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LEGAL PROS HONOR CONSTITUTION

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By 7 p.m. Tuesday, the 12th floor of the Two Datan Center in Kendall was filled with close to 100 people, mainly lawyers, judges and politicians, for lawyer Milton Hirsch's annual office party.

The corks on the wine bottles were popped and trays of food were passed around the room.

Chef David Schwadron served assorted sushi, blue crab and spinach pesto fondue, salmon, Peking duck, and Tandoori chicken among dozens of other dishes.

Pocket Constitutions, enlarged pages of the U.S. Constitution and a custom Constitution cake were the main attraction. Unusual props for your

typical office party, perhaps, but not when everybody is celebrating Sept. 17, 1787 - the signing of the Constitution.

Hirsch said he hosts a Constitution Day party, rather than a Christmas party, out of concern that too many people don't honor this prominent day in U.S. history.

"As lawyers, we do a lot of work with these amendments, so we should be more than familiar with the words of each," said Hirsch, a defense attorney and legal scholar.

Over the past 10 years, the same faces have attended the event, but Hirsch's ideas are always changing.

One year, Hirsch bought copies of famous portraits of the "founding-era figures" and autographed them before handing them out to guests.

Another year, Hirsch took part in "I Signed the Constitution," a program sponsored by the National Constitution Center in Pennsylvania that

allowed Hirsch and everyone attending that night to add their signatures to the document, alongside those of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.

As guests came through the door Tuesday, they could choose between name tags that read the Miranda rights, or those that required them to be identified as witness, target, subject, defendant or "just here for the food."

Once properly tagged, the lawyers, judges, politicians and a couple of

psychologists made their way around the room, sampling assorted dishes, catching up with friends and colleagues and exchanging thoughts on the Constitution.

"I come out year after year because it's a nice gathering but also in admiration for that piece of paper. So many people come to this country

because of it; more people should be celebrating it," said Tod Aronovitz, former president of the Florida Bar Association.

That opinion was shared by guests - including Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Stanford Blake, administrative judge of the criminal division.

"I believe in two things - good food and the Constitution," said Blake, with a smile.

But then in a more serious tone, Blake said what he explains frequently to his jurors: "I know that coming out to jury duty is considered an inconvenience, but I remind my jurors that not a lot is asked of them. They should remember why they're here and be grateful."

Illustration: Photo: Milton Hirsch, right, welcomed some of his guests to his annual party honoring the U.S. Constitution; from left: Stanford

Blake, Tod Aronovitz and Jose Garcia Pedros (a)

Caption: CELEBRATING OUR FOUNDERS: Milton Hirsch, right, welcomed some of his guests to his annual party honoring the U.S. Constitution; from left: Stanford Blake, Tod Aronovitz and Jose Garcia Pedros.

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