

A message from PBA President Clifford E. Haines

With the adoption of the United States Constitution, our country became a nation of laws and, for more than 220 years, we have continued to live by the Rule of Law. The document developed by the founders during a hot, humid summer in Philadelphia established the framework for our government and was based on well-researched and thoughtful study of thousands of years of history. What these 55 delegates accomplished is truly amazing.



But Thomas Jefferson warned that “if a nation expects to be ignorant and free, ...it expects what never was and never will be.” These words remind us that we must educate our youth, pass on the lessons of history and help our young people understand their duties and responsibilities as American citizens. The rights and freedoms we enjoy every day are based, in part, on our decision to live by the Rule of Law. I hope you will join with me in passing on our history to the next generation of citizens by helping them understand what it is that makes our country so great.

National Constitution Day is September 17. Eleven years ago, the Pennsylvania Bar Association developed the award-winning program, *Celebrate the Constitution*. This program is funded through the generous support of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation. It includes lesson plans that provide an opportunity for students of all ages to learn about the United States and Pennsylvania constitutions through inviting and engaging learning activities. *Celebrate the Constitution* includes activities that can be held with a single class as a one-time, stand-alone lesson as well as ideas teachers can use in their classrooms throughout the school year. There are also unifying, school-wide ideas such as holding a mock constitutional convention and having students sign draft and sign their own version of a school constitution with school rules and procedures. As you plan your activities, please consider reaching out to local lawyers, judges and legislators to visit your classrooms and help reinforce your lessons.

The PBA will kick-off its *Celebrate the Constitution* program during the third week of September and will continue the celebration and learning through Bill of Rights Week, the third week in December. This extended period gives everyone an opportunity to launch programs throughout the fall as schedules and curricula allow. We encourage you to consider using some of the lesson ideas provided on our Web site or the many other helpful resources that exist, to talk with your students about the significance of this year’s theme, “Rule of Law: It’s what I live by,” and to ask students as a class to complete creative writing projects, develop audio/video programs or draw pictures. Their work can then be entered in our poster, essay and audio/video contests.

Thank you for participating in the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s *Celebrate the Constitution* program. We are very proud of this youth citizenship education program and the partnerships we have formed with other organizations, including the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

If we can assist you in your plans for *Celebrate the Constitution* or in implementing civics and law-related education for your school or classroom, please contact us. The Pennsylvania Bar Association and its more than 29,000 members are committed to community and youth education programs.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clifford E. Haines". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clifford E. Haines

