



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
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CONSTITUTION DAY CEREMONY

The judges of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit in partnership with the Lake County Bar Association and the Lake County Bar Foundation celebrated the 230th Anniversary of the United States Constitution with a ceremony held on September 18, 2017. The ceremony was attended by a crowd of lawyers, judges, students, and citizens, who were given pocket-size copies of the supreme law of the United States. Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz explained: "We honor Constitution Day at the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit because we think it is important to come together as a community and celebrate the principles and freedoms that our Constitution stands for."

High school students from the Government class at Waukegan's Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep led the ceremony with the Pledge of Allegiance. Jeffrey Berman, President of the Lake County Bar Foundation, which contributed the pocket-size founding documents, delivered remarks. Associate Judge Luis Berrones regaled the audience with some little-known facts about the Constitution. Chief Judge Ortiz reminded the audience, "In a democratic and diverse society such as ours, what must tie us together as Americans are our shared values. At the heart of these values and our system of government is the United States Constitution.... As we celebrate and appreciate our Constitution, I want to also thank and salute all those who have dedicated their lives to upholding it."

Jennifer Howe, President of the Lake County Bar Association, an 800-member professional organization of local lawyers, introduced a special Constitution Day video produced by the Association. The video depicted interviews about freedom with diverse locals, including business owners and Chief Judge Ortiz. "Freedom can mean different things to different people. The Bar Association is proud of our film. These interviews captured the spirit of America and demonstrate the great appreciation our citizens and immigrants have for our Constitution and the many freedoms it affords us," commented Ms. Howe. At the conclusion of the formal part of the gathering, Associate Judge Charles Johnson along with the students from Cristo Rey gave a moving rendition of *God Bless America*, accompanied by Steven Rice, Secretary of the Lake County Bar Association, on the guitar.

Constitution Day is observed annually on September 17th in the United States and commemorates the September 17, 1787 signing of the United States Constitution by 39 delegates on the last day of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. For more information, go to www.constitutionday.com

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