



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

Federal Courts Sponsor Civics Contest

ANCHORAGE – A civics contest organized by federal courts in the western United States offers Alaska high school students a chance to win cash prizes while learning about their constitutional rights.

“50 Years After the Miranda Decision: How Federal Courts Defined the Rights of the Accused” is an essay and video competition open to sophomores, juniors and seniors in public, private and parochial schools or to home-schooled students of equivalent status. Individual students can compete in the essay contest, while individuals and teams of up to three students can enter the video contest. Complete information is available at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

The contest is sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska and the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions. The district court is holding a local contest with prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 for the top three finishers in both the writing and video competitions. Local winners go on to compete in the Ninth Circuit contest, which offers prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500 to the top three finishers in each category. Circuit winners will be announced in June.

The contest celebrates the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miranda v. Arizona in which the court ruled that someone taken into police custody must be informed – prior to questioning – of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Students will consider how “Miranda Rights” came to be defined and how they are safeguarded by the federal courts.

“This competition provides students with the opportunity to learn, to think, and to express themselves about a vitally important part of our history,” said U.S. District Judge Ralph Beistline of Anchorage, who serves on the Courts and Community Committee. “It will hopefully make them better citizens and encourage them to be active participants in our democracy and in protecting the rights of all Americans.”

For more information about the district contest, please contact Ruth Tronnes at (907) 677-6210 / Ruth_Tronnes@akd.uscourts.gov.

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