

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Idaho, Idaho Bar organize Constitution Day events for Moscow, Boise

MOSCOW, Idaho – Sept. 8, 2016 – The University of Idaho’s College of Law and the Diversity Section of the Idaho State Bar plan two days of speakers and panels, Sept. 15 in Moscow and Sept. 16 in Boise, as part of a national observance of Constitution Day. Both events are free and open to the public.

Constitution Day events this year will commemorate the 225th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791. The Moscow symposium will begin at 8 a.m. (PT) Wednesday, Sept. 15 in the courtroom of the Menard Law Building, 711 Rayburn St. The Boise program will begin at 8 a.m. (MT), Thursday, Sept. 16, in the auditorium of the Washington Group Plaza, 720 Park Blvd., in Boise.

The Idaho State Bar’s Diversity Section began conversations in 2010 about a statewide symposium on the most important document for an American citizen’s civil liberties – the Bill of Rights, said Linda Pall, a Moscow attorney and Diversity Section council member. Those efforts came to fruition this year.

“The Constitution would not have been approved by the states without specific protections for citizens’ rights,” Pall said. “While the Constitution itself is directed toward the structure of government, individual rights have been the cornerstone of personal liberty from their ratification in 1791 through today and into the future.” Pall is coordinating the symposium with support from the College of Law and Idaho State Bar.

Stephen Pevar, senior staff counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, will give the keynote address at both locations. Pevar has litigated some 200 federal cases involving constitutional rights, including more than 35 in Idaho. His areas of specialty include free speech, Indian rights, prisoners’ rights and the separation of church and state.

Other topics include:

- A look back: Access to the Bill of Rights
- Sixth Amendment Right to Counsel: Public Defense Reforms in Idaho
- Going forward: The Changing Supreme Court and the future of the Bill of Rights (Boise only)
- First Amendment and Citizens United (Boise only)
- Fourth Amendment’s Application to Social Media Surveillance (Moscow only)
- Racial Justice Under the Bill of Rights: Violence and Minority America (Moscow only)

A highlight of both days’ programs will be a discussion of ethical issues in law and journalism, titled “Constitutional Rights in a Court of Law and the Court of Public Opinion.” UI emeritus law professor Don Burnett will moderate a panel of lawyers, judges, journalists, historians and philosophers in a hypothetical discussion modeled on the late Fred Friendly’s televised roundtables. The panels will begin at 3:30 p.m. in both locations.

Another feature of the Boise program is an opportunity for attendees to hear the personal views of Robyn Brody and Curt McKenzie, candidates for an open position on the Idaho Supreme Court, on the role of the Bill of Rights in state and federal jurisprudence. McKenzie and Brody will be on the ballot for November’s general election.

For a complete schedule, including all speakers’ names and affiliations, please see:

- Boise: https://isb.idaho.gov/pdf/temp/div_20160916_225thanniversaryboise.pdf
- Moscow: https://isb.idaho.gov/pdf/temp/div_20160915_225thanniversarymoscow.pdf

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit is available through the Idaho State Bar. Pre-registration is available through Sept. 13 for Moscow and Sept. 14 for Boise participants.

Constitution Day, observed annually on Sept. 17, recognizes the events in 1787 when delegates to the Constitutional Convention met for the last time to sign the document they had created. The late Sen. Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia inserted language into a 2005 federal spending bill that requires all educational institutions that receive federal funds from any agency to have programming for Constitution Day.

Past observances at the University of Idaho have dealt with free press and fair trial issues, leaks of government secrets, violent images in video games, federal drug laws and marriage equality.

For more information about Constitution Day, visit <http://www.constitutionday.com/>

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About UI

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