



STCC student and new citizen Donald Israel is flanked by STCC professor Cynthia DeSellier, left, and president John B. Cook.

SPRINGFIELD

'It means everything'

New citizen studying civil engineering at STCC

The 189 new U.S. citizens who participated in a naturalization ceremony on the grounds of the Springfield Armory last month included Donald Israel, a Springfield Technical Community College student.

He left Haiti seven years ago with a dream of getting an affordable education and finding a pathway to a better life.

What does it mean for Israel to finally become a citizen?

"It means everything. I have a chance to do anything now. I finally

feel a part of the country, a part of the nation. It's the best thing," said Israel, who is studying civil engineering technology at STCC.

He described the challenge of leaving Haiti for a new life in America. Israel had to learn English and U.S. history. "It was a lot of work and a whole process to get here today," he said.

Now enrolled at STCC, Israel is on track to graduate next spring. He is passionate about civil engineering technology, one of the college's many programs that prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

His civil engineering technology

professor Cynthia DeSellier came to the naturalization ceremony to show her support for Israel.

"It's a good program, especially my teacher. She's one of the best I've seen. She will take time to make sure I understand everything. She will make sure you pass the class. She's the best," Israel said.

DeSellier said Israel has a bright future in civil engineering technology, a field where jobs are expected to grow over the next several years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need to preserve, repair, upgrade and enhance an aging infrastructure will boost the demand for civil engineer-

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STCC student Donald Israel, far left, celebrates at his naturalization ceremony, and left, embraces his sisters, Eliadine Desir and Veronica Israel, who were also sworn in as citizens during the ceremony.

Citizen

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ing technicians.

“I’m proud of Donald,” DeSellier said. “Like many of our students at STCC, he has worked hard to get here. Nothing has been handed to him. I’m here to support him on this important day in his life.”

Two of Israel’s sisters, Veronica Israel, a University of Massachusetts student, and Eliadine Desir, a Hampshire College student, also were sworn in as U.S. citizens during the ceremony.

The Springfield Armory National Historic Site, in partnership with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), held the naturalization ceremony on the armory grounds. The Honorable Mark G. Mastroianni of the U.S. District Court, Massachusetts, presided and the clerk of the court administered the oath.

The ceremony, which included citizenship candidates from 51 countries, was part of USCIS’s annual celebration of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, observed on Sept. 17, and Constitution Week, recognized from Sept. 17-24.

In his remarks at the ceremony, STCC president John B. Cook said higher education can give anyone, including new citizens, a pathway to a better life. STCC and the Springfield Armory share a location with a rich history of manufacturing that goes back over 200 years.

“Today, STCC is federally designated as a Hispanic-serving institution, and we remain the only technical community college in the commonwealth,” Cook said. “When there are conversations in the region about engineering, manufacturing, healthcare and technology, I know our families, our communities and our industries think of STCC.”

Join Us at STCC’s Open House!

Today, October 16

Drop in between 4:00pm–6:30pm

Building 19/First Floor Welcome Center Entrance

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