



District Court of Guam

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DISTRICT COURT OF GUAM NATURALIZATION CEREMONY **Court Celebrates Constitution Day and Citizenship Day**

On Friday, September 16, 2016, at 9:00 a.m., Tiyan High School will proudly host a special Naturalization Ceremony in celebration of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. The commemoration honors both the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787 and what began in 1940 as "I am an American Day."

The District Court of Guam, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Guam Department of Education, will welcome 34 new American citizens who hail from the countries of Columbia, Italy, Papua New Guinea, People's Republic of China, Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony is Ms. Minakshi V. Hemlani, a first-generation immigrant, and an attorney licensed to practice law in Guam and California. Born in India, Ms. Hemlani's family moved to Guam when she was very young and she now considers Guam her home. After graduating from law school, Ms. Hemlani worked for both the public and private sectors, as a law clerk for the Guam judiciary, a criminal defense attorney at the Alternate Public Defender's office where she represented indigent criminal defendants, and now owns her own private law firm.

George Washington High School Color Guard will open the ceremony; Tiyan High School music students will be singing the National Anthem and the Guam Hymn, and an honor student will lead the Preamble. A naturalized student will recite a short keynote address. Singing "America the Beautiful" to close the ceremony will be Music Director, Mr. Michael M. Kilayko, a professionally trained and well-known Guam musician.

An Educational Outreach Program was held this week in partnership with the District Court of Guam and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services where staff taught Naturalization 101 to all the students of Tiyan High School. A Citizenship Outreach Program will be held immediately following the ceremony, where new citizens will meet representatives from the Guam Passport Office and the Guam Election Commission for assistance in applying for a United States passport and registering to vote on Guam.

"This ceremony is a historical event not only for our newest citizens, but also for our court and for our island. It is the first naturalization ceremony to be held at a school on Guam – 1338 of our high school students will witness the new citizens take the Oath of Citizenship and will walk away with a real-life lesson in civic engagement. It is an honor to be a part of this great learning opportunity for our students as Guam joins the rest of the nation in celebrating Constitution Day and Citizenship Day," remarked Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood