

When is Law Day?

Each year on May 1st, *Law Day* provides an opportunity for everyone to reflect on our legal heritage, on the role of law, and on the rights and duties which are the foundation of peace and prosperity for all.

What happens on Law Day?

Throughout New York State, bar associations on the state and local levels and other law-related organizations sponsor numerous events to recognize the contributions of citizens, lawyers and judges. This can be in the form of visits to classrooms, recognition of lawyers and non-lawyers for volunteer service, special lectures, essay contests, etc.

Why do we celebrate Law Day?

In the late 1950s, the [American Bar Association](#) instituted May 1 as Law Day to draw attention to both the principles and practice of law and justice. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established Law Day by proclamation in 1958.

"Now, therefore, I, Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Thursday, May 1, 1958, as Law Day -- USA. 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."

Congressional Resolution Establishing Law Day (1961)

US Code, Title 36, Section 164

The first day of May of each year is hereby designated as Law Day, U.S.A. It is set aside as a special day of celebration by the American people in appreciation of their liberties and the reaffirmation of their loyalty to the United States of America; of their rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under law in their relations with each other as well as with other nations; and for the cultivation of that respect for law that is so vital to the democratic way of life.

The President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon all public officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on such day and inviting the people of the United States to observe such day with suitable ceremonies and other appropriate ways, through public bodies and private organizations as well as in schools and other suitable places.

Since that day, every U.S. President has annually issued a Law Day Proclamation, and the activities surrounding the event have not abated.



Dwight D. Eisenhower
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Law Day Chronology

1957 - American Bar Association (ABA) president Charles S. Rhyne, a Washington, D.C., attorney, envisions a special day for celebrating our legal system.

1958 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower establishes Law Day U.S.A. to strengthen our great heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under law.

1961 - May 1 is designated by joint resolution of Congress as the official date for celebrating Law Day U.S.A.

Every Year - May 1 remains the official date, but Law Day often becomes Law Week (or Weeks!) as national organizations, state and local bar associations, businesses, and schools, in conducting thousands of programs on the rule of law in a constitutional democracy.