

## CINNATI STATE WELCOMES NEW U. S. CITIZENS

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PHOTO PROVIDED

“Ours is an open and accepting society, and has historically provided an avenue for lawful immigration to all those willing to accept the responsibilities of citizenship.” said Spencer Bachus, U.S. Congressman (AL). And recently in Cincinnati, 102 individuals from 43 countries of origin including Ghana, Canada, Mali, Senegal, and Australia, accepted that responsibility and became U.S. citizens at a naturalization ceremony held at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College with Judge J. Gregory Wehrman administering the oath of citizenship. The naturalization ceremony was sponsored by the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) and the Humanities and Sciences Divisions at the College.

“It is inspiring to me that despite all the more recent difficulties within the U.S. political scene, that this country still welcomes people from all over the world, from all walks of life and that the idea of a melting pot is still alive.” Andrea Cheng tells AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. Cheng, an ESL (English as a second language) instructor at Cincinnati State and co-chair of the naturalization ceremony held at Cincinnati State, found the event “inspiring” and “moving”.

Cheng, whose parents are natu-



**Dr. Odell Owens, President of Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, addresses the 102 new citizens, their families, and friends at the recent Naturalization Ceremony held at the College.**

*Photo by Cincinnati State Technical and Community College*

ralized U.S. citizens, was especially moved as she witnessed ten of the new citizens, who were ESL students that Cheng previously taught, fulfill dreams. The celebratory event included the new citizens taking the oath, performances by the Fifth Grade Choir of Our Lady of Visitation and Marcia Caulton (vocalist), folk dancing by the International Folk Dancers of Cincinnati, and a reception.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website, the United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants from all parts of the world. During the last decade, U.S. Citizenship and Immigra-

tion Services (USCIS) welcomed more than 6.8 million naturalized citizens into the fabric of our nation.

If not born in the U.S., obtaining U.S. citizenship is done through the naturalization process which culminates with taking an oath of citizenship. As stated on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website, “Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).” The process, which is detailed, is not to be taken

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lightly. Determination, hardwork, and a commitment to the beliefs of this country are cornerstones to achieving citizenship. The process, which can take at least 5 years (sometimes longer) includes being at least 18 years of age, completing a detailed application, being able to read, write, and speak basic English, passing a history/civics test, and culminates with taking an oath of citizenship.

While illegal immigration is more readily in the headlines, legal immigration is a quest of many and should not go unnoticed. In the Annual Flow Report (April 2011), published by the Office of Immigration Statistics which used data for the fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) from administrative records of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security, the total number of persons naturalizing in fiscal year 2010 was 619,913. As reported by the Department of Homeland Security in the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, the total number of persons naturalized in fiscal year 2010 in the state of Ohio was 8,617. Since 2001, the total number of persons naturalized in the state of Ohio during the fiscal years totaled 76,344 persons.

It has been 52 years since her U.S. naturalization ceremony and Mary Kartal, mother of Andrea Cheng, attended the recent ceremony at Cincinnati State and



***Since 2001, the total number of persons naturalized in the state of Ohio during the fiscal years totaled 76,344 persons. In what has become an annual event at Cincinnati State, more than 300 future citizens, family members and friends have participated in the naturalization ceremony in past years. Recently at the College, 102 individuals from 43 countries of origin, became U. S. citizens at a naturalization ceremony held at the College.***

speaks with pride and delight of becoming a naturalized U. S. citizen and seeing others striving for the same goal and opportunities. "I would do it [U.S. naturalization] all over again" said Mrs. Kartal, whose birth country is Hungary. Mrs. Kartal, who is now in her 80's and an active volunteer at an inner city elementary school in Cincinnati, found the naturalization ceremony in 2011 to be just as poignant as when she and her husband took the oath of citizenship in 1959 in a judge's chambers. "We were very happy." And, still are.

In what has become an annual event at Cincinnati State,

more than 300 future citizens, family members and friends have participated in the naturalization ceremony in past years. "The naturalization ceremony is a way for Cincinnati State to reach out to and welcome new citizens in the Cincinnati area." said Cheng. "It is also a way for our students to learn about what it means to become an American citizen, and to witness this moving ceremony."

*To learn more about the naturalization process, visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).*

*To learn more about Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, visit [www.cincinnati-state.edu](http://www.cincinnati-state.edu).*

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