



Press Release

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Color of Justice at CIRI and Boney Courthouse in Anchorage February 25-26, 2016 **Diverse Judges and Attorneys Encourage Youth to Pursue Legal and Judicial Careers** **40 Rural High School Students to Attend This Year's Program**

Anchorage, Alaska (February 23, 2016) – On February 25-26, 2016, the Alaska Court System, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Justice Center, and Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI) will host the *Color of Justice* program. Color of Justice is a law-related education program founded by the National Association of Women Judges that is designed to promote diversity in the legal profession and judiciary by encouraging diverse youth to consider careers as lawyers and judges. Nearly 90 high school students from villages across the state and from Anchorage area high schools will attend two days of workshops and other activities presented by law professors from Gonzaga University School of Law, Seattle University School of Law, University of Alaska Anchorage, and University of Washington School of Law. The program is also supported by the Alaska Bar Association, Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Justice Center, Anchorage School District, Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Law School Admission Council, Northwest Indian Bar Association, and Rotary Club of East Anchorage.

New to Color of Justice this year, is a Rural Student Initiative made possible by contributions from all 12 ANCSA Regional Corporations, the Alaska Native Justice Center, and by program support from the UAA Justice Center, the Multicultural Center, the Alaska Native Student Center, Alaska Native Studies Program, UAA Department of Anthropology, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP), the UAA Pre-Law Society, and the First Alaskans Institute. Rural Student Initiative attendees will be coming from Akutan, Atkasuk, Chignik Lake, Dillingham, Dutch Harbor, Egegik, Fairbanks, Galena, Hooper Bay, Houston, Huslia, Kaktovik, King Cove, Kongiganek, Kotzebue, Koyuk, Larsen Bay, Nenana, Nikiski, Saint Paul Island, Soldotna, and Valdez. Anchorage area students are coming from Bartlett, Dimond, Eagle River, East, SAVE, Service, and West high schools.

Color of Justice sessions will include "*MentorJet: A Speed Mentoring Experience*," where students will get the chance to meet with 14 diverse lawyers, judges, and justices, including Supreme Court Justice Dana Fabe. *Mentor Jet* takes place on Thursday February 25, 2016 from 4:15 - 6:30PM at CIRI – 725 E. Fireweed Lane. "*Constitutional Cranium*," a quiz show on constitutional knowledge hosted by

Judge Pamela Washington and UAA Justice Center Prof. Jason Brandeis, and a *Mock Trial* coordinated by UAA Justice Center Prof. Ryan Fortson with 16 volunteer mock trial coaches from across the state, will take place at the Boney Courthouse - 303 K in the Supreme Court Courtroom on the 5th Floor, from 11:00AM - 12:15PM and from 12:45PM - 3:45PM respectively.

For the rural high school students attending the program this year, the Rural Student Initiative has coordinated donated food, transportation, and friendly volunteers and students who will welcome Initiative students and show them the UAA campus and speak to them about educational and cultural issues. Volunteer host families in Anchorage will be putting them up, feeding them, and transporting them to and from the program events. Some Initiative students will require chopper and bush plane hops to get from island to mainland to hub village to Ted Stevens. Some have never seen a traffic light, or been in a movie theatre. They will not only be converging on Anchorage to learn about the legal profession and all that it has to offer them and their nation, state, community and ethnic group, but will be doing so alongside students from Anchorage who bring their own perspectives, but from an urban environment. The convergence is historic.

Increasing diversity on the bench is important to fostering public trust and confidence in our justice system, according to Justice Fabe. Color of Justice serves this goal, she says, "*by affirming for our young women and youth of color that the judiciary is a career path that is open to them.*" Members of the news media are invited to attend and cover *Color of Justice* events in Anchorage, which are detailed in the attached program agenda. A Color of Justice video is available on the court system website <http://courts.alaska.gov/outreach/index.htm#coj>, and further information is available by calling the contact number above.

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