

**Superior Court of California
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**



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Charles Smiley, Assistant Presiding Judge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: Alameda County Superior Court celebrates **Law Month**, bringing civics education to Alameda County classrooms throughout the month of May.

[Law Day](#), designated by Congress as May 1, is an annual opportunity to celebrate the rule of law and its role in protecting American democratic freedoms. The 2021 Law Day theme, [Advancing the Rule of Law NOW!](#), serves as a reminder that all of us share in the responsibility to promote the rule of law, defend liberty, and pursue justice.

Recognizing the particular importance of the rule of law in these challenging times, this year, Alameda County will observe Law Day throughout the entire month of May by using remote videoconference technology to bring civics learning programs to more classrooms and students than ever before.

Alameda County's "Law Month" launched on May 4, 2021 at an afternoon presentation before the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, which joined the Alameda County Superior Court in issuing a joint proclamation declaring May 2021 as Law Month. Presiding Judge Tara M. Desautels, Assistant Presiding Judge Charles A. Smiley, Office of Education Superintendent of Schools L.K. Monroe, and students Brooke Nunes and Jasai Martinez offered remarks about the rule of law and the value that civics learning opportunities bring to young people.

Subsequently, students from public and private schools in Alameda County joined superior court judges, lawyers and educators at a virtual reception featuring keynote speaker and retired California Supreme Court Justice Ming Chin, the Court's first Chinese American justice. Sharing his personal conversations with retired United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, Justice Chin inspired the audience with his explanation of the rule of law's essential function in protecting democracy in America.

For the remainder of the month of May, the Court and its government partners are offering interested Alameda County schools and students a series of coordinated remote sessions where they will have the opportunity to learn more about civics and the rule of law from community experts including judges and justices, distinguished lawyers, County Supervisors, mayors, and community organizations. These sessions will provide the opportunity for students to meet and speak with civic leaders directly, to

learn about their occupations and personal histories and also to discuss substantive topics such as social justice, voting rights, jury service, the legal system, and the three branches of government.

The Court's approach to Law Month is inspired by the work of California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, a [nationally recognized](#) champion of civics learning and also a Law Month participant! Law Month borrows from the Judicial Council's innovative programs like [Judges in the Classroom](#) and the annual [Civic Learning Awards](#), which are available to all California public schools.

Despite the challenges schools continue to face during this coronavirus pandemic, numerous Alameda County educators have enthusiastically joined Law Month activities. To date, schools from nine districts covering all parts of the county have registered for Law Month's unique civics learning experiences. Similarly, in addition to the wide participation from Alameda County leadership, this year our Superior Court judges have also been joined by federal judges from the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, as well as justices from the First District Court of Appeal and the California Supreme Court. Educators interested in registering their students for additional opportunities are encouraged to do so through [this link](#).

With great thanks to the Court's community partners, Law Month is a proud demonstration of the work of the Alameda County Civic Learning Partnership, which will only spur future collaborations between government, education, and the community to advance civics education and community engagement for Alameda County's young people.