



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Ninth Circuit Civics Contest Focuses on Legal Legacy of the Japanese Internment

SAN FRANCISCO – A civics contest organized by the federal courts of the western United States offers high school students a chance to win cash prizes while learning more about constitutional conflicts that arose during one of the most momentous periods in our nation’s history.

The 2017 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is an essay and video competition open to young people in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington, along with the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Students in grades 9-12 in public, private and parochial schools or home-schooled students of equivalent grade status may enter. Individual students can compete in the essay contest, while individuals and teams of up to three students can enter the video contest. Complete information is available at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

The contest theme, “Not to Be Forgotten: Legal Lessons of the Japanese Internment,” relates to events occurring in 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Presidential directives authorizing the military to take steps to guard against enemy sabotage or espionage on the West Coast led to the forced relocation of some 100,000 persons of Japanese descent, many of them U.S. citizens. Students are advised to consider U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 1943 and 1944, which generally upheld the internment policy, along with lower court decisions in the 1980s, which resulted in exoneration for two Japanese-American men who had resisted relocation. The cases bring into focus the constitutional conflicts that can arise when national security and individual rights are both at stake. In studying the Japanese internment, students are asked to consider its relevance today as our nation seeks to protect against terrorism on American soil.

The contest is organized by the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for the federal judiciary in the western states. Federal courts in the 15 judicial districts that make up the Ninth Circuit 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 competitions. Winners will be announced in June.

“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 principles of our democracy.”

For more information about the contest, please contact the Ninth Circuit Office of the Circuit Executive, (415) 355-8973 / civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov.

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