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United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit
Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · (415) 355-8901 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: David Madden (415) 355-8800

Visit by Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy to Bolster Civic Education Efforts

SACRAMENTO – Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the Supreme Court of the United States will visit here next week to participate in two events promoting greater public understanding of the courts and the role of the judiciary.

On Wednesday, March 6, Justice Kennedy will take part in Open Doors to Federal Courts, an annual educational program that brings hundreds of Sacramento area high school students to the Robert T. Matsui U.S. Courthouse to meet with judges and court staff and learn about the judicial system through mock trials. Justice Kennedy will observe some of the courtroom activities taking place and later conclude the program with remarks to students gathered in the courthouse rotunda.

On Thursday, March 7, Justice Kennedy will be the guest of honor at the dedication of the Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Library and Learning Center, which is housed in the Robert T. Matsui U.S. Courthouse. Civic leaders, educators and members of the legal community have been invited to the event, which is sponsored by a non-profit group formed to financially support the library and manage its future educational efforts. The highlight of the program will be the unveiling of a bust of Justice Kennedy, which was donated by a friend of the Justice and will be displayed in the library.

“We are very honored to have the Kennedy Library and Learning Center located here in the Robert T. Matsui U.S. Courthouse,” said Chief District Judge Morrison C. England, Jr., of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California. “We look forward to working with the community in making the center an important civics education resource.”

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“The Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Library and Learning Center in the Robert T. Matsui U.S. Courthouse will be a fitting tribute to one of our nation’s foremost jurists. Justice Kennedy’s profound commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law began in Sacramento, but his judicial service has touched communities throughout our country,” said Rep. Doris Matsui of California’s Sixth Congressional District, the widow of the late Rep. Robert T. Matsui. “This learning center will open the doors of the federal courthouse and be a place where students, families, and all visitors can learn more about how each of us can form a more perfect union.”

The Sacramento Federal Judicial Library and Learning Center Foundation will oversee the new facilities, which are privately funded except for the space provided in the Robert T. Matsui U.S. Courthouse. The foundation was formed in 2012 to promote the public's understanding of the importance of an independent judiciary, the rule of law in American society, and the rich history of the federal courts. Contributions to the foundation are tax deductible, said Mac Goldsberry, a Sacramento attorney and president of the foundation.

“The Kennedy Library and Learning Center will ultimately house exhibits addressing all of these subjects in ways that can be equally well understood by children and adults,” Goldsberry said. “It will provide elementary and secondary school teachers with all of the tools they need to ensure that their students are able to appreciate the role of an independent federal judiciary in our democracy.”

Open Doors to Federal Courts, the federal judiciary's signature community outreach program, supports national social studies standards and is part of a long-term commitment by the federal courts to share in the civic education of high school students. The program consists of a civil mock trial with students playing the roles of judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, and witnesses. There are several breakout groups for jury deliberation, facilitated by volunteer attorneys, which allows all students to participate.

Nearly 600 students from nine high schools are expected for this year's Open Doors event. Participating are Kennedy, Luther Burbank, McClatchy, Rio Americano and Grant high schools in Sacramento; Rio Linda High School; Folsom High School; Vacaville Christian High School; and Almondale Academy in Orangeville. Justice Kennedy and Judge England are McClatchy High School alumni.

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