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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



Law Day U.S.A., 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Founding Fathers were guided by a belief in the dignity of the individual when they framed our system of government. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights guarantee the blessings of liberty to all, regardless of race, religion, or national origin. These cherished documents bequeath to all Americans the right to equal justice under law and the means to safeguard this right through the legal system.

Today marks our Nation's twenty-sixth annual celebration of Law Day, a day set aside for all Americans to reflect on our legal heritage, the rights we enjoy under our democracy, and the role of law in our society. The theme of this year's Law Day observance is "Sharing in Justice," highlighting both the rights and the responsibilities of each citizen as a participant in shaping and protecting our laws and system of justice.

Each new generation of Americans inherits as a birthright the legal protections secured, protected, and expanded by the vigilance and sacrifice of preceding generations. These rights—freedom of speech, trial by jury, personal liberty, a representative and limited government, and equal protection of the laws, to name but a few—give every citizen a vested interest in American justice.

Active participation in our system serves to protect these interests and preserve them for future generations. It is participation that begins in our own neighborhoods, at town meetings, and during open sessions of city government. Meaningful sharing and participation in our system of justice must start where one is affected most: close to home. This is the basis and strength of our Federal system. Sharing in justice also means working for objectives within the legal system, voting thoughtfully and intelligently, expressing views to our elected representatives, serving as jurors, and volunteering to make our neighborhoods, schools, and communities better places for all. The continuous involvement of the people with all levels of government makes our system of justice work.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20 of April 7, 1961, do hereby proclaim Sunday, May 1, 1983, as Law Day U.S.A., and I invite the American people to observe this event with programs emphasizing the need for each citizen to share and participate in our system of justice.

I call upon the legal profession, schools, civic, service, and fraternal organizations, public bodies, libraries, the courts, all media of public information, business, the clergy, and all interested individuals and organizations to focus attention on our Nation's dedication to justice. I also call upon all public officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings open on Law Day, May 1, 1983.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 15th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

Ronald Reagan