

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 8, 2024
3:32 p.m.

SOMJAI KAMTHONG MILLER, RINA
ELIZABETH CAMPOS DE ESCOBAR,
ERICKSON LLANA SABANAL, CHARITY
MAE SOLIVEN THOMAS, JOSE ANTONIO
BECERRA AVALOS, JORGE ALBERTO
MEZA ORTIGOZA, MARIA DEL ROSARIO
VEGA PEREZ DE LEON, NAPASSANAN
SCHEMEL, SAW MYAT KHINE, MARIA
ABILENE MEDINA, BENJAWAN JOSS,

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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transcript produced with computer-aided transcription.*

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:32 p.m., January 8, 2024.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

3 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to
4 the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse. The Court will suspend
5 all rules on cameras and recording devices.

6 It is a tradition at the beginning of these
7 naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and
8 families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in
9 defending what so many in this world seek, the freedom and
10 benefits of being a United States citizen.

11 As of this morning, 7,079 American men and women have
12 been killed in action while involved in military operations in
13 the Middle East. In addition, 53,425 United States military
14 personnel have been wounded in action during these military
15 operations.

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

19 (Moment of silence.)

20 THE COURT: Thank you.

21 The United States District Court for the District of
22 Wyoming is in special session for the naturalization of
23 foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with
24 great honor, pride, and privilege that I'm able to conduct
25 today's ceremony naturalizing 11 new United States citizens

1 from five different countries around the world.

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

5 At this time I would ask that Ms. Bynon with the
6 United States Citizenship and Immigration Service make a roll
7 call of the prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship, and
8 if you could please raise your hand when your name is called.

9 MS. BYNON: Okay. Pardon me if I do not pronounce
10 them correctly. They do not teach name pronunciation at the
11 academy, so I'm going to give it my best.

12 THE COURT: And, ma'am, if you could come to the
13 corner of that table with the microphone. It's got a green
14 light on it. Is it lit up?

15 Okay. Perfect. If you can go ahead and speak into
16 that.

17 MS. BYNON: Okay. Somjai Kamthong Miller, Rina
18 Elizabeth Campos De Escobar, Erickson Llana Sabanal, Charity
19 Mae Soliven Thomas, Jose Antonio Becerra Avalos, Jorge Alberto
20 Meza Ortigoza, Maria Del Rosario Perez De Leon, Napassanan
21 Schemel, Saw Myat Khine, Maria Abilene Medina, and Benjawan
22 Joss.

23 Congratulations.

24 THE COURT: Thank you.

25 One of the most fundamental acts we do as citizens is

1 pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United States. And I
2 would ask for the posting of the flags, and then I would ask
3 Shaylee and Sebastian Becerra -- Shayla and Sebastian Becerra
4 if they could come forward.

5 They're already here. We're ready for them.

6 And if you could lead us in the pledge once we get
7 the flags posted.

8 If you could please rise.

9 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

10 THE COURT: Thank you.

11 Now if we could have the playing of *The Star-Spangled*
12 *Banner*, and I ask that you remain standing.

13 (Playing *The Star-Spangled Banner*.)

14 THE COURT: Thank you to the ROTC, Natrona County
15 High School, for providing us with the flags and the colors.

16 Thank you all. You may be seated.

17 At this time I would ask the Clerk of Court to play
18 the President's video.

19 (Playing message from the President of the United States.)

20 THE COURT: Thank you.

21 At this time I would recognize the Assistant United
22 States Attorney for the District of Wyoming, Mr. David
23 Kubichek, representing Attorney General Garland, on a petition
24 for United States citizenship.

25 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

1 Before the Court today are individuals for a hearing
2 on their petitions for naturalization. Each of these
3 prospective citizens has successfully completed all the steps
4 necessary for eligibility for United States citizenship.

5 Moreover, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration
6 Service has completed its processes with respect to each of
7 them, including the necessary background investigations.

8 Having successfully negotiated all of those hurdles,
9 Your Honor, we are advised that each of them is well qualified
10 to be admitted to citizenship. Therefore, the United States
11 hereby moves the Court to admit each of these individuals to
12 United States citizenship upon their taking of the required
13 oath.

14 Thank you, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

16 On the petition of the United States, the Court finds
17 that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal
18 requirements to become citizens of the United States and,
19 therefore, grants the petition and will enter an order
20 allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the United
21 States subject to the taking of their oath.

22 And with that, I would provide the Clerk of Court
23 with the order, and I would ask our newest United States to-be
24 citizens if you could please stand and take your oath.

25 And those of you who want to get a better picture,

1 you're free to do so if you want to relocate.

2 If you could raise your right hand and state after
3 me:

4 I, state your name --

5 THE PETITIONERS: I, (stating names) --

6 THE COURT: -- hereby declare, on oath --

7 THE PETITIONERS: -- hereby declare, on oath --

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

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

11 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

12 THE PETITIONERS: -- renounce and abjure --

13 THE COURT: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

14 THE PETITIONERS: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

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

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

18 THE COURT: -- state or sovereignty --

19 THE PETITIONERS: -- state or sovereignty --

20 THE COURT: -- of whom or which --

21 THE PETITIONERS: -- of whom or which --

22 THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --

23 THE PETITIONERS: -- I have heretofore been --

24 THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen --

25 THE PETITIONERS: -- a subject or citizen --

1 THE COURT: -- that I will support and defend --

2 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will support and

3 defend --

4 THE COURT: -- the Constitution and laws --

5 THE PETITIONERS: -- the Constitution and laws --

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

7 THE PETITIONERS: -- of the United States of

8 America --

9 THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

10 THE PETITIONERS: -- against all enemies --

11 THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic --

12 THE PETITIONERS: -- foreign and domestic --

13 THE COURT: -- that I will bear true faith --

14 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will bear true faith --

15 THE COURT: -- and allegiance to the same --

16 THE PETITIONERS: -- and allegiance to the same --

17 THE COURT: -- that I will bear arms --

18 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will bear arms --

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

20 THE PETITIONERS: -- on behalf of the United

21 States --

22 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

23 THE PETITIONERS: -- when required by law.

24 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

25 THE PETITIONERS: I take this obligation freely --

1 THE COURT: -- without any mental reservation --

2 THE PETITIONERS: -- without any mental

3 reservation --

4 THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion --

5 THE PETITIONERS: -- or purpose of evasion --

6 THE COURT: -- so help me God.

7 THE PETITIONERS: -- so help me God.

8 THE COURT: Congratulations. Please join me in
9 welcoming our newest U.S. citizens.

10 (Applause.)

11 THE COURT: If you want to be seated, I'll go ahead
12 and present you with your certificates at this time.

13 (Presentation of certificates.)

14 THE COURT: At this time the Court would recognize
15 the various patriotic organizations that we are privileged to
16 have here today.

17 Go ahead and have a seat. Sorry.

18 These men and women either represent or are members
19 of the various armed forces and entities that have provided us
20 with the ability to enjoy the freedoms and the privileges that
21 we have as United States citizens. And but for their
22 existence, we would not be here today.

23 So with that I would recognize the Daughters of the
24 American Revolution for presentation of various items in
25 recognition of the newest U.S. citizens.

1 MS. TRUMBULL: Congratulations, my fellow Americans.
2 My name is Kristen Trumbull, and I represent the Fort Caspar
3 Chapter, National Society, Daughters of the American
4 Revolution. We are a women's service organization focusing on
5 historic preservation, education, and, of course, patriotism.

6 I consider myself very lucky to have been born in the
7 United States. It's something in which I take great pride.
8 Each of you have had a unique journey arriving at this
9 celebration today, none of which were easy. I'm sure of it.
10 Whether you came by boat, plane, bus, or foot, you made the
11 necessary steps to join us all as citizens today.

12 You have surpassed many difficult adjustments that
13 come with moving to a new country and fought hard to become an
14 American just like me and my DAR sisters. I commend you on
15 your hard work and dedication to achieve this status.

16 As an eighth-grade honors history student, I had to
17 complete the 100 questions that are possible on the United
18 States citizenship test. Let's just say my score was
19 laughable.

20 As a communication graduate, I know that this road
21 has been filled with many obstacles such as language barriers,
22 new cultural norms, and everything else that comes with
23 immersing oneself in a new culture. I would like to welcome
24 you, on behalf of the Fort Caspar Chapter, as our newest
25 countrymen.

1 We ask only that you love America, cherish her,
2 honor her, protect her, and embrace all of the
3 possibilities that you are given.

4 May God bless each and every one of you on your new
5 journey.

6 THE COURT: Thank you.

7 I would also recognize Disabled American Veterans and
8 the American Legion.

9 Mr. Williams.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, thank you so much. It's
11 been many, many months since I've been here to be standing in
12 front of you, and I'm so happy. I know the hospital isn't
13 because they get no more money from me.

14 THE COURT: We're glad to have you here.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: But God bless you and your staff.
16 They're awful wonderful people to deal with, and I thank you
17 for all you've done for us and your country.

18 My fellow citizens, the Judge more or less told you
19 about your military. Did you hear the words I said? "Your
20 military." It's your military. And when we took the oath, we
21 almost took an oath similar to yours. And there's not really
22 much exception to it except that we promise -- we promise, if
23 need be, we're willing to give up our life so you can be here
24 and so you can have your freedom. And we mean it.

25 Every day, like His Honor tells you, we're losing men

1 and women for that promise. The only thing that we ask for in
2 return is when it comes time for us to leave this world that
3 we be buried with honor and respect. And that happens. And
4 you're going to hear from a gentleman today who is keeping
5 that promise in this county.

6 The American Legion is one of the groups of people
7 who honor our veterans. And they're made up of men and women,
8 and their only obligation is that they receive what is called
9 a Military Department of Defense Number 214, Honorable
10 Discharge. They're a group of people every day working for
11 our veterans in our country.

12 The Disabled American Veterans is exactly what that
13 says. They're veterans that have been disabled; and most of
14 them have been, from what we say, boots on the ground in
15 foreign countries during conflict time.

16 (Pause in the proceedings.)

17 (Discussion off the record.)

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Ms. Tiffany.

19 The American Legion. After that, we have -- we have
20 the VFW, Veterans of Foreign Wars. And these are people who
21 actually leave these countries and all of your veterans who
22 have fought for the protection of you and other folks.

23 We have another group, which is the Natrona County
24 Veterans. This young man, he is going to tell you about them.
25 He's the one that makes sure that our final promise that your

1 veterans are laid to rest with respect and dignity.

2 For right now I would like to introduce to you a
3 young gentleman who is from the VFW. He will tell you his
4 name and what he is doing. Those of you -- how many people
5 realize what a submarine really is? Raise your hand, a
6 submarine.

7 The reason he's got the blond or gold hair now is
8 because his duty, he had to wash all the windows on a
9 submarine, if you can believe that story.

10 You don't believe it either? Neither do I.

11 Sir, if you would, please.

12 MR. BLACKFORD: He's a hard act to follow.

13 Good afternoon. My name is Ernie Blackford. I am
14 representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I'm a lifetime
15 member and a past post commander of the VFW Post 9439.

16 Our mission as the VFW is to support our veterans,
17 our military, their families, and our communities. And with
18 that, I would like to offer a very big congratulations to all
19 of you.

20 And next is our president of the Natrona County
21 United Veterans Council.

22 MR. LAURENZ: Hello. My name is Hank Laurenz. As
23 Ernie said, I'm president of the Natrona County United
24 Veterans Council, and one of the things we do is provide
25 funeral honors for our departed veterans. We can't do much

1 for the veterans once they pass away, but it seems to be liked
2 by the families and helps them deal with it.

3 In conjunction with that, since we're Natrona
4 County's United Veterans Council, the Legion's there, the VFW.
5 I'm commandant of the Marine Corps League. We bring all the
6 veteran organizations together to address complex problems
7 with our veterans and their families. That's the short
8 version of what we do.

9 And, secondly, I would like to congratulate you.
10 It's a lot of years and a lot of hard work, and I'm proud of
11 you. Thank you.

12 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen, for your sacrifices
13 and for your presence today.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, gentlemen.

15 Once again, congratulations all from the United
16 States Army, the United States Navy, the United States Marine
17 Corps, the United States Coast Guard, the United States Air
18 Force, and now the United States Space Force.

19 Thank you, again, sir. It's been our pleasure.

20 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen.

21 Let me verify, I have on my list, in addition to the
22 Daughters of the American Revolution, the Wyoming Society of
23 U.S. Daughters of 1812, and I want to make sure that I haven't
24 overlooked them.

25 And -- no. I don't see anyone raising their hand.

1 All right. Let me next recognize Amy Lea on behalf
2 of the Small Business Administration. Many of you may be
3 entrepreneurs or inspired to be entrepreneurs, and one of the
4 entities that assists in that is the Small Business
5 Administration.

6 Ms. Lea.

7 MS. LEA: Thank you, Your Honor.

8 And congratulations to all of you. One of the most
9 wonderful things about the American dream is that, as
10 citizens, you are free to start, expand, and grow your own
11 businesses. And there's an entire Federal agency here, the
12 U.S. Small Business Administration, that has free resources to
13 help you do just that.

14 And so I'm going to pass around some packets that
15 have contact information, including my card. If there's
16 anything we can do to help you achieve your American dream,
17 please reach out to us. And congratulations.

18 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Lea.

19 Next, when you are not excited about how Government
20 is going, there's one other thing that's unique about this
21 country that is not common in a lot of countries, and that is
22 the right to speak by way of election and by way of voting.

23 Not only is it something that you have the right to
24 do, but it's something, as a citizen now, that you have the
25 obligation to partake in and be involved in.

1 And that process and the representatives of those
2 individuals who have been elected by the citizens of Wyoming
3 to U.S. Senate and to Congress are here today, and I would
4 recognize -- Keiter? Am I -- Keiter?

5 MR. MCLEMORE: Kiefer.

6 THE COURT: Kiefer. I'm sorry. I was having a
7 little trouble whether that was a "t" or an "f." Kiefer
8 McLemore on behalf of Senator Barrasso. I would also
9 recognize Ms. Ally Garner on behalf of Senator Lummus; and
10 Ms. Hughes, Ms. Scaling, and Ms. Adelman on behalf of
11 Congresswoman Hageman.

12 Hedges. I'm sorry. I forgot there's a "d."

13 With that, I would ask -- I think that there's some
14 information that they have to provide you and some phone
15 numbers that you can call, so I would recognize them for those
16 presentations.

17 (Presentation of materials from the Wyoming Congressional
18 Delegation.)

19 THE COURT: Thank you.

20 Ladies and gentlemen, I mentioned her before, and I
21 put her on the spot by having to pronounce some names she
22 wasn't really comfortable with, but, Ms. Bynon, I want to
23 thank you for being here today, and thank you for the work
24 that you and your agency has done to do the paperwork
25 necessary to make sure that this day could occur.

1 And I would also encourage you, ladies and gentlemen,
2 our newest U.S. citizens, if you have questions or need some
3 kind of information, don't hesitate to contact your various
4 Governmental entities for assistance or to get a copy of
5 something that you may need or what it might be.

6 But it's important -- but for that agency's work and
7 Ms. Bynon's efforts, today would not come to be. So thank
8 you.

9 With that, let me recognize Mr. Kubichek for remarks
10 on behalf of the United States Attorney General, Merrick
11 Garland.

12 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor.

13 It is one of my most special opportunities as an
14 employee of the U.S. Department of Justice to have the chance
15 to address new citizens on behalf of the Attorney General of
16 the United States.

17 We all, many of us in this room, were born here, you
18 know, so we automatically got to be citizens. I didn't have
19 to hike through the wilderness or take a plane or a boat ride
20 or whatever to get here. I started up the street at the
21 Wyoming Medical Center some 72 years ago.

22 You all have done something special. As the
23 President pointed out, you all picked us. And -- and I want
24 you to know that those of us who think about such things
25 are proud of that fact and grateful that you invest that kind

1 of confidence and appreciation for the things that this
2 country offers.

3 Today you signed up, you took an oath -- an ancient
4 oath, relatively speaking, or at least by -- in terms of the
5 longevity of this country. We're only a couple hundred years
6 old and change, so probably not as old as a lot of the places
7 you all have come from. But it's an ancient oath,
8 nonetheless, chunks of which I took back when I started with
9 the Department of Justice back in 1978 to support the
10 Constitution; to defend it, if necessary; to respect it; to
11 abide by it; and to live your life as citizens with an eye
12 towards not only the rights that that Constitution affords you
13 but also some of the obligations.

14 And, you know, the obvious ones, the obligations that
15 you abide the law. Every now and again, Judge Skavdahl may
16 ask you to come down here and be on a jury, and you got to do
17 that unless you got a good reason not to.

18 You should vote. I mean, it's not a crime in this
19 country not to vote, at least a legal crime. And,
20 unfortunately, big slices of our public don't, you know, for
21 whatever reason. And that's unfortunate.

22 But you have the opportunity to participate in
23 deciding who is going to be in charge in the Executive Branch
24 of Government, the President and the people appointed under
25 him; the representative branch of Government represented by

1 these people here who work for our two senators and our
2 representative; and -- you know, by way of appointment from
3 the President, with consent of the U.S. Senate, our Judicial
4 Branch, which is represented here today by Judge Skavdahl.

5 Our Constitution designed a fairly intricate system
6 about how all of these different branches work together. And
7 it's based on a system of laws that we all respect. So long
8 as we all respect those laws, this idea that is America can
9 continue to thrive.

10 And I know sometimes, in this media-saturated world,
11 it's easy to get the impression that the kind of craziness out
12 there has sort of taken over, you know. If you watch the
13 news -- I try not to a lot of times because it hurts my
14 heart -- you could easily get the impression that there are
15 anti-Semites running all over the place and anti-Muslims and
16 anti-this and anti-that, and they're all out jumping around
17 and carrying on and making this an unsafe place.

18 But you know what? Those people, as unfortunate as
19 the examples they set are, they represent, really, a tiny
20 minority of who we are. Most Americans, by oodles of
21 majority, get up in the morning; they fix breakfast for their
22 kids; they go off to work and do what they do; they come home
23 at night; they enjoy their families; and -- you know, and they
24 respect each other.

25 And you can see that. You go to the store -- you go

1 to the grocery store. You walk around. Nobody's giving you a
2 hard time about what you look like or where they think you
3 came from. We just -- most all of us just respect each other
4 as citizens, and we get along.

5 Part of the job you signed up for today is to carry
6 on that tradition. You know, you don't have to agree with
7 what everybody else says, but what you have to do is respect
8 their right to think what they think and be tolerant to a
9 level so that our civic society can continue. Because at the
10 end of the day, we're all in this together, and we sink or
11 swim together.

12 You know, as Benjamin Franklin once said back in the
13 day when we were having our Constitutional Conventions and we
14 were thinking about the Revolutionary War and declaring our
15 independence from Great Britain -- that was no small thing.
16 Those guys were putting their lives on the line back in 1776
17 for an idea, the idea that we should be a separate independent
18 country. We shouldn't be living subject to a sovereign
19 monarch 2,000, 3,000 miles away in a foreign country. What
20 Benjamin Franklin said was, Look, we have to hang together, or
21 we shall surely hang separately.

22 Now, that bit of wisdom, you know, kind of carries on
23 through the years, and we've had to defend our democracy and
24 our way of life multiple times. These amazing gentlemen over
25 here are here not just to hand out trinkets and give little

1 speeches, but they represent the sacrifices of thousands and
2 thousands of Americans who have put their lives on the line to
3 keep us free and to keep us independent and to maintain our
4 society where we get to pick who is in charge of us. And if
5 we don't like them, we can throw them out, vote them out. You
6 know, that was a system of Government that was not common back
7 in the late 1700s.

8 And keeping it over the last 200-plus years has been,
9 occasionally, a struggle. And not only a struggle for us in
10 terms of maintaining it for us -- we've had the advantage. We
11 got this whole big continent mostly to ourselves. So -- but
12 we've also defended liberty and democracy in other countries.
13 And that's been a role of America not only to be inward-
14 thinking and protecting our own but to try to go out and help
15 other people have freedom and a say in how their lives are
16 run.

17 And that has been a cost to us and one we have borne
18 willingly because the idea of freedom and democracy and choice
19 is an idea that is just rooted deep in the human experience
20 and the human heart, you know. And these gentlemen represent
21 that, and we're grateful for them for being here.

22 This is, as I said, as the Judge said, sort of a
23 solemn day for you all. We are so proud that you're here and
24 you picked us, and it is a privilege that I get to exercise a
25 couple -- three times a year, as long as they let me do it, to

1 come over here and say a few words and welcome this bunch of
2 very handsome and very lovely new citizens. You've made us
3 better by picking us.

4 So thank you. We are proud of you, and we are proud
5 you picked us. I hope you all have a productive rest of your
6 days as a citizen of this country. We are glad to have you.
7 You made us better.

8 (Applause.)

9 THE COURT: One of the things that we do that makes
10 this a very enjoyable and interesting process is I'd like to
11 recognize you as new citizens for the opportunity to introduce
12 yourself and anyone that's accompanying you today or that's
13 here today with you that you would like to recognize, and tell
14 us one thing that makes today special in your life.

15 And with that, I would pass the microphone.

16 MS. MILLER: Hi. My name is Somjai Kamthong Miller.
17 I'm here today with my husband and my sons over there. And
18 I'm so proud myself that -- to be here as a U.S. citizen and
19 also am thankful for my little family and also these -- my new
20 home country. Thank you.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. CAMPOS DE ESCOBAR: My name is Rina Elizabeth
24 Campos De Escobar. Only I want to say thanks, God.

25 THE COURT: Congratulations.

1 MR. SABANAL: Hello. My name is Erickson, and I'm
2 with my mom and my aunts and their friends. I just want to
3 thank you for -- to everybody, and thank you guys.

4 THE COURT: Congratulations.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. THOMAS: Hi, everyone. I'm Charity Mae Soliven
7 Thomas. I am here with my husband, Bart; my daughter, Bianca;
8 my mom and dad from the Philippines, Jean and Thor. Thank you
9 so much. And what this day made special, it's the end of my
10 journey. Done with the process, done with money or the cost
11 of everything. Thank you.

12 THE COURT: You're very welcome. Congratulations.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. BECERRA: Hello. My name is Jose. I'm happy for
15 today to be a citizen so I can have a better future for my
16 kids.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. MEZA: Hi. My name is Jorge Meza, and I'm here
19 with my wife. And I'm so proud to be a citizen. And thank
20 you so much for all you -- for you guys be here with me, and
21 thank you so much.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. VEGA: Hello. My name is Maria. Thank you, the
24 United States, for this opportunity. Thank you my family, my
25 husband, my kids for support me. Thank you. Thank you so

1 much.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MS. SCHEMEL: Hi. My name is Napassanan Scheme1.
5 I'm here with my husband and my little baby right here. Sorry
6 if he interrupt kind of a lot. Thank you for my husband the
7 most for the opportunity, and thank you for everyone that
8 working so hard on my document. It has been tough. It's a
9 lot of document we have to go through. Thank you for good
10 opportunity for -- make me become a citizenship today. Thank
11 you so much.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. KHINE: Hi. I'm Saw Myat Khine. Nobody with me
14 on special day.

15 THE COURT: We're with you.

16 MS. KHINE: Sorry. Thank you all honorable person in
17 this room. Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. MEDINA: Hi. My name is Maria, and I'm here with
20 my daughter, my son, and my friend. And thank you for the
21 opportunity.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. JOSS: So I am the last one. Hi, everyone. My
24 name is Benjawan Joss. My husband over there. It took me for
25 ten years to get this, so I am very proud of myself. So I

1 came from Thailand, but for a while I live in the United
2 States. I love it. I love the system. I love everything.
3 Thank you so much for everyone here come for this very
4 important day for me. Thank you so much.

5 (Applause.)

6 THE COURT: Congratulations to you, your families,
7 and friends and everyone that's helped you to get here today
8 one way or another.

9 The importance and significance of this event cannot
10 be understated. You spent ten years -- as Mr. Kubichek noted,
11 many of us were simply born and given the right. We do not
12 all recognize as much as we should what we've been gifted by
13 way of our birth that you've had to work for and to fiddle and
14 work with paper and to wait, wondering if it would ever
15 happen.

16 It has, and now you have a new journey. You've
17 completed one, but now you have a new journey.

18 No person or country is perfect, and the United
19 States of America is no different. The exception is we were
20 forged by immigrants such as yourselves who experienced
21 tyranny, feudalism, and oppression by their governments and,
22 because of that, were willing to sacrifice any and everything
23 that they had to form this country, all for the betterment of
24 not only themselves and their families but for others.

25 And they did that when those men and women formed a

1 government unlike any other, one designed to serve the people,
2 not one where the people served the government.

3 It is in the Constitution "We, the people." It's not
4 "We, the prince" or "We, the dictator" or "We, the prime
5 minister." It's "We, the people," not the king.

6 Part of the oath you took today is not only to be
7 loyal to we, the people, and the United States of America but
8 to support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United
9 States. You have done that by way of getting here today and
10 doing what you've had to do: to abide by the laws and to
11 achieve what you've achieved.

12 As imperfect an experiment as this country may have
13 had over the 250 years of existence, hopefully, we can
14 collectively recognize our failings and seek to improve what
15 we are as the people and a country, because we, the people,
16 give the Government its power. To improve or change, we must
17 all participate. Lest we stand silent and fail to exercise
18 our rights to vote and support our Constitution and recognize
19 that it is we, the people, who must exercise, support, and
20 defend our rights and enforce our laws, then we run the risk
21 of extinction, just like any other government, if we fail to
22 take an active role and be part of it.

23 Our Constitution is simply a paper document. Without
24 people participating, believing in it, and abiding by it, it
25 is rendered valueless.

1 Our Constitution was crafted not based upon universal
2 ideology but, rather, on compromise and appreciation. No
3 singular system is ideal or superior, but, rather, it's an
4 amalgamation of views and systems that come together to
5 provide a structure that has endured civil war, two world
6 wars, and, 22 years ago and some change, an attack on our own
7 soil.

8 To our newest U.S. citizens, I encourage you, with
9 your enthusiasm, skills, and talents, to make us a more
10 diverse and talented country. Enrich our democracy.
11 Participate in it. Vote and exercise your rights and freedoms
12 but appreciate and respect the divergent views and beliefs
13 that make this country what it is.

14 This is the greatest nation on earth, but to remain
15 so, we must appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms we
16 do. It is not because we all think the same or all believe
17 the same but, rather, because we respect each other and the
18 diversity and beliefs that allow us to be we, the people, and
19 govern ourselves.

20 May we always honor our commitment to each other and
21 to ourselves, and may the United States continue to be the
22 greatest nation on earth. May God bless and continue to bless
23 the United States of America.

24 Congratulations, ladies and gentlemen.

25 (Applause.)

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THE COURT: We'll stand in recess. Thank you.
(Proceedings concluded at 4:20 p.m., January 8, 2024.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, MEGAN E. STRAWN, Federal Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the District 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 27 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript.

Dated this 9th day of January 2024.

 /s/ Megan E. Strawn

MEGAN E. STRAWN
Registered Professional Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter