



[It's Never Too Late To Become A Citizen!](#)

Posted on August 20, 2009 by [Robert A. Kraft](#)

Our client, a 92-year-old citizen of Yugoslavia, who had been a permanent resident of the U.S. since 2000 is going to take her naturalization oath on Friday, August 19, 2009. After 92 years of being a citizen of Yugoslavia, she was ready to apply for U.S. citizenship a few months ago. Her daughter, a U.S. citizen, was aware of the naturalization requirement that includes an English and civics test. To qualify for naturalization, applicants must satisfy certain requirements. The requirements to naturalize include, but are not limited to, proficiency in English literacy and knowledge of U.S. history and government. There are exceptions to this requirement however, and we established that our client was eligible for the medical disability exception.

If a naturalization applicant is eligible for a medical disability exception, he or she can be exempted from the English and civics test requirement. The applicant must submit Form N-400 Naturalization Application along with Form N-648 Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Prior to submission Form N-648 must be completed by a medical physician, certifying that the applicant has a medically diagnosed condition that has impaired functioning so severely that it has rendered the applicant unable to learn or demonstrate knowledge of English and/or U.S. history or government.

Our 92 year old client had a heart attack and a stroke six years ago. On Form N-648, her physician provided information indicating that the stroke left her with progressive irreversible neurological and brain damage causing decreased cerebral function, which includes forgetfulness and difficulty learning or remembering. This diagnosed mental impairment had rendered our client unable to learn English and knowledge of U.S. history and government. At the naturalization interview, the immigration officer accepted her request for a Disability Exception and exempted her from the requirement to demonstrate English language ability and knowledge of U.S. history and government. Our client's naturalization application was approved, and a visiting federal judge (who is a friend of the family) will be administering the naturalization oath to her.