

### **Attorney Keynote Speaker at Naturalization Ceremony**

St. Croix-The United States gained 26 new citizens this week when Chief District Judge Raymond Finch led a naturalization ceremony in federal court.

In return, the new citizens gained the chance to live and work in a land of opportunity not found throughout the rest of the world, said Lydia Logie Moolenaar, the keynote speaker.

“Grasp this opportunity,” Moolenaar told the new citizens Wednesday. When she had the chance, she did.

Moolenaar is herself a naturalized citizen of the United States who went to become a local attorney with her own law firm in Christiansted. She said Wednesday that she doubts she would have become a lawyer if she had not become an American citizen.

Many of the new citizens come from other countries in the Caribbean but some come from as far away as France, Germany and Africa. They each had to give up their citizenship to the countries they were born in before being allowed to become American citizens.

The new citizens also were required to live on United States soil for five consecutive years, have no criminal record, possess a basic understanding of U.S. government and history, be able to read, write, and speak English and be willing to swear an oath of loyalty to the country.

Moolenaar said the new citizens considered the event to be a very big deal.

“They were tears,” she said. “It was a very emotional time.”