

Local Bar Associations Invited to Join the Celebration as PBA Plans for 50th Anniversary of Law Day

By Susan Etter, Esq., PBA Education and Special Projects Coordinator

The Pennsylvania Bar Association will soon celebrate the ninth annual statewide Law Day program and the 50th anniversary of Law Day nationwide. In 1958 President Eisenhower recognized the importance of celebrating a “day of national dedication to the principle of government under law,” and that is still just as important today.

“Growing Strong Citizens” is the theme for Pennsylvania’s Law Day activities. We can strengthen our communities by educating others about their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democratic nation, talking about the importance of the rule of law in a free society, and building relationships with our neighbors, schools and local businesses. There are many ways we can make a difference, some big and some small, but all important. Many local bar associations will be sponsoring Law Day festivities. If you have never participated in the past, please consider joining us during this 50th anniversary by celebrating Law Day in your community. Here are just a few ideas you can use: work with your county bar association to organize and host a community event — maybe an “Ask a Lawyer” program or guest speaker; invite a group of students to visit the courthouse and meet with a judge; go into a classroom at your child’s school and share one of the lessons in the PBA 2008 Law Day Planning Guide — everything you need to know to be successful is contained in the guide; or be creative and plan an event that meets a need you’ve identified in your community.

What is the PBA doing to support and celebrate Law Day 2008?

The Pennsylvania Bar Association serves as a clearinghouse for Law Day, providing free materials and registration information. Local bar associations may request free Law Day lesson plan guides and other materials to use in classroom visits or during other special events that are held to celebrate Law Day. The PBA Law Day program and materials are designed to enhance and supplement existing local efforts. Please visit the PBA Web site at www.pabar.org/public/education/lawday/lawdayinformation.asp for more information about Law Day. Remember, Law Day events can occur anytime during the month of May.

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These are some of the resources available on the Web site:

- General Law Day 2008 information, including the free lesson plan guide.
- The 2008 K-College Law Day Lesson Plan Guide – filled with information to help you get started and plan a visit to a classroom, lesson planning tips and ideas, quick lessons if you have a limited amount of time to visit a class, and a variety of grade-appropriate lesson plans from which to choose.
- Law Day 2008 registration form.
- Lesson Plans from past years that can be used at any time.
- Local bar association Law Day activities scheduled for May 2008.

Please share with the PBA any information about your upcoming Law Day programs. It is important so that we can report the impact our members’ efforts have on local communities. Your time and efforts make a difference in the lives of students. We’d like to share this through the PBA Web site and other publications. To include your local program(s), please forward all relevant information, including date, place, contact information, etc., by e-mail to lawday@pabar.org or by fax to (717) 221-8739. Schools and lawyers do check this area for local information!

On May 1, PBA President Andy Susko will join Pennsylvania First Lady and Third Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Marjorie Rendell in a special plenary session at the National Judges Forum on Children, Families and the Courts in Philadelphia celebrating both the 50th anniversary of Law Day and the partnership between the PBA and Judge Rendell to promote civic education.

The PBA will also host a special 50th anniversary party in Harrisburg at the Capital in early May. Watch the Web site and future editions of PBA publications for more information.

Law Day is coordinated by the PBA Law-Related Education Committee and is funded by the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation.

If you have any Law Day questions, please contact me at (800) 932-0311, Ext. 2256; or susan.etter@pabar.org. Thank you for time and support of this important school-community partnership. ■

