

PRESS RELEASE

Jacksonville, Florida, November 25, 2020

For Immediate Release

CONTINUING A TRADITION AT TIAA BANK FIELD

**UNITED STATES TO WELCOME 50 NEW CITIZENS IN
NATURALIZATION CEREMONY AT
HALFTIME OF THE JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS GAME
AGAINST THE CLEVELAND BROWNS
NOVEMBER 29, 2020**

The judges of the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville Division, working together with the Department of Homeland Security – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Jacksonville, are pleased to announce that for the third year in a row the Jacksonville Jaguars will host a Naturalization Ceremony at TIAA Bank Field during the halftime of the Jaguars game against the Cleveland Browns. On Sunday, November 29, 2020, 50 northeast Florida residents from 24 different countries, ranging in age from 20 to 62, will become new citizens of the United States.

The federal judiciary is committed to engaging the public in projects that educate citizens and naturalization ceremonies hosted by federal courts throughout the United States help to accomplish that commitment. At these ceremonies, immigrants who have worked for years to complete the arduous requirements of U.S. citizenship swear their allegiance to the United States and receive their naturalization certificates, the final step in becoming a citizen of the United States.

Prior to the pandemic, Jacksonville federal judges fulfilled their commitment by hosting naturalization ceremonies every month in the Ceremonial Courtroom of the Bryan Simpson United States Courthouse, at schools, and other community venues. Family members and friends of new citizens, students from schools, and members of community organizations were invited to witness these meaningful ceremonies, which provided a celebration of the new citizens' achievements, and a learning experience about what it means to become a U.S. citizen. Since the onset of the pandemic, it has no longer been possible for the Court to host ceremonies with large audiences within the confines of the courthouse, in school auditoriums, or other public venues.

However, a naturalization ceremony at halftime of a Jaguars game has become an important tradition for the Jaguars, the Court, and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

District Judge Marcia Morales Howard says, “We were so pleased to learn that the Jaguars wanted to continue the tradition of sharing this meaningful ceremony with their fans and broadcast audience by finding a way to conduct the ceremony within CDC guidelines and the Jaguars’ 2020 Stadium Protocols. We appreciate the thought that went into staging the ceremony on TIAA Bank Field’s Sky Terrace rather than the field. In compliance with Stadium Protocols, this open-air venue permits the applicants for citizenship to be socially distant from each other, from the fans and the team, and continues to provide a way to publicly celebrate their achievements.”

During this difficult time for all of us, Judge Howard and Lisa Bradley, Field Office Director of DHS-USCIS, appreciate and thank the Jacksonville Jaguars for their cooperation in providing a lesson in citizenship to thousands of Jaguars fans as well as graciously and safely hosting the new citizens and their families at this game.

At the ceremony Judge Howard will administer the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America which says:

"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."

A list of the 24 countries from which the new citizens come is attached.

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Media Inquiries:
Suzanne Judas, Esq.
Community Outreach Coordinator
Jacksonville Chapter, Federal Bar Association
communityoutreach@jaxfedbar.org
904-910-0354

**COUNTRIES FROM WHICH NEW CITIZENS ARE COMING
NATURALIZATION CEREMONY
NOVEMBER 29, 2020
AT HALFTIME
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS GAME AGAINST THE CLEVELAND BROWNS**

Afghanistan
Albania
Australia
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Brazil
Burma
Colombia
Cuba
El Salvador
France
Germany
Haiti
Iran
Jamaica
Mexico
Morocco
Netherlands
Philippines
Romania
Russia
Slovakia
Thailand
United Kingdom
Venezuela