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – What is an ‘Unreasonable Search and Seizure’ in the Digital Age?” Students were challenged to write an essay or produce a short video explaining how Congress and the federal courts have applied 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections to electronic data devices, particularly the cellphones upon which almost everyone relies.

Winners in the essay competition are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place – Natalie Fraser, a junior at West High School in Anchorage, Alaska;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Kellen Vu, a recent graduate of Arizona School for the Arts in Phoenix; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Jessica Chou, a recent graduate of Arcadia High School in Arcadia, California.

Winners in the video competition are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place – The team of Matthew Lovering, Colton Massic and Jason Mueller, recent graduates of Spanish Springs High School in Sparks, Nevada;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Raveena Lele, a sophomore at Castilleja School in Palo Alto, California; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place – The team of Jessica Chou, Maxwell Tong and Aaron Wu, recent graduates of Arcadia High School in Arcadia, California.

The winning essays and videos will be posted to the contest website, [www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest](http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest), in July.

The competition was open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private and parochial schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status in nine western states and two Pacific island jurisdictions. Approximately 1,300 young people entered the contest, which offered cash prizes, an opportunity for travel, and a chance to meet some of the nation's preeminent jurists and legal practitioners.

Federal courts in all 15 judicial districts in the Ninth Circuit held local contests with winners going on to compete in the circuit-wide competition. In all, 44 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 that many students from all parts of the Ninth Circuit submitted many outstanding essays and videos, demonstrating an understanding and the importance of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment,” 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 1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-place winners in both the essay and video competition. In addition, first-place winners along with a parent or guardian will be invited to attend the opening session of the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference.

Prize money and travel costs for the winners are funded through attorney admission fees collected by the federal courts in the Ninth Circuit to fund educational programs for the bar and community.

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

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