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## Introduction

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*United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE HONORABLE JACQUELINE H. NGUYEN

On behalf of the Ninth Circuit, I would like to thank the *Golden Gate University Law Review* for its continued commitment to analyzing Ninth Circuit decisions in its annual *Ninth Circuit Survey*.

The *Survey* highlights some of the Ninth Circuit's most challenging and notable cases. This year's issue features *Perez v. Roseville*, 882 F.3d 843 (9th Cir. 2019), *superseded by* 926 F.3d 511 (9th Cir. 2019), and *Williams v. Gaye*, 895 F.3d 1106 (9th Cir. 2018). In *Perez*, the court considered the complex issue of whether the defendants, police officials who had investigated a complaint against a fellow officer that led to the officer's termination, were entitled to qualified immunity from 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claims. *Williams*, by contrast, was a copyright infringement action arising out of the allegation that Pharrell Williams and Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines" had copied from Marvin Gaye's "Got to Give It Up." These cases, two of the thousands that the Ninth Circuit resolves every year, evidence the breadth and weight of the court's docket.

Although the Ninth Circuit's caseload garners most of the public's interest, the court does more than decide cases. The judges, staff, and attorneys who practice in the Circuit are also engaged in important efforts to promote civic education. One such effort is an annual civics contest—a Circuit-wide essay and video competition for high school students—led by its Courts and Community Committee (ably chaired by District Judge Janis L. Sammartino). The contest, designed to help young people become knowledgeable citizens who are better able to participate in our democracy, focuses on the role of the judicial branch in preserving our constitutional rights. The theme of the 2019 contest was: "The 4th Amendment in the 21st Century—What is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age?" Students were challenged to write an essay or produce a short video focusing on how the federal courts have applied Fourth Amendment protections to electronic data devices, including cellphones. The court also hosted over 50 students at a "Law Day" event to discuss the contest's theme. In all, 1,308 essays and 138 videos were submitted by students from across the Circuit. Top finishers in each com-

petition received a monetary prize and were invited to attend the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Spokane, Washington.

The Ninth Circuit regularly hosts tour groups at the historic San Francisco courthouse. In partnership with Experiencing Justice, a program dedicated to civic outreach, volunteer docents lead tours that provide a curated experience for students to learn about the judiciary. Judges, law clerks, and court staff have fully embraced the program, often participating in question-and-answer sessions with students—an experience that is both meaningful and memorable. Students also take advantage of the opportunity to observe oral arguments. This year (as of August 2019), the court has facilitated 51 question-and-answer sessions with students and has welcomed over 1,700 students in total—with over 2,000 projected to visit by the end of the year.

On September 17, 2019, the court commemorated Constitution Day with events across the Circuit. Judges presided over naturalization ceremonies at baseball stadiums in San Diego and Los Angeles, and the Kennedy Learning Center in Sacramento hosted a “Constitution Café,” at which students engaged in discussions of whether particular provisions of the Constitution should be re-drafted.

According to the 2017 Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey, only 26 percent of Americans can name all three branches of government and more than a third of Americans cannot name any of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.<sup>1</sup> The court’s efforts to promote civics education recognize that democracy best thrives when its citizens and engaged.

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<sup>1</sup> *Americans Are Poorly Informed About Basic Constitutional Provisions*, ANNENBERG PUBLIC POLICY CENTER (Sept. 12, 2017), <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-are-poorly-informed-about-basic-constitutional-provisions>.