

## Court Information Release



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

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### **73 New Citizens Sworn in at Cantigny Park for Veterans Day Naturalization Ceremony**

Wheaton, Ill. – On November 13, 2023, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois hosted a naturalization ceremony at Cantigny Park. 73 candidates from 32 countries were sworn in as new U.S. citizens.

“We are so pleased to celebrate our nation’s newest citizens in the beautiful setting of Cantigny Park, a perfect backdrop for this special Veterans Day celebration,” said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

“Yesterday was an example of just how powerful hope can be, as our newest American citizens make their contributions to writing America's history,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "It is our collective purpose that will put us on the road to a stronger democracy, and these United States of America makes room for us all."

Lieutenant Governor of Illinois Juliana Stratton and Matt LaFond, Executive Director of Cantigny Park, welcomed the new citizens. U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin administered the Oath of Allegiance. Kevin Riddle, Chicago Field Office Director for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, congratulated the new citizens.

Marmion Academy students conducted a colors ceremony, and the Chicago Brass Band provided music.

U.S. service members, veterans and their families may be eligible for certain immigration benefits in recognition of their important sacrifices. Specifically, veterans and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces and recently discharged service members may be eligible to become U.S. citizens through naturalization under special provisions of the Immigration and Nationality

Act. Since 2002, USCIS has naturalized more than 170,000 members of the U.S. military, both at home and abroad. In FY 2023, more than 12,100 service members were naturalized.

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.

Cantigny is the 500-acre estate of Colonel Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955), long-time editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune, and founder of the Chicago-based Robert R. McCormick Foundation. Cantigny houses, among its many amenities, a museum dedicated to the 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army.

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Above photos courtesy of U.S.C.I.S.

