



United States District Court  
District of Minnesota  
John R. Tunheim, Chief Judge  
Kate M. Fogarty, Clerk of Court  
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Courthouse  
316 North Robert Street  
Suite 100  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Edward J. Devitt U.S.  
Courthouse and Federal  
Building  
118 South Mill Street  
Suite 212  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Gerald W. Heaney  
Federal Building and U.S.  
Courthouse and  
Customhouse  
515 West First Street  
Suite 417  
Duluth, MN 55802

Diana E. Murphy United  
States Courthouse  
300 South Fourth Street  
Suite 202  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

February 10, 2021

## NEWS RELEASE

**United States District Court for the District of Minnesota**  
***Open Doors 2021 – A Century-Old Injustice: Remembering the 1920 Duluth Lynchings***

Minneapolis, MN – The United States District Court for the District of Minnesota is pleased to share the 2021 *Open Doors* program for educators. *Open Doors* is a longstanding project of the Federal Court in Minnesota, in collaboration with partners throughout the justice system. Over the years, *Open Doors* has brought hundreds of volunteer lawyers and judges into classrooms to teach students about the justice system, using mock trials and presentations regarding important historical events.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, *Open Doors* is offering flexible classroom programming that educators can use in remote learning models. This program addresses an often overlooked, but important, piece of Minnesota history: the public lynching of three Black men in Duluth in 1920 by a violent mob. This project is available to high school educators and students around the state as part of the Federal Court's multi-faceted commemoration of these tragic events.

The program material introduces students to the facts surrounding three employees of a traveling circus who were lynched after being falsely accused of sexually assaulting a white woman, and the subsequent prosecution of others, including Max Mason, who was convicted of the assault on the flimsiest of evidence. Students will learn about the breakdown in the rule of law that made the murders possible, and about the system failures which resulted in no one being held responsible for those murders. The material also introduces students to the inspiring efforts of a team of lawyers and community leaders last year to secure a posthumous pardon for Mr. Mason.



This program is designed to be flexible, so that educators can choose to implement all or some of the material into their curriculum. It is designed to be interactive and multi-media, so students can actively engage with the materials. Because the court is aware that teaching is more difficult than ever in the COVID era, two options have been developed that can be shortened or expanded. To learn more about the two suggested options, and for full access to the 2021 *Open Doors* materials, please visit the *Open Doors* website at <https://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/open-doors>.

Additional questions can be directed to *Open Doors* Coordinators Theresa Anderson and Magistrate Judge Kate M. Menendez at [Opendoors@mnd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Opendoors@mnd.uscourts.gov).

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