

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT

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PRESS RELEASE: Federal Judges Inspire Students During Law Day **For Immediate Release: May 10, 2022**

“You are welcome in the federal Judiciary.” That was the message that Kansas federal courts shared with high school and college students at a Law Day program on May 6 in Kansas City, Kansas. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court and U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas celebrated and encouraged diversity in the legal profession, introduced students to the variety of career options in the court system, and honored the many contributions of Judge Julie A. Robinson. The Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach Committee of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Kansas hosted the program.

Chief Bankruptcy Judge Dale L. Somers welcomed Wichita high school students from the Rise Up for Youth organization who attended in person. High school groups from Garden City High School and Satanta High School also viewed the event via a live YouTube feed. The students served as jurors while Federal Magistrate Judge Teresa James and the University of Missouri—Kansas City Mock Trial Team conducted a criminal trial. Myah Blocker, an undergraduate student intern with the courts, announced the student jury’s “Not guilty” verdict.

The program culminated when bankruptcy attorney Jill Michaux announced that the winner of the inaugural “Judge Julie A. Robinson Award” was its namesake, District Judge Julie A. Robinson. As Judge Robinson graciously accepted the award, she told her young audience that when she was in high school “I could not have imagined myself sitting as a federal judge on this bench” but “the important thing, I think, is to not let yourself be limited.”

Judge Robinson began her career as a law clerk for Bankruptcy Judge Benjamin E. Franklin. Then she spent a decade handling both civil and criminal cases in the United States Attorney’s Office. In 1994, she was appointed as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the District of Kansas, and in 1996 she became a member of the Tenth Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel. In 2001, she was appointed as a U.S. District Judge, where she served as Chief Judge from 2017 to 2021. Judge Robinson’s influence and hard work have benefitted the judiciary nationwide. She either led or was a member of several key judicial committees, including the Federal Judiciary Workplace Conduct Working Group that works to “ensure a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all court employees.” Judge Robinson also serves the broader community in a wide variety of capacities, from teaching as an adjunct law professor to serving as chair of Healing House of Kansas City, a non-profit that has provided transitional housing for more than 8,000 women and men after they completed substance abuse treatment.

Law Day has been observed since 1958 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower—who grew up in Abilene, Kansas—proclaimed Law Day to “remember with pride and vigilantly guard the great heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under law which our forefathers bequeathed to us.”