

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

In the Matter of the
Naturalization and Granting of
United States Citizenship to:

Casper, Wyoming
January 10, 2022
3:43 p.m.

ALONA LOS BANOS FERGUSON, YUMIKO
KUMAYAMA PETREY, RENELYN TAMAYO
MOORE, JACKAPONG CHERACHAT,
ARMANDO HOLGUIN PORTILLO,
ALEXANDRINA MOISUC, DANIEL
MOISUC-HOJDA, MEI CHU YANG, JOSE
LUIS ROSALES-CASTANEDA, LUZ
IMELDA CISNEROS, DEBBY SORAYA
DEWI-SIMPSON, MATTHEW EDWARD
HOLLINGSWORTH, NELIDA IBETH
CORONADO, ANTONIO RIBEIRO DE
JESUS, JANDIRA ROCHA DE JESUS,
MARIA KRISTINA LOUISE DAVIDSSON,

Ewing T. Kerr
Federal Courthouse

Petitioners.

TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING ON PETITIONS FOR
UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

For the Government: DAVID KUBICHEK
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*Proceedings recorded by stenography; transcript produced by
computer-aided transcription.*

(Proceedings commenced at 3:43 p.m., January 10, 2022.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.
The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming is now in session. The Honorable Scott W. Skavdahl presiding. God save the United States and this honorable court.

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the United States Courthouse, the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse. The Court will suspend all rules on cameras and recording devices.

It is a tradition at the beginning of these naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in defending what so many seek, the freedom and benefits of becoming a United States citizen.

As of this morning, 7,074 American men and women have been killed in action involved in military operations in the Middle East. In addition, 53,323 United States military personnel have been wounded in action during these military operations.

Let us take a moment of silence and recognize those American heroes and their families whose sacrifice cannot be measured and whose loss will never be recovered.

(Moment of silence.)

THE COURT: Thank you. The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming is in special session for

the naturalization of foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with great pride and privilege that I am able to conduct today's ceremony naturalizing 16 new United States citizens from ten different countries around the world.

The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including Judges Johnson and Freudenthal, extend their congratulations to you and your family and friends.

At this time, I would ask the Deputy Clerk of Court to make a roll call of prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship, and if you could please raise your hand and let us know and verify you're here today.

Ms. Blonigen?

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Alona Los Banos Ferguson.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Yumiko Kumayama Petrey.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Renelyn Tamayo Moore.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Jackapong Cherachat.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Armando Holguin Portillo.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Alexandrina Moisuc.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Daniel Moisuc Hojda.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Mei Chu Yang.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Jose Luis Rosales-Castaneda.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Luz Imelda Cisneros.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Debby Soraya Dewi-Simpson.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Matthew Edward Hollingsworth.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Nelida Ibeth Coronado.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Antonio Ribeiro De Jesus.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Jandira Rocha De Jesus.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Maria Kristina Louise
Davidsson.

(Petitioner raised hand.)

THE COURT: Good afternoon. Let me ask at this time -- one of the most fundamental acts we do as citizens is pledge our allegiance to the flag and the United States. And at this time, I believe there are some young individuals that are going to come forward and help us with that Pledge of

Allegiance. If you could come forward, please.

Please stand.

(Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

THE COURT: Thank you. And if you'd please remain standing for the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

(Playing "The Star-Spangled Banner.")

THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. At this time, I would ask the Clerk of Court to play the President's video.

(The President's message played.)

THE COURT: At this time, the Court would recognize Mr. David Kubichek, Assistant United States Attorney, on behalf of the Attorney General of the United States, Merrick Garland.

Mr. Kubichek.

MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. May it please the Court.

THE COURT: Counsel.

MR. KUBICHEK: Before the Court today are individuals here for a hearing on their Petitions for Naturalization. Each of these prospective citizens has successfully completed all of the steps necessary for eligibility for United States citizenship. Moreover, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service has completed its processes with respect to each of these individuals, including the necessary

background investigations.

Having successfully negotiated all of these hurdles, we are advised that each of them is well qualified to be admitted to citizenship.

Therefore, Your Honor, the United States hereby moves the Court to admit each of these individuals to United States citizenship upon their taking of the required oath.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek. And on the petition of the United States, the Court finds that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal requirements to become citizens of the United States and will therefore grant the petition and enter the order allowing these petitioners to become new United States citizens after taking their oath which, as soon as I finish signing, I will administer. I don't want to forget this.

Now, if I could have you stand and raise your right hand.

I'm going to take this off so that I can speak.

And any of those of you who wish to relocate to take a picture, you're welcome to do so.

I, state your name --

THE PETITIONERS: I, (stating names) --

THE COURT: -- hereby declare on oath --

THE PETITIONERS: -- hereby declare on oath --

THE COURT: -- that I absolutely and entirely --

THE PETITIONERS: -- that I absolutely and
entirely --

THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

THE PETITIONERS: -- renounce and abjure --

THE COURT: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

THE PETITIONERS: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince or potentate --

THE PETITIONERS: -- to any foreign prince or
potentate --

THE COURT: -- state or sovereignty --

THE PETITIONERS: -- state or sovereignty --

THE COURT: -- of whom or which --

THE PETITIONERS: -- of whom or which --

THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --

THE PETITIONERS: -- I have heretofore been --

THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen.

THE PETITIONERS: -- a subject or citizen.

THE COURT: That I will support and defend --

THE PETITIONERS: That I will support and defend --

THE COURT: -- the constitution and laws --

THE PETITIONERS: -- the constitution and laws --

THE COURT: -- of the United States of America --

THE PETITIONERS: -- of the United States of
America --

THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

THE PETITIONERS: -- against all enemies --

THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic.

THE PETITIONERS: -- foreign and domestic.

THE COURT: That I will bear true faith --

THE PETITIONERS: That I will bear true faith --

THE COURT: -- and allegiance to the same.

THE PETITIONERS: -- and allegiance to the same.

THE COURT: That I will bear arms --

THE PETITIONERS: That I will bear arms --

THE COURT: -- on behalf of the United States --

THE PETITIONERS: -- on behalf of the United
States --

THE COURT: -- when required by law to do so.

THE PETITIONERS: -- when required by law to do so.

THE COURT: I take these obligations freely --

THE PETITIONERS: I take this obligation freely --

THE COURT: -- without any mental reservation --

THE PETITIONERS: -- without any mental
reservation --

THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion.

THE PETITIONERS: -- or purpose of evasion.

THE COURT: So help me God.

THE PETITIONERS: So help me God.

THE COURT: Congratulations. Please join me in

welcoming our newest citizens.

(Cheers and applause.)

THE COURT: You may be seated. I believe the Clerk of Court has your certificates, and we'll go ahead and distribute those at this time.

(Distribution of certificates.)

THE COURT: Normally, I'd give you a handshake, but given Omicron and everything else, we'll waive that for now.

Let me first ask, if we could, each of you should have a microphone. We're going to clean that -- okay. If I could just have you introduce yourself and any friends or family that you have with you here today and want to recognize, and just tell us one thing that makes you excited about today.

We'll start with Ms. Banos Ferguson.

MS. BANOS FERGUSON: Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Alona Los Banos Ferguson. I'm so happy and so blessed that I'm already now a U.S. citizen, and I'm so thankful also to my husband. Very supportive to me until the end. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. KUMAYAMA PETREY: My name' Yumiko Kumayama Petrey, and I'm from Japan. And this -- this occasion got me to study and read the Constitution of the United States. I

should have sooner, but I totally believe in it. And I love America because I love the constitution. And I'll do -- do my best to be a good citizen to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and I'm so excited about that. So thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

MS. TAMAYO MOORE: Hello, guys. My name is Renelyn -- oh, Moore, now. I'm from the Philippines. And I'm just happy today because it's been ten years, and then now I'm a citizen. I'm just thankful to my boyfriend and my son. And soon, I'm going to have another one. So -- that's it. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MR. CHERACHAT: Hi. My name is Jackapong Cherachat. I am here with my wife and my two boys. So they support me, like, you know, today and then -- I have no words to say. Just priceless. So thank you guys.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MR. HOLGUIN: Hello. My name is Armando Holguin. I'm very happy to be a citizen finally. Just want to be helpful to this country and just get better every day. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. MOISUC: Hi. My name is Alexandrina Moisuc. I'm happy that I'm here and that I was able to do this whole journey with my husband here. So we're kind of hoping our kids are going to have a better life here. Let's put it that way. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MR. HOJDA: Hello. My name is Daniel Moisuc Hojda. I'm from Romania. And I'm happy because I'm a new citizen of the United States, and I'm happy because I will start a new life here in United States. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. YANG: My name is Mei Chu Yang. I was born and raised in Taiwan. I'm so happy today that -- I have twice been called -- been yelled to me saying, "Go back to China." So now I don't have to say -- you know. I have my husband and three beautiful kids here. We have been in Casper for ten years. And they're out of school, and they're not here with me, but I'm so proud of myself. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

MR. ROSALES-CASTANEDA: Good evening. My name is Jose Luis Rosales-Castaneda. I'm from Mexico. I'm here with my wife, my kids, and I'm really happy and excited. It's been a long time, process, and I'm very grateful for this

achievement we have. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. CISNEROS: My name is Luz Cisneros, and I'm so excited today for my new certificate. Thank you, United States, for adopting me.

THE COURT: Thank you for wanting us to. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMPSON: My name is Debby Simpson. I'm from Indonesia. I just want to give big thanks to my big supporter. I did it, baby. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: My name's Matt Hollingsworth. I'm from Canada. I'm just so excited to be here. I wish my wife could be here, but she's at home with the kids. She's the one that pushed me to finally get it. So . . .

THE COURT: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. JOVELL: My name is Nelida Jovell (phonetic). I'm from Mexico, and I'm so happy to be here and be part of this beautiful country.

THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MR. DE JESUS: My name is Antonio Ribeiro De Jesus. I'm from Brazil. I've lived here in Casper for five years with my beautiful wife. And my daughter, she's living in Glen Rock with her kids. And I am grateful to live in this -- and receive this certificate for citizenship. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. DE JESUS: I'm Jandira. I'm from Brazil. I'm Tony's wife. And we have here our daughter, Larissa (phonetic), who was the one who helped us a lot with all this stuff and all the support she gave to us. It was a long process, but we made it. We are very happy for all you achieve, and we are ready to start a new chapter in our life. And I would like to thank you for you all having us, and that's it. Thank you.

THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIDSSON: Hi. My name is Maria Davidsson, and I want to thank my parents back in Sweden. I know they are very proud of me today and also my husband and my two beautiful children. Sorry.

THE COURT: It's all right.

MS. DAVIDSSON: We live in Jackson, and we love Jackson, and we love Wyoming and the United States. And today is, as you can see, a very emotional and happy day and just

thank you, everyone.

THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

(Applause.)

THE COURT: I am told that you have been presented letters from Wyoming's Congressional Delegation, and those letters should have various information and contact information to contact Senator Barrasso, Senator Lummis, and Representative Cheney's office.

They are the individuals that represent us as citizens in Congress, and they are the individuals that you now have the obligation to express your concerns and your thoughts to as a citizen of the United States. So please do that. Understand that they represent you now, and we all need to make sure that we communicate and participate.

I'd also like to recognize Ms. Fitzgerald, who is here today with us from the Naturalization Service. But for Ms. Fitzgerald and her office processing the various paperwork and guiding you through that process, your ability to be here and take an oath today would not have happened. So my thank you to Ms. Fitzgerald for coming up here and for all the assistance.

If you need any communication or have any concerns as to paperwork, please don't hesitate to contact her office so that you can make sure that's taken care of.

I would, at this point in time, recognize

Mr. Kubichek for some remarks on behalf of the Attorney General of the United States. Mr. Kubichek.

MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor.

Boy, you're a mighty fine looking bunch of new citizens. As the President said in his remarks, you all flatter us to want to be citizens of this country and to want it bad enough to go through the journey that each of you has experienced to get here today. Most of us in this room -- well, at least lots of us, because you guys almost represent a majority today. Ordinarily, we have a full house, and we have veterans organizations, a whole lot of people. But this pandemic gets in the way of a lot of things, and hopefully, we'll get back to that.

But you know, most of us that you see out on the streets, we didn't do this. We didn't have to take tests and study the constitution. We're all high on our constitutional rights, you know. We all have them, and we're all excited about, damn it, that's mine. That's my right under the constitution. Most us haven't read it. So . . .

I've read it. I've been studying it for close to 50 years now, I'm sad to say. But it's a document organized with the idea of just what the President said, organizing our government, of course. Conferring upon us certain liberties that are our Founders thought were inherent in the rise of man and should be recognized universally. They're not, of course.

We know that. Some of us come from places where that would be the exception, not the rule.

But you all are here, and what we offer more than any other sort of guarantee is, as the President said, we offer possibility and opportunity. You know, there are no guaranteed outcomes in life. I wish there were, but there aren't. But the one thing we pride ourselves on here is that if you work hard and you play by the rules, you at least have an opportunity to do well and to succeed. And I still think that's true.

It's not always easy, but your being here today wasn't easy. You know, you come from places where it's pretty hard. But what we offer you is an opportunity to take your talents and your abilities and to make the most of your lives for you and for your families and your children and that you'll raise them to be good citizens, as well, because they're our future. You are, and they are.

Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address, talked about, you know, the fact that none of this is guaranteed, you know. We are 200 and several years into this experiment in government and in organizing a country based on -- not on the notion that we're a homogeneous set of people with the same background racially or religiously or any of that. We don't have that here.

We are from all the heck over the place with a

zillion different belief systems and understandings about -- about religion or non-religion or ways of life or all of that. The one single thing that binds us together and upon which our success depends is our common shared belief in each other and in the system that allows us to have the opportunities we have, a system of Government where everyone is treated equally -- as equally as possible.

And that's what we depend on. And as Lincoln said at Gettysburg, it's an experiment. There are no guarantees. It requires each of us to invest in those ideas every single day.

So there are obligations to this event today as well as rights and liberties and all of that. Obligations to participate, as Judge Skavdahl said. Now you have not only a right but an obligation to speak up. You can write to your Congress people. You can also talk to your city council person, you know. Those people, you know, are equally important. They probably have more of an impact on our lives, you know.

But participate, because we need you to participate. We need you to vote. We need you to be active in your schools and those kinds of things for your kids. Those are the things that make us better. And -- and try every day, if you can, to do some little thing to make the world better, whether it's picking up a piece of trash blowing across the parking lot that you happen to see and putting it in a trash receptacle or

helping somebody cross the street or -- little things reinforce the bond that we have as citizens, because we all have a common -- we aren't all going to have the same ideas about stuff, the same views about politics or religion or any of that because we're all different individuals, and we come from different places.

But for this to keep working, we all have to at least be tolerant of our fellow citizens' perhaps different ideas. And if we don't agree with them, okay. But we at least have to recognize that they have the same rights to hold their views as we do ours, and there's nothing that's inherently better than the other.

So thank you for this investment of your time and your belief in us. We are better for this today, and we have full confidence that you, as new citizens, will raise your children and your families to understand and believe in those things that make this a special place and pass that along and -- you know, if you do that and abide your oath today as best you can, we'll be a better country. We're already better because you picked us.

So thank you. Congratulations, and we're proud of you and your accomplishment. We're grateful. And so get out there and be new citizens and do your thing. Thank you.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

First, let me say congratulations to you and your families and your friends that have come to join you today and those that aren't here, that couldn't be here that have helped get you to where you are in being able to take an oath and become new U.S. citizens.

The reality is, is I've contemplated, on occasions -- particularly in the recent weeks -- of continuing this ceremony and delaying it so that we could have a more engaging experience and not have to worry as much about the pandemic.

But the reality is, is every time I keep thinking about delaying it, it seems like things continue to become more challenging. And you have worked and waited long enough to become U.S. citizens, and so I want to make sure that I bestow that privilege upon you having committed to the work to do it.

No person or government or country is perfect. Hopefully, as a country, we can collectively recognize our failings and seek to improve who we are as a people and as a country. I would submit, following Mr. Kubichek's remarks, my constitutional rights are only as valuable as I recognize and value your constitutional rights. In other words, it's reciprocal. It's not individual. I may disagree with you, but if I don't value the right for you to disagree with me, then I lose everything that we've gained as a country. And it's important we remember that.

And to improve on that, we must all participate and believe in it. Lest we stand silent and fail to exercise our rights and support our constitution and recognize it is we, the people, who must exercise, support, and defend our rights we run the risk of extinction, just like any other government.

Our constitution is simply a paper document. Without people believing in it, defending it, it becomes valueless. Thank you for wanting to become part of this incredible country. While this country is not perfect, for over 240 years, it has provided a sanctuary for freedom and served as an incubator for the opportunity and advancement of all.

I enjoy listening to each of you talk about what, today, is important to you and why because it instills in me a confirmation of how lucky I am to be a United States citizen. To hear your sincerity, to hear your tears and recognizing that opportunity that you have been given, maybe that will give us all who were given that gift a little more importance in what we have so that we don't lose it or waste it.

With your energies, skills, and talents, I encourage you to make us a more diverse and talented country and democracy. Vote. Exercise your rights. Run for school board. Run for city council. Exercise your rights and freedoms but appreciate and respect the divergent views and beliefs that make this country what it is.

This is the greatest country on earth, but to remain

so, we must appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms we do. It is not because we all think and believe the same but, rather, because we respect each other's diversity of beliefs which allows us to be we, the people, and to govern ourselves.

You are now part of this richly woven fabric of the United States of America. We do not exist as individuals but as a collection of many, united to form a more perfect union. May it always be that way, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Congratulations. The Court will stand in recess.

(Proceedings concluded at 4:17 p.m., January 10, 2022.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, MEGAN E. STRAWN, Court Reporter in the state of Wyoming, a Registered Professional Reporter and Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by machine shorthand the proceedings contained herein on the aforementioned subject on the date herein set forth, and that the foregoing 21 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript.

Dated this 12th day of January 2022.

/s/ Megan E. Strawn

MEGAN E. STRAWN
Registered Professional Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter