

## NEWS FROM THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**JANUARY 18, 2022**

*Philadelphia* – The Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee of the Judicial Council of the Third Circuit announced today that it is hosting an essay contest for 5th and 6th grade classes focused on civics, citizenship, and the concept of the “Rule of Law.” The essay prompt is: “What does the Rule of Law mean to you and to our country?”

The Third Judicial Circuit is comprised of the U.S. Court of Appeals as well as the Federal District Courts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The latter are trial courts, which include bankruptcy courts. Chief Circuit Judge Michael A. Chagares noted that “We think it is only fitting that we launch this program in connection with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, as we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. King, an example of how individual citizens can advance the notion that our society should recognize the dignity of each and every citizen.” The Rule of Law plays a key role in that effort by ensuring the consistent and predictable application of law to each person.

The Committee and its members are partnering with bar associations, civic organizations, and educational institutions across the geographical reach of the Third Circuit to promote and oversee the essay contest. Class essays must be submitted on or before Friday, March 18, 2022. Classes submitting the best essays in each district (District of Delaware, District of New Jersey, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Middle District of Pennsylvania, Western District of Pennsylvania, and the District of the Virgin Islands) of the Third Circuit will be invited to one of the nine courthouses in the Third Circuit to present their essays during the first weeks of May, in celebration of Law Day. The essays and presentations will be evaluated based on focus, content development, organization, and style and prizes will be awarded.

Judge D. Brooks Smith, who chairs the Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee overseeing the contest, urged that “It is important, now more than ever, that

the citizenry realize that our courts are an integral part of the community. An understanding of what we do as the third branch of government in promoting the rule of law will help students appreciate the importance of our independent judiciary.”

For more information about the essay contest, please visit the Third Circuit Court of Appeals website at <https://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/> or contact 267-299-4306.