

Law Day Yosemite 2014

Why We Celebrate Law Day

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower designated May 1 as “Law Day” in the United States. Specifically, he issued the following Presidential Proclamation:

PROCLAMATION 3221

LAW DAY, 1958

WHEREAS it is fitting that the people of this Nation should remember with pride and vigilantly guard the great heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under law which our forefathers bequeathed to us;

and

WHEREAS it is our moral and civic obligation, as free men and as Americans, to preserve and strengthen that great heritage;

and

WHEREAS the principle of guaranteed fundamental rights of individuals under the law is the heart and sinew of our Nation, and distinguishes our governmental system from the type of government that rules by might alone; and

WHEREAS our Government has served as an inspiration and a beacon light for oppressed peoples of the world seeking freedom, justice, and equality for the individual under laws;

and

WHEREAS universal application of the principle of the rule of law in the settlement of international disputes would greatly enhance the cause of a just and enduring peace;

and

WHEREAS a day of national dedication to the principle of government under laws would afford us an opportunity better to understand and appreciate the manifold virtues of such a government and to focus the attention of the world upon them:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Thursday, May 1, 1958, as Law Day.

I urge the people of the United States to observe the designated day with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and I especially urge the legal profession, the press, and the radio, television, and motion-picture industries to promote and to participate in the observance of that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this third day of February in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and [fifty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighty-second.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

By the President:

JOHN FOSTER DULLES,

Secretary of State.

Subsequently, the United States Congress enacted 36 U.S.C. § 113 which reads in part:

Law Day, U.S.A., is a special day of celebration by the people of the United States—

(1) in appreciation of their liberties and the reaffirmation of their loyalty to the United States and of their rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under law in their relations with each other and with other countries; and

(2) for the cultivation of the respect for law that is so vital to the democratic way of life.

Every President since Dwight D. Eisenhower has Proclaimed May 1 of each year as “Law Day,” the day for all Americans to celebrate the rule of law in this country.