

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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472 New American Citizens Take Oath at Auditorium Theater

CHICAGO, Ill. – Today at the Auditorium Theater, 472 individuals from 82 countries were sworn in as U.S. citizens. In a first-of-its-kind naturalization ceremony, the Auditorium Theater, “the Theater for the People,” hosted the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the new citizens, and their families.

“On behalf of the Court, I extend my deepest congratulations to the new citizens sworn in today,” said Chief Judge Pallmeyer.

“We are delighted to welcome and celebrate our community’s newest citizens in such an iconic venue as the Auditorium Theater. This “Theater for the People” has hosted some of America’s greatest treasures including FDR, Booker T. Washington, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Aretha Franklin, and today 472 new citizens from throughout the globe, all of whom have made our nation more vibrant.”

Judge Pallmeyer; Illinois Governor JB Pritzker; and Congresswoman Robin Kelly all welcomed the new citizens. Judge Matthew Kennelly administered the Oath of Allegiance.

Every year thousands of immigrants visit the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois to be sworn in as U.S. citizens at naturalization ceremonies. The district’s judges preside over these ceremonies, which take place in both of the district’s courthouses and throughout the district. Family and friends gather to watch as new citizens take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States, a sworn declaration that every citizenship applicant must recite during a formal ceremony in order to become a naturalized American citizen. When taking the Oath, the new citizen promises to support and defend the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the U.S.

Today’s ceremony was the largest ceremony ever administered by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court has conducted naturalization ceremonies outdoors, in large public spaces that allow for distancing, and has had to limit the number of citizens at each courthouse ceremony to allow for social distancing and to comply with health guidelines.

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