

**16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit**  
**County of Kane**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT K. VILLA**  
**KANE COUNTY JUDICIAL CENTER**  
37W777 Route 38, Suite 301  
St. Charles, Illinois 60175



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Kane County Judges and Legal Professionals Celebrate the Spirit of Law Day**

*May 4, 2026 – Kane County, IL* – On May 1, 2026, the 16th Judicial Circuit, in partnership with the Kane County Bar Foundation (KCBF) and Kane County Bar Association (KCBA), marked Law Day with celebrations across the county, honoring the 2026 theme, "The Rule of Law and the American Dream." Codified by President Eisenhower in 1961, Law Day (held annually on May 1) is a national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law. Law Day provides an opportunity to reflect on how law and the legal process protect our liberty, strive to achieve justice, and contribute to the freedoms that all Americans share. The main Law Day ceremony took place in the historic rotunda of the Kane County Courthouse in Geneva, while other award presentations and activities were held at various high schools throughout Kane County.

During the ceremony, Chief Judge Robert Villa presented the first annual 16th Judicial Circuit Law Day Spirit Award to Julie Cibulskis, Esq., of Speers, Reuland & Cibulskis, P.C. The award was created by the Chief Judge's Office to recognize an individual (or individuals) who exemplifies the principles of the law and dedication to the legal community. Chief Judge Villa said it was very easy to select the inaugural award honoree sharing, "Julie is someone who really embodies what I think is the spirit of the law, its practice as a professional, what impacts us, and how you get involved."

Judges from the 16th Judicial Circuit and members of the KCBF visited high schools countywide to present awards, including a cash prize, certificate, and swag bag, to winners of the 2026 Law Day Essay Contest in front of educators, school staff, and family. Chief Judge Villa shared, "All monetary prizes for this contest were generously donated by the Kane County Bar Foundation."

The annual contest was open to all sophomores and juniors who attend high schools in Kane County. Students were invited to submit 500-word essays centered on the 2026 American Bar Association's Law Day Theme, "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."

The 2026 Kane County Law Day Essay Contest Winners:

- Izzy Pasternak (Sophomore, Rosary College Prep) — 1st Place: \$500. Presented by Judge Reginald Campbell, Judge D.J. Tegeler, and Kane County Bar Foundation member Chrissie White.
- Malyada Medikundam (Junior, Illinois Math and Science Academy) — 1st Place: \$500. Presented by Judge Keith Johnson and Kane County Bar Foundation Board member Paul Steele.
- Santiago Garcia (Junior, Marmion Academy) — 2nd Place: \$250. Presented by Judge Kimberly DiGiovanni and Kane County Bar Foundation President Katie Doyen.
- Anya Amin (Junior, St. Charles East High School) — 3rd Place: \$250. Presented by Chief Judge Robert Villa and Kane County Bar Foundation Executive Director Ann Lobb.

Chief Judge Villa ended the ceremony with a reminder of the day's importance: "I hope you all find a day like this to be reflective on why you chose to be lawyers, why you chose to be involved in the rule of law, and why we should continue to celebrate Law Day every year."

If you would like to read the winning Law Day essays, please click here or visit <https://www.illinois16thjudicialcircuit.org/Pages/Law-Day-Essay-Writing-Contest.aspx>.

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Photos and Captions (also attached to email)

*We have received permission to use photos from all adult individuals, parents/guardians of minors, and photographers.*



Chief Judge Robert Villa (left) presented the first annual 16th Judicial Circuit Law Day Spirit Award to Kane County attorney Julie Cibulskis (right). The award is given in recognition of an individual (or individuals) who exemplify the principles of the law. Photo by James Harvey Photography.



Izzy Pasternak (Sophomore, 1st Place) holding her certificate with Judge Reginald Campbell (left), Kane County Bar Foundation member Chrissie White, and Judge DJ Tegeler (right) at Rosary College Prep — Izzy receives her \$500 check, Law Day swag bag, and certificate. Photo provided by school officials.



Malyada Medikundam (Junior, 1st Place) center with Judge Keith Johnson (left) and Kane County Bar Foundation Board member Paul Steele (right) at Illinois Math and Science Academy. Izzy receives her \$500 check, Law Day swag bag, and certificate. Photo provided by Judge Keith Johnson.



Santiago Garcia (Junior, 2nd Place) left, with Judge Kimberly DiGiovanni, and Kane County Bar Foundation President Katie Doyen (not pictured) at Marmion Academy — Santiago receives his \$250 check, Law Day swag bag, and certificate. Photo provided by Katie Doyen.



Anya Amin (Junior, 3rd Place) with Chief Judge Robert Villa and Kane County Bar Foundation Executive Director, Ann Lobb (not pictured) at St. Charles East High School — Anya receives her \$250 check, Law Day swag bag, and certificate. Photo provided by Ann Lobb.