

News Release



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Hudson Vicinage Celebrates Free Speech, Free Press, and a Free Society on Law Day 2019

Judges, attorneys, dignitaries, and students from Hudson County will gather at noon in the rotunda of the historic William Brennan Courthouse, 583 Newark Ave., Jersey City on Wednesday, May 1 to celebrate Law Day.

The event, co-sponsored by the Hudson Vicinage, the state of New Jersey and the Hudson County Bar Association & Foundation, will commemorate the theme “Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society.”

A highlight of this year’s ceremony will be the three keynote addresses given by Madeline Lozano, an author and junior at North Bergen High School; Gianna Giocoli, a sophomore poet from Bayonne High School; and Daniel Cruz, a sixth-grade rap artist from McKinley Elementary School in North Bergen. Each student’s presentation and original work on the First Amendment emphasizes the importance of this fundamental right to the nation, state, and individual.

John Wefing, author and distinguished law professor at Seton Hall Law School, will receive the 2019 Liberty Bell Award for his service to the legal profession and for his efforts to strengthen the system of justice within the county and the state.

The Hudson County Law Day Committee sponsored a number of contests earlier this year for elementary, middle and high school students to share their ideas and insights through essays, poems, rap, and art presentations on a common topic: “Free Speech, Helpful or Hurtful?”

A record number of countywide fourth-grade students participated in a mini mock trial in which students served as jurors, judges, witnesses and attorneys in a fictional case of a missing dog. High school students from throughout the county participated in the annual Vincent J. Apruzzese High School Mock Trial Competition and argued a fictional civil case involving a roller coaster accident. Members of the vicinage's judiciary will present awards to the winners of all of these contests during the festivities.

“Our Law Day celebration is certainly one of the high points of the court year”, said Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. “This year, we continue our effort to make relevant our system of law and fundamental rights to our younger citizens. The depth of thought and creativity shown by the students in all of the contests was extraordinary. They are the future of our democracy and we are very happy and proud that they are a central part this year's ceremony.”

President Dwight D. Eisenhower established Law Day in 1958 as a “day of national dedication to the principals of government and law.”

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