

1 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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

November 7, 2023
1:30 p.m.

6 DULCE MARIA CARMONA RIVERA,
7 TERESA ROYAL, MARIO IBARRA
8 CARDENAS, ANGEL PORTILLO
9 BARAHONA, DIANE ORTEGA, HIEP
10 XUAN NGUYEN, MY CAM FREEMAN,
11 ANDRES DE SANTIAGO PLASCENCIA,
12 CARLOS COLIN CONTRERAS, OSCAR
CORONA CERVANTES, SERGIO PEREA
ARMENTA, LORENA SANCHEZ
GONZALEZ, DARDAN SELIMI, HECTOR
TORRES ARANDA, SHUA TEGUINOS,
ALDOLFO SALUGAO,

Prairie Wind Elementary
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Petitioners.

13 **TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING PROCEEDINGS ON PETITIONS FOR**
14 **UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION**

15 BEFORE THE HONORABLE KELLY H. RANKIN
16 CHIEF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

17 APPEARANCES:

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1 (Proceedings commenced 1:30 p.m., November 7, 2023.)

2 CHIEF CLERK BOTKINS: Oye, Oye, Oye: The Honorable
3 United States District Court for the District of Wyoming is now
4 open for the transaction of business, sitting at Prairie Wind
5 Elementary School, pursuant to adjournment: The Honorable
6 Kelly H. Rankin, Chief United States Magistrate, presiding;
7 along with the Honorable Nancy D. Freudenthal, United States
8 District Judge, and the Honorable Gregory A. Phillips, United
9 States Circuit Judge.

10 All having business before this Honorable Court draw
11 near, give attention, and you shall be heard.

12 God save the United States of America and this
13 Honorable Court.

14 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Well, good afternoon,
15 everyone. It is a special honor to be here with you today,
16 very special occasion. We have 16 individuals who are about to
17 become naturalized United States citizens, so this is a
18 wonderful day for us.

19 I would like to introduce my colleagues. First, I
20 have next to me on my right side District Judge Nancy
21 Freudenthal, and on my left side is Tenth Circuit Court Judge
22 Greg Phillips.

23 It is a delight for us to be here with you and thank
24 you all for attending. Really neat to be here at Prairie Wind
25 Elementary School. I understand we have fourth, fifth and

1 sixth graders and your respective staffs. We want to thank you
2 for hosting us and the family and friends of our new citizens
3 to be.

4 I would like to also thank Mr. Aragon, the principal
5 of Prairie Wind, for hosting us. We try to go to schools
6 around the district from time to time to share the celebration
7 that you are about to observe and be a part of. So we're just
8 tickled to death to be here with you.

9 We will suspend the requirement -- normally in these
10 proceedings there are no cameras or videoing at all, but we
11 will suspend that. So please feel free to move about, if you
12 would like, to take pictures as we go. We will certainly have
13 an opportunity to take photographs with the participants after
14 today's proceedings as well.

15 Well, without further ado, I say we begin this special
16 court ceremony of the District Court of the District of
17 Wyoming, and I will begin with the roll call and the motion for
18 naturalization of these new United States citizens.

19 By the way, there are 16 new citizens that we will be
20 swearing in here shortly from nine different countries, so
21 certainly a very diverse group. And we're just tickled to have
22 you with us.

23 So with the roll call and the motion, I'll turn it
24 over to Assistant United States Attorney Jeremy Gross on behalf
25 of the Attorney General.

1 Mr. Gross.

2 MR. GROSS: Well, good afternoon -- Your Honor, thank
3 you for having me here. And I apologize. I was a little late
4 today, so I was just learning everybody's names as you all
5 arrived on the bench here. So forgive me.

6 I am here today appearing as a representative of the
7 United States Attorney's Office for the District of Wyoming,
8 and in proxy for the Attorney General of the United States.

9 It is my privilege, Your Honors, to introduce to the
10 Court the following individuals who are appearing here today in
11 person on their petitions for naturalization as United States
12 citizens:

13 Ms. Dulce Maria Carmona Rivera, native and former
14 inhabitant of the Dominican Republic; Ms. Teresa Barbara Royal,
15 native and former inhabitant of Canada; Mr. Mario Ibarra
16 Cardenas, native and former inhabitant of Mexico; Mr. Angel
17 Portillo Barahona, native and former inhabitant of Guatemala;
18 Ms. Diane Mary Ortega, native and former inhabitant of the
19 United Kingdom; Mr. Hiep Xuan Nguyen, native and former
20 inhabitant of Vietnam; Ms. My Cam Freeman, native and former
21 inhabitant of Vietnam; Mr. Andres de Santiago Plascencia,
22 native and former inhabitant of Vietnam -- Mexico; Mr. Carlos
23 Colin Contreras, native and former inhabitant of Mexico;
24 Mr. Oscar Ivan Corona Cervantes, native and former inhabitant
25 of Mexico; Mr. Sergio Perea Armenta, native and former

1 inhabitant of Mexico; Ms. Lorena Sanchez Gonzalez, native and
2 former inhabitant of Mexico; Mr. Dardan Selimi, native and
3 former inhabitant of Serbia; Mr. Hector Wilfredo Torres Aranda,
4 native and former inhabitant of Peru; and, finally, Mr. Shua
5 Teguinos, native and former inhabitant of the Philippines.

6 Judge, each of these individuals has been interviewed
7 and examined under oath by a designated examiner for the United
8 States Citizenship and Immigration Services who has also
9 completed their character and background checks. Immigration
10 Services indicates that each of these individuals have all met
11 the requirements for naturalization and are well qualified as
12 candidates for United States citizenship.

13 As a fellow citizen, I want to welcome all of you to
14 the United States. I know you've been here a long time, but
15 now you are about to become citizens, so welcome as a fellow
16 citizen.

17 And now, Your Honors, it is my distinct honor to
18 motion that each of these individuals be granted citizenship.

19 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Mr. Gross, thank you.

20 And your motion and petition is granted.

21 I will now need to turn to the oath.

22 If you are out in the audience, the oath is in the
23 handout for you to follow along. This is the oath of
24 allegiance that's been given since 1787, and so all newcomers
25 like yourselves have been taking the same oath for the 240-some

1 years.

2 So I would now invite the individuals who are about to
3 become new citizens of the United States to please stand, and I
4 will invite my colleagues to join me in the administration of
5 the oath of allegiance. Please raise your right hand and
6 repeat after me:

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

21 Congratulations to each of you. You are now citizens
22 of the United States of America. Welcome.

23 (Applause.)

24 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: The process isn't
25 complete, really, until you receive that piece of paper, the

1 certificate of citizenship, so at this time I would again
2 invite my colleagues down below to give you your individual
3 certificates of citizenship.

4 (Presentation of certificates of citizenship.)

5 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: At this time our
6 citizens will take their very first Pledge of Allegiance as new
7 citizens. So if you would all please join us and rise, it is
8 my understanding that the Prairie Wind Student Council will
9 lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

10 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

11 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you, members of
12 the Prairie Wind Student Council.

13 Well, next it is a pleasure to introduce to you Jane
14 Redd who is a sixth grade student. Jane will lead us in the
15 rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner, followed by the
16 President's message.

17 (Star-Spangled Banner performed.)

18 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: And now we will hear
19 from the President of the United States.

20 Please be seated.

21 (President's message played.)

22 (Applause.)

23 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you, President
24 Biden.

25 Well, it is an honor and privilege to introduce to you

1 our guest speaker. MiYon Bowden was in your spot some years
2 ago at 11 years old. MiYon Bowden was naturalized as a new
3 citizen just like you are today or have been today. What's
4 even more special about MiYon is that she works with us. She's
5 a part of our team. She is a courtroom deputy with the clerk
6 of court's office, and she's, more specifically, a member of
7 the team where I work and she is our courtroom deputy. She's
8 just a wonderful person with a wonderful story about her own
9 path to citizenship.

10 So at this time I will introduce to you MiYon Bowden.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. BOWDEN: Good afternoon, Prairie Wind students and
13 new U.S. citizens. My name is MiYon.

14 It feels wonderful to witness such an important,
15 life-changing event for all the new citizens and at the same
16 time a huge honor to be here sharing my own naturalization
17 story with you.

18 It is over 34 years ago that I stood in front of the
19 Honorable William C. Beaman with my father by my side. As a
20 11-year-old child, I really didn't understand what it meant to
21 become a naturalized U.S. citizen. I can remember feeling
22 nervous, holding my right hand up and concentrating on
23 accurately repeating the oath after the judge.

24 Afterwards, I was congratulated, handed my
25 certificate, and I thought, This means I'm grown up now.

1 But to give you a bit of a back story, my father was
2 born and raised in Huntington, New York. After high school, he
3 joined the Air Force, and in his early 20s he was stationed at
4 Kwang Ju Air Force Base in South Korea. This is where he met
5 my mother.

6 He always told me that he fell quickly in love with my
7 mom, especially because of her cooking. They were married in
8 1977 and I was born the following year. My little sister was
9 born four years later.

10 I spoke Korean, only knowing a few English words I
11 learned from my father. My mother was slowly learning to speak
12 English. I attended kindergarten at the age of 4 and
13 graduated. It was the next year that our whole family moved to
14 the United States when my father received the news that he
15 would be stationed at the FE Warren Air Force Base here in
16 Cheyenne, Wyoming.

17 I had to start kindergarten, again, here in the U.S.
18 I also needed to learn the English language. Back then
19 kindergarten was only a half a day, so in the morning I went to
20 Henderson Elementary School for English class. Then I rode the
21 bus to Alta Vista Elementary for regular afternoon
22 kindergarten. I must have picked up the English language
23 rather quickly because I understood everything that was said in
24 my kindergarten class. I even remember songs that we sang. It
25 was mostly play, pointing and singing in circle time.

1 Unfortunately, once I learned to speak English, the
2 Korean language faded from my memory.

3 Our family lived on the base for about seven years.
4 Then we moved off base and my sister and I relocated to a few
5 different schools in town. My mother remained a stay-at-home
6 mom through my childhood, and my dad finally retired from the
7 Air Force when I was about 15 years old. He had served 20
8 years.

9 We were able to take a trip back to South Korea when I
10 was in high school. I remember feeling like a foreigner,
11 unable to speak the language and completely taken aback by the
12 culture shock. It was then that I realized how blessed and
13 fortunate I am to be an American citizen. I am proud of my
14 Korean heritage, and I'm proud to be an American citizen who
15 values my freedoms and constitutional rights.

16 Today I have beautiful children of my own, and, with
17 the help of my mother, I share with them the cultures,
18 traditions and, of course, the delicious food of our Korean
19 descent.

20 I now work for the very court in which I was
21 naturalized as a courtroom deputy for the Honorable Kelly
22 Rankin who has presided over this wonderful ceremony. I'm so
23 excited to congratulate and welcome each of you as citizens of
24 the United States of America. Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you for those
2 words.

3 I can't help but notice the very judge that swore you
4 in when you were 11 years old is in the audience, Judge Bill
5 Beaman.

6 Bill, if you would, Judge Beaman, raise your hand and
7 be recognized.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Well, it is always an
11 honor at these ceremonies to have representatives from our
12 Wyoming congressional delegations: Lummis, Barrasso and
13 Hageman. And I understand embedded in the audience are those
14 folks who have a personalized letter to each of our new
15 citizens from our representatives.

16 Thank you so much for your attendance today. If you
17 would kindly hand those letters to our new citizens.

18 (Presentation by congressional delegation.)

19 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Again, thank you very
20 much for appearing today and your presence and the letters that
21 you have handed out on behalf of our congressional delegation.
22 You're always wonderful supporters of these ceremonies.

23 Next, it is my understanding that some of the students
24 here at Prairie Wind have some personalized cards to be handed
25 out to our new citizens. At this time I would invite those

1 students to present your cards to the new citizens.

2 (Presentation of student cards.)

3 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you very much,
4 students.

5 Our next presentation comes from our folks that are
6 really diligent about their presence and assisting us in so
7 many ways with these ceremonies. This includes the Cowboy
8 Freedom Pac from Laramie. They have the bag so that you can
9 put all of your items into. But also, of course, the League of
10 Women Voters have the Wyoming Constitution and I believe a rose
11 to present.

12 So if you would kindly come forward and present those
13 items. And, likewise, thank you so much for your support of
14 these ceremonies over the years.

15 (Presentation by League of Women Voters
16 and Cowboy Freedom Pac.)

17 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you so much
18 again to the League of Women Voters and also the Cowboy Freedom
19 Pac. They traveled from Laramie to be here with us.

20 In advance, I would also like to thank the Daughters
21 of the American Revolution. They are providing some snacks and
22 treats, if you will, after our ceremony. So thank you all for
23 your presence and providing those treats for us.

24 Well, at this time I would invite, if anyone is
25 interested among our new citizens, to come up and say a word or

1 two about your path, your journey that got you to this day. It
2 is usually just kind of off the cuff and heartfelt. If any of
3 you would like to come up, we'll give you the microphone and
4 you can say a few words about your story, maybe thank someone
5 or many people if you would like.

6 No pressure. It is always a neat opportunity to hear
7 those words from our new citizens.

8 So if anyone would like to come up, I will hand you
9 the microphone.

10 Yes, sir. Come on up, please. Head to the podium and
11 we will hand you the mic.

12 HIEP XUAN NGUYEN: Good afternoon, everybody. My name
13 is Father Nguyen, originally from Vietnam. I have been living
14 here in this country for 50 years, and today I am so grateful
15 and thankful to become a U.S. citizen.

16 You and I, we are different. We speak different
17 languages. If we speak English, of course we have different
18 accent, right. We have different skin color. We have
19 different diversities in our cultures. We also have our
20 different gifts and talents. But today we are American. We
21 become -- we are part of the same country, the United States of
22 America, and today let us try our best to be loyal to this
23 wonderful country and let us use our different gifts and
24 talents to make this country a little bit better than
25 yesterday. I think we can do that.

1 Right now I'm the pastor at a catholic church in
2 Wheatland. And since I came to Wheatland, I walk to the park,
3 Lewis Park, every day. Every day. So every time I walk to the
4 park, I pick up one piece of trash. On the way home, I pick
5 another piece of trash. So every day at least I pick up two
6 pieces of trash. Every month I pick up at least 60 pieces of
7 trash. Of course the street and the park are better, right?

8 We can make America better with our differences. I'm
9 so grateful and thankful to be here to become a U.S. citizen.
10 I'm so proud to be a Vietnamese American. Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Father, thank you for
13 those heartfelt words. The community of Wheatland is lucky to
14 have you.

15 Anyone else like to say anything this afternoon?

16 Come on.

17 LORENA SANCHEZ GONZALEZ: Hi, my name is Lorena. I
18 come from Mexico. My journey as an immigrant started off with
19 a Wyoming guy. But before that, my dad was an immigrant who
20 worked in the United States, and he -- every single day told us
21 and say, Thank God for the United States of America for the
22 food that we have today.

23 Maybe you don't understand how wonderful this country
24 is. You have freedom. You have many possibilities. You have
25 hope. It is beautiful country to be proud of it, and I'm very

1 thankful, very proud to become today an American citizen. I am
2 grateful of every single person who work in Immigration,
3 because it didn't make it easy, this journey, for me. It was
4 14 years of journey. The first was landing with my dad in
5 Juarez where I learned hard work from the U.S. Army.

6 In the past, everybody who worked in Immigration, they
7 say they are putting themselves to make this country safe. It
8 is very important that everyone understand that -- this is my
9 daughter.

10 (Applause.)

11 LORENA SANCHEZ GONZALEZ: I'm very grateful with every
12 single person and with you and this journey, for the
13 Immigration, even though they didn't make anything easy for me.
14 I told my husband our journey is very noble. You feel
15 everything that's scary, love, happiness, lows, highs.

16 Being an American citizen is an honor for me, and,
17 yes, I will fight for it. And I hope to become a better
18 person, because you guys here, every single person has made me
19 better and become proud of this little country of Wyoming, the
20 honor, with the history. Wow, I've learned so much, it is
21 amazing.

22 So thank you so much to the U.S. Army for even being
23 there and many other persons and the world. You guys don't
24 understand, but it is big, keeping us safe. And I am honored
25 to stand up by his side and fight when I have to. And thank

1 you so much to the Immigration office for the opportunity and
2 for making things so difficult for me because that made me
3 learn so much, even English.

4 So thank you for the journey. I recognize looking at
5 you I'm in trouble. Thank you. Thank you everybody for
6 helping us and having us today.

7 (Applause.)

8 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you so much for
9 those wonderful words. That's just great.

10 Anyone else like to come up and share?

11 Yes, sir. The first brave souls go and then it sort
12 of flows from there, which is great.

13 MARIO IBARRA CARDENAS: Good afternoon, everybody. My
14 name is Mario Ibarra. I come from Mexico. I have been
15 residing in this country for 34 years now. It was a long path,
16 but I just want to say thank you everybody for the opportunity
17 we have to become American citizens, to be participant of this
18 country and to serve, you know. Like Father said, we can do
19 America great. We can rebuild America. We can do anything one
20 little piece at a time. It doesn't have to be overhaul the
21 whole nation. But little by little we can change the whole
22 things, our prayers, our own way of life, our friendships, you
23 know, Wyoming. Better neighbors, become better people.

24 I just want to thank everybody, the Immigration
25 system, thank you, Your Honor, for giving this opportunity and

1 becoming a United States citizen. Thank you all. God bless
2 you all.

3 (Applause.)

4 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you for those
5 inspiring words.

6 Anyone else?

7 Please come forward.

8 DULCE MARIA CARMONA RIVERA: Good afternoon,
9 everybody. My name is Dulce Maria Carmona Rivera. I'm
10 currently in the U.S. Air Force. I'm currently in the U.S. Air
11 Force, and I just want to thank all my co-workers, because --
12 thanking them, all their leadership and each one of them is one
13 of the reasons why I'm here.

14 So I was born in the Dominican Republic, but I just
15 lived there until I turned 4 years old. I live over 13 years
16 in Puerto Rico, and then I came here, which I feel has been one
17 of the best options that my mom -- at the time I didn't think
18 it was the best option because the English was hard for me, but
19 once I came here, I realized it was the best option.

20 I am so grateful that I'm serving in the United States
21 Air Force, and I'm so proud that I have met so many good people
22 from so many places that I feel like they're family for me.
23 And I thank all of you all here today for making each day
24 better day by day. I feel like it is amazing. It is great.

25 I would say my citizenship journey was really hard,

1 even though I'm in the military. But it was kind of hard.
2 But, still, I'm here thanking all of you all, and all of them.

3 Thank you so much.

4 (Applause.)

5 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you so much for
6 those remarks, and thank you for your service.

7 Anyone else like to say anything?

8 All right. Going once -- well, thank you all for
9 those powerful words. We really appreciate it and very
10 inspiring.

11 I would like to now turn it over to my colleagues for
12 any remarks they would like to make before we conclude.

13 I will begin with Judge Freudenthal.

14 Judge.

15 JUDGE FREUDENTHAL: Thank you, Judge Rankin.

16 Welcome. Welcome to all of you and congratulations.
17 Thank you, as the President said, for choosing us, choosing
18 America, choosing Wyoming and your presence here today.

19 I appreciated the remarks made and the passion behind
20 making our country better, which I think should inspire each
21 and every one of us. Simply by your presence here today and
22 the contributions you have already made and expect to make
23 toward your future and our future as countrymen, you help us
24 all remember that we are not a country that picks up the
25 welcome mat and closes the door. You help us remember to live

1 and speak the words that are found at the base of the Statue of
2 Liberty: *Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses,*
3 *yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuge of your teeming*
4 *shores, send these, the homeless, tempest tossed, to me. I*
5 *lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

6 I think all of us should be encouraged to remember
7 that we are very, very fortunate to live in this country with a
8 golden door lit by the lamp of liberty, preserved by the lives
9 given and lost by our military and veterans, where we are all
10 equal in every respect, including those born here and those who
11 chose America as a naturalized citizen.

12 You honor and bless us today. Thank you very much.
13 And congratulations.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you, Judge
16 Freudenthal.

17 Now I'll turn it over to Judge Phillips.
18 Judge.

19 JUDGE PHILLIPS: Thank you. It is so wonderful to be
20 here with you today. The other thing we're doing today is
21 understanding half the story and why we're so happy. But the
22 main part of the reason we look so happy is because of this day
23 and the joy that we see in your faces and the achievement. I
24 know it is hard work, although I didn't have to do it. I know
25 what's involved in becoming a citizen, and congratulations to

1 each of you.

2 It is a day of past, present and future for me, which
3 is to say anytime I attend one of these events, which are so
4 memorable, I always think back to, as Judge Freudenthal was
5 talking about, the Statue of Liberty. And whether one
6 generation, two generations, three generations, each of us in
7 this room or almost all of us in this room had someone who
8 suffered harms and travails to get to the United States. And,
9 therefore, we have had it easier as far as citizenship simply
10 being conferred by our birth. And if we could only pull those
11 people back, we would hug them, thank them and love them for
12 what they have done for us, as people will do for you as well.

13 Present, there's always a moment or two, or more, that
14 I remember from a ceremony. Your daughter stole the show. I
15 thought that it was just one of the kids who wanted to go
16 outside and throw the ball, and when he brought her up here, it
17 finally dawned on me. I really enjoyed that moment.

18 As far as the future, you have set yourself up for
19 success in the land of hard work and initiative, and I have
20 every belief that you all will succeed. And thank you for
21 coming to our country which offers so much as far as rights and
22 responsibilities as well. We're stronger for having you.
23 Welcome aboard, and hope to see you on the street or somewhere
24 else.

25 (Applause.)

1 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: Thank you, Judge
2 Phillips.

3 Once again, I want to thank the staff and Mr. Aragon
4 for hosting us this afternoon.

5 The fourth and fifth and sixth grade class, we were
6 commenting how well behaved and calm you have been. So we
7 thank you for your presence and all the family and friends of
8 our new citizens.

9 And to the new citizens, welcome. You are all now
10 Americans. Congratulations once again to each of you. What a
11 long road we all know it has been. We heard 14 years. I'm
12 sure others have taken longer, maybe some shorter, but I'm sure
13 it has also not been easy. It has been a struggle at times,
14 leaving your homeland, saying good-bye to beloved family and
15 friends, traveling to a country, finding a home, finding a new
16 job, finding a new way of life. And that's been the
17 culmination of this process for you that leads to the
18 celebration today.

19 But the good news for all of you and all of us is the
20 best of your respective cultures and your way of life is the
21 best of ours. And your traditions not only enrich your own
22 families, but they enrich the United States of America. Always
23 remember that this country was founded on the diversity of many
24 tribes, countries and cultures. We have been blessed by the
25 rich cultures and traditions of so many people like you, so

1 many people that came before you. America is a combination of
2 the very best of everyone that has come here, and this great
3 country depends on new citizens such as you to learn and grow
4 and prosper. Our survival depends on this diversity,
5 tolerance, dignity and respect for one another, and teachings
6 that we provide to one another.

7 Our very first president, George Washington,
8 recognized the importance of immigrants to our land when he
9 said: *Not just the rich and high-ranking newcomer, but the*
10 *oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions whom we*
11 *shall welcome to a participation in all of our rights and*
12 *privileges.*

13 Being a United States citizen, of course, means we're
14 free. It means that the Constitution and the laws of this
15 country prevail, but they are designed to protect those
16 freedoms. You are free to think on your own and to form your
17 own opinions, and you may voice those opinions, whether many
18 people or few people agree with you. You are free to work
19 where you want to work, to read what you want to read, to say
20 what you want to say. You are free to believe what you want to
21 believe, to openly practice any religion or not practice any
22 religion at all.

23 There is no single American way to think or believe.
24 As a citizen of the United States, you are free to follow your
25 own path, wherever it may lead you.

1 It is important to realize that you are doing more
2 here today than completing a legal process. You are making a
3 life-long promise and commitment to uphold the laws and the
4 values that make America what it is, and that promise comes
5 with great privileges of American citizenship, but it also
6 comes with great responsibilities.

7 The freedom of democracy comes with the responsibility
8 to participate in the democratic process by voting -- today is
9 election day in some parts of this country -- but not to do so
10 carelessly or casually, but in a way that is thoughtful and
11 informed.

12 You have the responsibility to educate yourself so you
13 can make good choices for yourself, your family, and this
14 country that is now your country. This democracy so hard
15 fought for only works when its people participate fully by
16 helping to choose who will govern us all and by taking that
17 process seriously.

18 Freedom of democracy also carries the responsibility
19 of your community and your country. You must be willing to
20 serve this country as you can. And I can't help but notice the
21 many military men and women that are in the audience today.
22 Just here in a few short days we will celebrate what is known
23 here as Veteran's Day, and we honor all of you for your great
24 service and sacrifices.

25 And for all of us who can make those sacrifices and

1 help our community, give back to your communities and your
2 country through service, your participation and involvement.
3 Help someone else also that needs a leg up. Your new country,
4 our country, will only continue to thrive if you care about our
5 fellow citizens as human beings.

6 Again, congratulations and welcome. You have worked
7 incredibly hard to earn your citizenship certificates, and now
8 I know I speak for all of our Wyoming neighbors when I say
9 we're grateful to have you. Thank you again.

10 Thank you to Principal Aragon and the students that
11 are here, and a reminder that the Daughters of the American
12 Revolution will have some treats for us when we conclude.

13 Judge Freudenthal, anything else before we complete
14 our process today? Judge Phillips?

15 All right.

16 I'm sorry. I don't want to forget this very important
17 song: *God Bless the USA*. What a great way to end our ceremony
18 by Mr. Tatum Ernste, a sixth grader here at Prairie Wind.

19 (*God Bless the USA* performed.)

20 CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE RANKIN: That's a great job,
21 Tatum.

22 Jane, thank you for your singing as well.

23 I think now we have finished our ceremony.

24 Once again, congratulations to all of our new
25 citizens. Thank you all for being here. Thank you again.

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(Proceedings concluded 2:30 p.m., November 7, 2023.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JANET DAVIS, Federal Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming, a Registered Diplomat Reporter, Federal Certified Realtime Reporter, and Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings contained herein on the aforementioned subject on the date herein set forth and that the foregoing pages constitute a full, true and correct transcript.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2024.

/s/ Janet Davis

JANET DAVIS, RDR, FCRR, CRR
Federal Official Court Reporter