

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 21, 2020**

**Delaware Courts once again celebrate the season with reenactment of**  
***Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street***

*For its 17<sup>th</sup> year the reenactment took place via videoconference*

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Delaware Courts this month continued its 17-year-old holiday tradition of reenacting the courtroom scene from *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* for elementary school students. And just like many actual court proceedings in 2020, the hearing to determine Kris Kringle’s “competence” shifted to remote videoconferencing to make sure everyone – cast and audience – stayed safe.

The Delaware State Bar Association provided key technical support this year, allowing the performance to be staged via Zoom.

Traditionally the *Miracle* reenactments have taken place at the main courthouses in Georgetown, Dover and Wilmington, but that was not possible this year due to safety rules adopted by the Delaware Courts. The courtroom scene that is reenacted each year from the classic holiday movie focuses on a competency hearing for a department store Santa who believes he is the real Santa Claus.

“This is a great holiday tradition and I believe that the people involved in putting it on every year get as much out of it as the students in the audience,” said Family Court Judge James McGiffin, who plays Kris Kringle. “We enjoyed doing it by Zoom this year but we look forward to returning to the courthouses next year as it always warms everyone’s heart to hear Christmas carols and the sound of children’s laughter echo in the hallways during the holidays.”

More than 800 students from across the state – in grades 3 to 5 – remotely viewed the four performances conducted from Dec. 14-18, 2020. Participating schools this year included East Dover Elementary, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Mary Magdalen School, Pleasantville Elementary, John Dickinson School, HO Brittingham Elementary, MOT Charter K-8 Academy, Epworth Christian School, Caravel Academy and Marshall Elementary.

Just as with the performances staged in the courthouses, where real-life courtroom procedures were followed, the Zoom performances followed the procedures that have been used during the pandemic to conduct remote hearings. And as in years past, the *Miracle* cast included actual judges, attorneys and other members of the legal community. In addition to Judge McGiffin playing Kris Kringle, Superior Court Resident Judge William L. Witham Jr. and Family Court Chief Judge Michael K. Newell took turns in the role of the judge. Retired Superior Court Judge M. Jane Brady – who has been a part of every production dating back to 2004 – returned again this year to play the role of Kris Kringle’s attorney. Attorney and former prosecutor Kevin Carroll played the prosecutor.

Attorney Richard Herrmann, who conceived of and founded the *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* performances at the courthouse after reaching an agreement with the copyright owners 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox 17 years ago, participated in two of the four performances, playing the role of the psychologist. Other volunteers from the legal and court community filled out the remaining supporting roles including retired Superior Court Judge Robert Young and attorney Rob Gibbs (who each took a turn playing the psychologist); attorney Melissa Green, and Pamela Brown of the Department of Justice (who shared the role of Mrs. Macy); and the Delaware Courts Chief of Community Relations Sean O’Sullivan (who played the postman).

Two young performers, Claire Nagle and Lacey Podolak, also made special appearances as the daughter of the prosecutor to provide key testimony.