

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
May 10, 2021
3:31 p.m.

JOHN KIGUNDU MWANGI, CINTYA
MARISOL HANSEN, MARIA FERNANDA
KING, VLADIMIR ZDRAVKOV
VANGELOV, CARMEN ETELVINA KIRK,
DANIEL IVANOV MIACHKOV, JESRYLL
WENCESLAO INTES, TATIANA MILLER,
MILAGROSA YAP YU, MARIA LUCILIA
LEWALLEN, ROSE TIAN LI, JIE
SHULL, SENDER VIDAL MEDRANO
CASTILLO, IDEL ENRIQUEZ, KARLA
JENNETT PARSON, OLGA MILEVSKIY,

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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computer-aided transcription.*

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:31 p.m., May 10, 2021.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Good
3 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Ewing T.
4 Kerr Courthouse. I will suspend the rules on cameras and
5 recording devices.

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

11 As of this morning, 7,057 American men and women have
12 been killed in action while involved in military operations in
13 the Middle East. In addition, 53,252 United States military
14 personnel have been wounded in action during these military
15 operations. Let us take a moment of silence and recognize
16 these American heroes and their families whose sacrifices
17 cannot be measured and whose loss will never be recovered.

18 Thank you. The United States District Court for the
19 District of Wyoming is in special session for the
20 naturalization of foreign nationals to be United States
21 citizens. It is with great honor, pride, and privilege that I
22 am able to conduct today's ceremony naturalizing 16 new United
23 States citizens from 10 different countries around the world.
24 The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including Judges
25 Johnson and Freudenthal, extend their congratulations to you

1 and your families.

2 I had intended to conduct this outside because of the
3 COVID-19 issues, but unfortunately, Wyoming weather has not
4 cooperated, and I did not want you to freeze. So we're going
5 to try to be as expedient as possible, but I want to recognize
6 the new United States citizens and get them sworn in. And
7 then what I'll ask is you maintain your masks while we do this
8 so that we can minimize any potential risks.

9 Let me ask at this time that the Deputy Clerk of
10 Court make a roll call of prospective applicants for U.S.
11 citizenship, and if you could please raise your hand so that
12 we can verify that we've identified you.

13 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: John Kigundu Mwangi, Cintya
14 Marisol Hansen, Maria Fernanda King, Vladimir Zdravkov
15 Vangelov, Carmen Etelvina Kirk, Daniel Ivanov Miachkov,
16 Jesryll Wenceslao Intes, Tatiana Miller, Milagrosa Yap Yu,
17 Maria Lucilia Lewallen, Rose Tian Li, Jie Shull, Sender Vidal
18 Medrano Castillo, Idel Enriquez, Karla Jennett Parson, Olga
19 Milevskiy.

20 THE COURT: One of the most fundamental acts we do as
21 United States citizens is to pledge our allegiance to the flag
22 of the United States. Recent events have caused that pledge
23 to take even more renewed spirit and meaning. If I could ask,
24 at this time, I know there are two beautiful young ladies that
25 were going to come forward and help me in this. If I could

1 have you come forward at this time.

2 Please stand and join us.

3 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

4 THE COURT: If you'll please remain standing for The
5 Star-Spangled Banner.

6 (Singing "The Star-Spangled Banner.")

7 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. At this
8 time, I would recognize Mr. David Kubichek, representing the
9 Attorney General of the United States, as to the presentation
10 of a petition. Mr. Kubichek.

11 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. Before the
12 Court today are individuals here for a hearing on their
13 petitions for naturalization. Each of these prospective
14 citizens has successfully completed all of the steps necessary
15 for eligibility for United States citizenship. Moreover, the
16 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service has completed its
17 processes with respect to each of these people, including the
18 necessary background investigations.

19 Having successfully negotiated all of those hurdles,
20 we are advised that each of them is well qualified to be
21 admitted to citizenship. Therefore, Your Honor, the United
22 States hereby moves the Court to admit each of these
23 individuals to United States citizenship upon the taking of
24 the required oath Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Mr. Kubichek. We

1 had a little echo there. Well, I would find that based upon
2 the motion of the United States that each of these citizens is
3 qualified to become and be admitted as citizens of the United
4 States. And if you would, at this time, stand and raise your
5 right hand and repeat after me:

6 I, state your name, hereby declare on oath that I
7 absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and
8 fidelity to any foreign prince or potentate, state or
9 sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject
10 or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution
11 and laws of the United States of America against all enemies,
12 foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and
13 allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the
14 United States when required by law. I take this obligation
15 freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion,
16 so help me God.

17 Congratulations.

18 (Applause.)

19 THE COURT: If you wish to have a seat, we have some
20 certificates that we need to hand to you.

21 (Distribution of certificates.)

22 THE COURT: I know that a lot of you have waited a
23 long time for this day to come and have done a lot of work,
24 and you had a lot of support and assistance from your friends
25 and family. I'd like to allow each of you to identify anyone

1 that's here supporting you today or that is here today with
2 you and make any comment as to the one thing that makes you
3 excited for today. We can begin with Mr. Mwangi.

4 MR. MWANGI: My name is John K. Mwangi. It's been a
5 long journey for me here. It's been 17 years. So today's the
6 day. My wife, Mary McCarthy, my kids. Ed McCarthy and Pat
7 McCarthy have really supported me and welcomed me into this
8 family and the United States. And also, my in-laws, Bob and
9 Katie and family are here to show support. Thank you so much.

10 THE COURT: Congratulations.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE COURT: Ms. Hansen.

13 MS. HANSEN: I am a little speechless. I will try
14 and say something. I have always admired this country, and I
15 am really humbled to be a citizen now of this country and
16 having the opportunity to serve as much as I can. And I am
17 really proud of my family having -- now that they are here
18 with me. My husband has been my -- my everything. So now
19 that I am a citizen, now I -- I feel that I belong to him a
20 lot more. And I am just happy to be here and be part of this
21 beautiful country. Thank you.

22 THE COURT: Do you have anyone here today,
23 physically?

24 MS. HANSEN: Yes. They are over there. My little
25 girls and -- my three girls and my husband.

1 THE COURT: Awesome. Congratulations. Welcome.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE COURT: Ms. King.

4 MS. KING: Hi. My name is Maria Natale (phonetic),
5 King now. Well, I've been waiting for this day for a very
6 long time now, almost five or six years. And everything is
7 thanks to my husband that is sitting right there, Chris King.
8 I just want to say I love you, and thanks for being there for
9 me at all times.

10 THE COURT: Congratulations.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE COURT: Mr. Vangelov.

13 MR. VANGELOV: My name is Vladimir. I've been here
14 in Casper since 2004, almost long enough to get used to the
15 wind. Almost. Unfortunately, my wife and my family was not
16 able to attend. Our three-year-old was sick today. But same
17 as the rest of the folks, it's been a long journey, and I'm
18 just proud to be here on this side of the room.

19 THE COURT: Congratulations.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. KIRK: My name is Carmen Kirk. I've lived in the
22 United States since I was six months old. So this has been a
23 long journey for me. I'm very touched to be here. It's been
24 a very long journey. Sorry.

25 THE COURT: You don't have to apologize.

1 MS. KIRK: It's been long overdue. Thank you to my
2 husband, my children, my parents that couldn't be here today,
3 unfortunately. They live in California. But I am very happy
4 to be part of the United States. I am happy to call myself a
5 United States citizen today, and congratulations to everybody
6 here. It's been a long journey. So this is for us.

7 THE COURT: Here, here.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. MIACHKOV: My name is Daniel Miachkov. Just like
10 the rest you, it did take me a while to get to this point, but
11 I can truly say that I'm honored and happy to become a citizen
12 today. And I want to thank my wife for following this process
13 with me and raising our two wonderful boys, and I'm just happy
14 to be here.

15 THE COURT: Congratulations.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. INTES: Good afternoon, everyone. I am Jesryll
18 Intes. I'm very happy to be now a citizen of the United
19 States of America. I've been waiting for this for a long time
20 now because my recruiter is waiting. I'm going to be a
21 chaplain in the Army. I am already in the Reserves now, but
22 I'm planning to be in active duty, but I needed this to be in
23 active duty. So right after this, I'm going to resume my
24 process of becoming a chaplain in the Army. So I'm very happy
25 to be a citizen of the United States of America. Thank you so

1 much.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. MILLER: Hello, everyone. This is Tatiana. I'm
5 really honored to be a citizen today, and I'm very happy. I'm
6 thankful for my husband over there, Christopher Miller, and my
7 little daughters, Isabella and Gabriella. And I promise that
8 I will be faithful, and I'll protect the U.S. Thank you.

9 THE COURT: Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. YAP YU: Good afternoon, everybody. My name
12 is Milagrosa Yap Yu. Although, my son cannot attend this
13 memorable -- taking the oath as natural citizen because he is
14 serving in a marine base in Connecticut. And through my -- in
15 going through with this citizenship/naturalization, my
16 girlfriend here was with me all along the way. And I'm so
17 thankful for that.

18 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. LEWALLEN: Thank you. I want to thank my late
21 husband, Sergeant Raymond Sanford, that brought me to the
22 States 47 years ago, and my daughter was five months old, and
23 her name is Melinda Lynch. And I'm so proud to be an
24 American. Thank you very much.

25 THE COURT: Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. LI: Hi, everyone. My name is Rose Tian Li. I
3 love this country because our country is (inaudible). We are
4 free. Happy everybody. God bless you.

5 THE COURT: Congratulations.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. LI: And my husband and my friends Kathy, Rita,
8 Judy, Linda, thank you for come here.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. SHULL: Hi, everybody. My name is Jie Shull. I
11 have lived in Wyoming 15 years. A couple years ago, my
12 husband passed away. Three years. Finally, I can be a
13 citizen. I'm so happy me and my two kids stay here. We feel
14 more safe, comfortable here. And one more thing: I'm so
15 happy I can vote.

16 THE COURT: Congratulations.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. CASTILLO: Hello. Good afternoon. I just want
19 to say thank you for this beautiful moment. I was waiting for
20 this moment a long time ago, and I promise I will be here for
21 the United States no matter what. Thank you all. I love you.

22 THE COURT: Congratulations.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. ENRIQUEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Idel
25 Enriquez. I want to thank my new family here in Wyoming.

1 Unfortunately, my -- my parents are unable to be here today,
2 but I'm so thankful with life, with God. My new family has
3 been very supportive. My husband has been amazing, and I'm so
4 happy to be here, to be part of the United States. Thank you.

5 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. PARSON: Good afternoon, everybody. I just want
8 to say I'm so grateful for this opportunity to have this
9 opportunity to be here and become a U.S. citizen, and I want
10 to say thank you so much to my husband who has been so
11 supportive through this long journey and to my sons that I
12 love with all my heart. And I'm extremely happy and proud to
13 be able to be here today, and I just want to say thank you
14 guys so much for making this opportunity happen. And
15 congratulations to everybody. Congratulations. Thank you
16 very much.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. MILEVSKIY: Hello. You guys left me no words,
19 but I'll try. Long story short, when I was in seventh grade,
20 my teacher asked who I want to become when I will be a grown
21 human, and I told her "American." So I guess it explains
22 everything. So thanks everyone. I'm so happy to finally
23 become who I wanted to be. Thank you.

24 THE COURT: Congratulations.

25 (Applause.)

1 THE COURT: To our newest U.S. citizens, there is a
2 packet of information that has come along with you when we
3 handed out the certificates, some information from the
4 representatives, Senator Barrasso and Lummis as well as
5 Representative Cheney. And that information should be helpful
6 for you to learn a few things and follow up on things if need
7 be, and exercise that right to vote.

8 I also wanted to thank Mr. Johnson for his efforts
9 with the Immigration and Naturalization Service out of Denver;
10 is that right? But for his shepherding of these applications
11 and applicants through the process and getting the paperwork
12 done, we wouldn't be able to do what we did today.

13 So if you have questions or need anything from the
14 Immigration and Naturalization Service, keep his card so that
15 you can make sure that you get everything you need.

16 With that, I would, at this time, recognize
17 Mr. Kubichek on behalf of the U.S. Attorney for words of
18 congratulations.

19 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. And to each
20 and every one of you, I want to give my thanks. You know,
21 it's easy enough to think that this is all about you all --
22 and it is -- but it's really something for us, too. Most of
23 us here were citizens by birth. I didn't have to do anything.
24 I just got lucky. Born in the hospital up the street. Didn't
25 have to pass a test. Didn't have to pass a background. I

1 just got to be here.

2 And for a lot of us, there is some tendency to take
3 this for granted. And I wish everybody who is a fellow
4 citizen of mine could have been here with me today listening
5 to you all, because your -- and I wish, you know, what I
6 always think when I'm doing this is how I wish I could sit
7 down with each of you for a couple hours and hear your
8 stories, because I am certain they would be stories of courage
9 and stick-to-itiveness and dedication and sincerity and
10 sacrifice. And those of us, like me, who were born here don't
11 always appreciate or stop to think about what that means and
12 what a special place this can be for you all to have worked so
13 hard to be here.

14 So we are flattered and honored beyond any words that
15 you chose us, and I hope with every fiber of me that we live
16 up to those expectations. Vote. Vote. That's one of the
17 things you can do. Participate. Help make us better.
18 Because by you joining us today, you've already made us richer
19 by your diversity, your stories, your commitment.

20 So because we're in kind of a weird situation here,
21 I'm going to be short. I just want to say thank you again. I
22 am honored to be here today and blessed to be able to see your
23 testament to our country, because that matters. Thank you
24 all.

25 (Applause.)

1 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek. It is -- and it
2 can't be understated. Every time I listen to you with your
3 words of absolute sincerity and appreciation for what you have
4 been -- what you have earned today, it is rejuvenating, and
5 it's ever a reminder of how lucky we are in this country and
6 how we need to continue to be focused and committed to the
7 collective us that makes this country what it is.

8 And your goal to grow up and be an American, 15 years
9 of heartache and perseverance, 12 years, the sleepless nights
10 that I'm sure some of you have had of whether or not, "Will I
11 get there," it is a continued reminder that what we have is
12 valued, and it comes at a price. It comes with commitment to
13 each other regardless of who we are, where we're from. We
14 have a common belief in each other.

15 The events of this last year have only served to
16 galvanize the reality that the freedoms and rights we enjoy as
17 United States citizens cannot be taken for granted or assumed
18 a given. Lest we stand silent and fail to exercise our rights
19 and support our constitution and recognize it is we, the
20 people, who must exercise, support, and defend our rights, we
21 run the risk of extinction just like any other government.

22 Our constitution is simply a piece of paper. Without
23 people believing in it and pledging their love and loyalty to
24 it, it will not exist or withstand the Wyoming wind.

25 Thank you for wanting to become a part of this

1 incredible country. While this country is not perfect, for
2 over 240 years, it has a provided a sanctuary for freedom and
3 served as an incubator for the opportunity and the advancement
4 of all. With your energy, skills and talents, I encourage you
5 to make us a more diverse and talented country and democracy.

6 Vote. Exercise your rights and freedoms but
7 appreciate and respect the divergent views and beliefs that
8 make this country the melting pot that it is, the greatest
9 nation on earth. However, in order to remain that, we must
10 appreciate why we enjoy the freedoms. It is not because we
11 all think and believe the same but, rather, because we respect
12 each other's diversity and beliefs which allows we, the
13 people, to govern ourselves.

14 You are now part of this richly woven fabric of the
15 United States of America. We are not one individual but a
16 collection of many united to form a more perfect union. May
17 it always be that way, and may God continue to bless the
18 United States of America. Congratulations, and thank you for
19 wanting to join us. We'll stand in recess.

20 (Applause.)

21 (Proceedings concluded at 4:03 p.m., May 10, 2021.)

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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 15 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript.

Dated this 11th day of May 2021.

/s/ Megan E. Strawn

MEGAN E. STRAWN
Registered Professional Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter