



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Judge Kaufman speaks at naturalization ceremony

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CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Thirteenth Judicial Circuit (Kanawha County) Judge Tod Kaufman congratulated 61 new American citizens at a naturalization ceremony Thursday, Sept. 17, in the Robert C. Byrd United States Courthouse in Charleston.

The ceremony was held on Constitution Day, the 228th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787. The standing room-only crowd in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Joseph R. Goodwin pledged their allegiance to the flag and sang the National Anthem, and marked the new Americans' induction as West Virginia citizens by singing "Country Roads."

"We honor today, America's Constitution Day, in no better way than by remembering the blessings of a free nation and free people, and we celebrate it by a new growth of ideas represented by your energy and citizenship," Judge Kaufman said during his keynote address.

Judge Kaufman and Judge Goodwin encouraged everyone to register to vote and to welcome any opportunity to serve on a jury.

"The independence of our court system, protecting individual rights, is strong; and our trial by jury system remains the desire of all countries who wish to be democracies in the free world and to have independent courts," Judge Kaufman said.

He talked about the rights Americans have, including freedom of the press, and the struggles, like discrimination.

"We know the moral imperative of a civilized society to provide for our sick and injured and elderly, regardless of how much money we have. We struggle with immigration issues – hopefully inclusively – and we condemn the violence with guns throughout society," Judge Kaufman said.

"There are very few venues in American society like our public schools, where people must encounter people who are different in terms of race, religion, and economic circumstances," Judge Kaufman said. "Our public schools are one venue in which Americans have an opportunity to learn about each other and to learn tolerance.

"All of us, and all of you, have much to be proud of today."

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