



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

Release Date:
March 1, 2019

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Northern District of Illinois Kicks Off Bicentennial Anniversary with Two Special Events

Chicago, Ill. - On March 1, 2019, the U.S. District for the Northern District of Illinois kicked off the celebration of the Bicentennial Anniversary of Federal Courts in Illinois with two events -- a morning ceremony at Dirksen U.S. Courthouse and a bicentennial program and reception at Harold Washington Library Center in the afternoon.

"Our federal court, the Court at the Heart of America, has indelibly shaped our district and nation. It is where systems of patronage have been dismantled, where discriminatory practices in the workplace and government have been challenged, and where major criminal enterprises have been taken down. On this bicentennial anniversary of federal courts in Illinois, we find inspiration and hope knowing that in our federal court everyday people can pursue the sacred ideals set forth in our constitution," said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo.

At the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse on the morning of March 1, Chief Judge Castillo offered celebratory remarks and, alongside his colleagues from the bench, presented a special Bicentennial Cheesecake, created by Chicago-based Eli's Cheesecake, to the court community and courthouse public. District Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, chair of the 200th Anniversary Committee, offered remarks and unveiled an original oil painting of the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse, painted and donated by District Judge Ronald A. Guzman in honor of the court's bicentennial.

Later in the day, Chief Judge Castillo and Emmy Award and Edward R. Murrow Award-winning journalist Phil Rogers reflected on the court's 200 years in a program at the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium of the Harold Washington Library Center. U.S. Senator Dick Durbin received special recognition for his steadfast role in support of the federal judiciary.

The celebration also included a performance by the Chicago Children's Choir and highlights from a new inspirational documentary film exploring the places, cases, and people that have shaped the court and the community. Special guests included current and former members of the court's bench; judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh

Circuit, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, and the Illinois Supreme Court; the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois and several former U.S. Attorneys; the Director of the Federal Defender Program; the U.S. Trustee for the Northern District of Illinois; the Cook County State's Attorney; deans of Illinois law schools; and the officers of the Northern District of Illinois Court Historical Association.

Symposium, speakers, and other events are scheduled throughout the year to celebrate the court's 200th anniversary and can be found at www.ilnd.uscourts.gov.

On March 3, 1819, the Fifteenth Congress enacted a statute establishing the federal district of Illinois, and President James Monroe nominated Nathaniel Pope as the district's first judicial officer. Judge Pope was confirmed by the U.S. Senate the very same day.

Illinois federal court is where a young Abraham Lincoln argued that trains - not steamships - were America's future. Chicago is where Al Capone met his downfall, and the Mafia's "family secrets" were disclosed. "Days of Rage" played out in the Chicago Conspiracy trial - where Abbie Hoffman butted heads with Judge Julius Hoffman and Bobby Seale was bound and gagged. Illinois federal court is where thousands of individuals have taken the oath to become U.S. citizens; where everyday people pursue the ideals enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; and where dramas, big and small, play out every day.



Chief Judge Castillo and members of the court's bench in front of the Bicentennial Cheesecake.
Photo by Ralph Greenslade.



Chief Judge Castillo shares a photo of Judge Nathaniel Pope, the court's first judge. Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer poses with Judge Ronald A. Guzman and the portrait of the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse he painted in honor of the court's 200th Anniversary.
Photos by Ralph Greenslade.



Chief Judge Castillo and District Judge Pallmeyer cut into the biccennial cheesecake. Chief Judge Castillo serves slices of cheesecake to members of the public attending the Bicentennial Ceremony.
Photos by Ralph Greenslade.



The Chicago Children's Choir. District Judge Sharon Johnson Coleman.
Photos by Jim Slonoff.



Chief Judge Rubén Castillo. District Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer.
Photos by Jim Slonoff.



U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. Edward R. Murrow-Award-winning journalist Phil Rogers.
Photos by Jim Slonoff.



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