



News Release

Sept. 17, 2009

Katie Tichacek

212-264-5098

Katherine.tichacek@dhs.gov

USCIS NY Naturalizes More Than 100 Citizenship Candidates on Ellis Island

WASHINGTON — U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) NY District Director Andrea Quarantillo administered the oath of allegiance to more than 100 people today, welcoming them to American Citizenship on Ellis Island. Director Quarantillo was joined at the celebration by Fatima A. Shama, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs; Gening Liao, the Counselor to the Director of USCIS, and John Hnedak, the National Park Service Deputy Superintendent of Ellis Island. One of New York’s newest American citizens, Michael Vos, the son-in-law of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The event was held to commemorate Constitution Day and Citizenship Day and is part of a nationwide USCIS celebration. More than 8,400 citizenship candidates became citizens at nearly 75 special ceremonies held throughout the United States Sept. 17. Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is celebrated on Sept. 17 in remembrance of the signing of the Constitution in 1787.

“On the anniversary of the day our founding fathers committed to the principles and values that define America, men and women from around the world have come here to Ellis Island to show their commitment to the United States by becoming citizens,” said USCIS New York District Director Andrea Quarantillo. “Just as they commit to their new country, their country commits to them and grants them all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.”

“New York City has been made great by the contributions of generations of immigrants and our strength as a nation lies in our diversity” said Commissioner Fatima Shama, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. “Immigrants are an asset to every institution in which they participate and today we have all been made richer by welcoming these 113 new citizens.”

“As an immigrant, you come to New York City and during your stay in this new and strange land, you slowly assume a new identity and shake off the old,” said citizenship candidate Michiel Vos, “And today, on Ellis Island, this historic place—we take the final step of becoming new citizens of our new country.”

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About Citizenship Day

Citizenship Day has been celebrated in some form since 1940, when Congress designated the third Sunday in May as “I Am an American Day.” In 1952, President Harry Truman signed a bill formalizing the celebration of Citizenship Day on Sept. 17. In 1956, Congress requested, and President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed, the week beginning Sept. 17 through Sept. 23 as Constitution Week. Most recently, in 2004, Congress established Sept. 17 as Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. For more information on USCIS and its programs, please visit www.uscis.gov.