

Court Information Release



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

Release Date:

July 14, 2021

Contact: Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer

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the Northern District of Illinois
219 S. Dearborn St., #2514A
Chicago, IL 60604
312-435-5693

Roszkowski Courthouse Hosts First Naturalization Ceremonies Since Pandemic Began

Rockford, Ill. – Today for the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois conducted naturalization ceremonies at the Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse. District Judge Iain D. Johnston presided over two ceremonies, swearing in 40 new citizens of the United States.

“The Court is honored to conduct these ceremonies in a setting more convenient to those new citizens who reside in the Western Division of our district. We welcome them and celebrate with them as they take this final step in the process of becoming citizens of this nation,” said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

Twenty new citizens from 11 countries were sworn in during the morning ceremony, and 20 new citizens from 12 countries took the oath in the afternoon ceremony.

The Court has not hosted naturalization ceremonies at the Roszkowski Courthouse since before early in 2020. Until today, citizenship candidates from throughout the district had to travel to Chicago to be sworn in during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ceremony took place in a courtroom in the Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse. The candidates were socially distanced. Face masks are required throughout the courthouse.

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 have normally taken place in both of the district’s courthouses and at other venues throughout the district.

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 United States.

COVID-19 prevented the Court from proceeding with naturalization ceremonies from April through July 2020. However, since that time, the Court has conducted more than 418 socially-distanced naturalization ceremonies in various court spaces in Chicago, including outside the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Quincy Court, and naturalized more than 13,403 new citizens.

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