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NEWS RELEASE

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Immigration Judges Take Oath of Office In Arlington

ARLINGTON, VA – Charles K. Adkins-Blanch, Laura A. Baxter, and David L. Neal were sworn in today as Immigration Judges during an investiture ceremony at 2 p.m., at the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals, Ceremonial Courtroom, 6th Floor, Arlington, VA. The Director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review, Kevin D. Rooney, gave the keynote address at the investiture ceremony, and Chief Immigration Judge Michael J. Creppy administered the oath of office.

They join the ranks of more than 200 Immigration Judges located in 53 Immigration Courts throughout the Nation. Immigration Judges are responsible for conducting formal administrative proceedings to determine whether foreign-born individuals who are charged with violations of federal immigration law should be removed from the United States or may be granted relief from removal. Immigration Judges decide each case independently and their decisions are final unless appealed or certified to the Board of Immigration Appeals. In the past year, Immigration Judges completed more than 250,000 such proceedings. They also are authorized to administer oaths of citizenship to candidates for naturalization.

Charles K. Adkins-Blanch was appointed as an Immigration Judge in June 2004. Prior to this appointment, he served as General Counsel for the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) from May 2000 to June 2004, after serving in the position in an acting capacity for 1 year. He received his undergraduate degree from Grinnell College in 1984 and his law degree from George Washington University's National Law Center in 1990. Before joining EOIR's Office of the General Counsel in April 1995, Judge Adkins-Blanch worked for the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) from August 1990 to April 1995, where he served as a judicial law clerk under the Attorney General's Honor Law Program and was later promoted to the position of attorney/advisor. From 1989 to 1990, he clerked in private practice with the firm of Maggio & Kattar specializing in immigration and nationality law. Judge Adkins-Blanch also has served in several legal intern and law clerk positions including working in the Washington Liaison Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees providing legal counseling to asylum seekers. He is a member of both the Virginia and District of Columbia Bars.

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Laura A. Baxter was appointed as an Immigration Judge in June 2004. She received her B.A. in 1988 and her J.D. in 1991, both from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to becoming an Immigration Judge, from March 2001 to June 2004, Judge Baxter served as senior counsel to the Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice in Washington, DC. From February 2000 to March 2001, she served as chief of the National Security Division of the Office of the General Counsel in the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Washington, DC. From April 1998 to February 2000, Judge Baxter served as counsel to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims of the Committee on the Judiciary in the U.S. House of Representatives. From April 1995 to April 1998, she served as an associate general counsel in the Enforcement Division of the INS in Washington, DC. From October 1991 to April 1995, Judge Baxter worked as an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel at the INS in Baltimore, Maryland. She is a member of the Wisconsin Bar.

David L. Neal was appointed as an Immigration Judge in June 2004. Prior to this appointment, he served as special counsel to the Director, EOIR, from January 2003 to June 2004. Judge Neal received his undergraduate degree in 1981 from Wabash College, his master's degree in 1984 from Harvard Divinity School, and his law degree in 1989 from Columbia Law School. From October 2001 to January 2003, Judge Neal served as chief counsel to the Senate Immigration Subcommittee. He was an attorney/advisor for the BIA from November 1996 to October 2001. Prior to joining EOIR, Judge Neal practiced immigration law in Los Angeles from June 1993 to October 1996 and also served as the director of policy analysis for the American Immigration Lawyers Association from August 1990 to May 1993. He is a member of the New York and District of Columbia Bars.