

## NEWS FROM THE THIRD CIRCUIT

*Philadelphia*-The federal courts of the U.S. Third Judicial Circuit are stepping up their efforts in providing civics education programs throughout the expanse of the entire Circuit. Through outreach to communities and educational institutions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the United States Virgin Islands, an expanded and re-vitalized “Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee” will work with educators and citizens to enhance public understanding of the critical and non-political role that courts play in American society.

“That judges and courts make decisions based on a rule of law is essential to the most basic understanding of the American justice system,” Third Circuit Chief Judge D. Brooks Smith remarked in announcing the Circuit’s recent undertaking. “Our judges have done very valuable work in civics education, both at the district level and through the former ‘Courts and Community Committee’ of the Judicial Council. We will build on that foundational experience in the years ahead through an enhanced and coordinated effort, across the Third Circuit, emphasizing the rule of law.”

Judge Smith, who chairs the committee, called upon Senior Third Circuit Judge Marjorie O. Rendell of the Court of Appeals and District Judge Cynthia M. Rufe of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to serve as co-vice-chairs. Judges Rendell and Rufe have amassed a wealth of experience over the years in the

field of civics education through their shared leadership of the Circuit's predecessor Committee. "I can't over-state how much our programs will benefit from the expertise that Midge and Cynthia have developed from their work over the years," Chief Judge Smith added. "Not only are they respected jurists. They have also devoted themselves to instructing citizens of all ages on the rule of law and on how the federal courts administer justice."

Each district that comprises the Third Circuit is represented on the Committee. Other members are:

Judge Cathy Bissoon – Western District of PA

Magistrate Judge Sherry R. Fallon – District of Delaware

Judge Mark A. Kearney – Eastern District of PA

Judge Wilma A. Lewis – District of the U.S. Virgin Islands

Judge Zahid N. Quraishi – District of New Jersey

Judge Jennifer P. Wilson – Middle District of PA

Circuit Executive Margaret A. Wiegand

The "Courts, Community and Rule of Law Committee" held an organizational meeting at the end of September in the new Third Circuit Learning Center located on the first floor of the Byrne Federal Courthouse in Philadelphia. The Center is equipped with state-of-the-art technology which will facilitate the Committee's ongoing civics education and rule of law programming. Along with newly dedicated space and

technology, a five-member administrative team will be working to support the Circuit's outreach and civics initiatives.