

# Rule of Law: It's what I live by



## Law Day 2010 Planning & Lesson Guide for Lawyers and Judges

### Message from the PBA President Clifford E. Haines



From May 6-8, 2010, Pennsylvania will proudly host the National High School Mock Trial Championships. Close to 1,000 students, teachers, coaches, advisors, lawyers, judges and guests will come to Philadelphia to represent most of the 50 states and several territories. They will compete in elimination rounds until one team is declared the 2010 National Champion on Saturday, May 8.

In recognition of Pennsylvania's strong mock trial program, many of the lessons highlighted for this year's Law Day program will focus on various mock trials that lawyers and judges can use during classroom visits with students of all ages.

Mock trials and mock appellate arguments are excellent opportunities for lawyers and judges to teach students about their rights and responsibilities, as well as the judicial system. They provide an engaging mechanism to educate about the privilege and duty of all citizens to serve on juries. They can bring to life lessons on being responsible and living by the rule of law. In addition, they help teach skills such as listening, problem solving, consequences, negotiating, and decision making. These are only a few of the skills and benefits you can share with students through a mock trial presentation.

This year's law day theme selected by the PBA Law-Related Education Committee is "Rule of Law: It's what I live by." The message encourages students to take an active and accountable role in life and government; living by the rules and laws that we have agreed to as a country; challenging laws and actions that are unfair; and holding others accountable for living by the rule of law. Without this respect for the rule of law, we would be a country of chaos, tyranny and terror. Fifty-two

years ago when ABA President Charles Rhyne proposed the first Law Day, one of the primary purposes was to celebrate the rule of law in our country, in stark contrast to the military displays of power being demonstrated in May Day celebrations in Communist countries like Russia. These same messages are just as important and relevant to us today in 2010. I encourage each of you to read Charles Rhyne's message for a deeper understanding of why it is so important for us as legal professionals to recognize Law Day each year and continue the legacy of this tradition and our noble profession.

In Pennsylvania, we celebrate Law Day throughout the entire month of May. This gives lawyers, judges and teachers flexibility in scheduling events and ensures that the greatest number of students will benefit from these educational opportunities.

This guide provides ideas for lessons you can easily use with students of all ages and the PBA web site contains many other resources, including Charles Rhyne's Law Day message.

I can tell you from personal experience with a group of fifth graders last May, students are very interested and eager to participate in the mock trial. The time spent with these students is very rewarding and an investment in the future. I have no doubt we make a difference in the lives of those students and that many of them will take that experience with them throughout their schooling.

To those of you who are already working with students and teachers in your local communities, THANK YOU and please stay involved. Your time and personal attention do make a difference to these students. And, if you have not had the pleasure and satisfaction of working with a group of students, please consider getting involved this May. The PBA Law-Related Education Committee is there to assist you.

Best Regards-