



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Civics Contest Winners Announced

SAN FRANCISCO – Arizona, California, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington state high school students win top prizes in 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest. Ten students will share a total of \$11,400, and first-place winners, along with a parent/guardian, are invited to attend the 2024 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference.

Winners of the essay competition who will receive cash prizes are:

First place—Colin Williams (\$3,000), Charles A. Sprague High School, Salem, Oregon

Second place—Natalie Amir-Lobel (\$1,700), La Jolla Country Day, San Diego, California

Third place—Klara Hulick (\$1,000), Hanford High School, Richland, Washington

Winners of the video competition who will receive cash prizes are:

First place—The team of Vivan Patel, Mihir Sahani and Aayush Shah (total of \$3,000), BASIS Chandler, Chandler, Arizona

Second place—The team of Vanessa Lei, Joan Li and Hannah Vuong (total of \$1,700), West Career and Technical Academy, Las Vegas, Nevada

Third place—Trinity Nicholson (\$1,000), Foothills Christian Community School, Great Falls, Montana

“Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest! Every student who participated offered a meaningful perspective on this year’s theme of “70 Years Later—The Legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*,” said Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary H. Murguia.

“I am so grateful to all who took the time to reflect on this important case, whose impact we still feel today. *Brown v. Board of Education* is an example of the law’s influence on education—and particularly equitable, non-discriminatory education—and I am delighted that this year’s contest gave us all an opportunity to celebrate it,” Judge Murguia noted.

The contest theme, “70 Years Later—The Legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*,” challenged students to write an essay or produce a video to address the theme and discuss what impact they think the *Brown* decision has had on the law and our society and why.

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The Ninth Circuit received a total of 737 essays and 88 videos from students who competed at the local contests held by judicial districts throughout the Ninth Circuit. Of the total, 45 essays and 31 videos advanced to the Ninth Circuit for consideration. Twelve essays and 10 videos were selected for final consideration by PICO members, judges and court unit executives.

Essay finalists who made it to the top 12 for final consideration are: Akshita Khanna, BASIS Phoenix, Arizona; Michael Isayan, North Hollywood High School, California; Karthik Subramanian, American High School, Fremont, California; Daniel Palacios and Raine Wen, Mt. Carmel High School, San Diego; Colbie Bell, 'Iolani High School, Honolulu; Peter Vahsen, Kaiser High School, Honolulu; Addison Branen and Max Pieper, Moscow High School, Idaho.

Video finalists who made it to the top 10 for final consideration are: Anthony Baltazar, Desert Ridge High School, Mesa, Arizona; Katelyn Cheng, Trinity Pacific Christian School, Westlake Village, California; Team of Jayden Mendoza, Chidike Nwankwo and Chidinma Ojinmah, Norte Vista High School, Riverside, California; Julia Karsner, Castilleja School, Palo Alto, California; Teah Simon, 'Iolani High School, Honolulu; Grace Li, West Career and Technical Academy, Las Vegas; and Team of Luke Blue and Eleanor Weitz, Mt. Spokane High School, Mead, Washington.

Winning essays and videos will be posted on the civics contest website <https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/> in July.

The competition was open to high school-age students who reside within the geographic area of the circuit. Prizes and contest-related expenditures are funded through attorney admission fees collected by the federal courts in the Ninth Circuit to fund educational programs for the bar and community.

PICO was established in 2000 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, the governing body for federal district and bankruptcy courts in nine western states and two Pacific island jurisdictions. The committee seeks to promote public understanding of and confidence in the judicial system through civics education and outreach to the community and media.

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