

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
The Affiliate

Planning for a Successful Law Day in 2011

By Jaime Ackerman

The next Law Day will not be celebrated until May 1, 2011. Although that sounds far away, now is the perfect time to begin planning for your Affiliate's Law Day events. The 2011 theme was announced recently: **The Legacy of John Adams, From Boston to Guantanamo.**

During his legal career, John Adams represented criminal defendants in high profile cases, including at the 1770 Boston Massacre trials. His participation in those trials as defense counsel stands as a leading example of standing up for the rights of the defendants in the face of public controversy. It reminds us that no matter how horrific the crime or how unpopular the accused, the Constitution affords all criminal defendants the right to counsel, one who will zealously advocate for his client, regardless of the public sentiment against him.

Through your Affiliate's Law Day events, the public will gain a greater understanding of John Adams and his legacy, as well as the role and importance of criminal defense attorneys in our system of justice.

American Bar Association Law Day Planning Tools

The American Bar Association has a wealth of resources available to help plan your Affiliate's Law Day events. The Law Day webpage is updated continually with information for Law Day 2011. The site contains a calendar of Law Day events throughout the country and downloadable art for use in your own Law Day programs. Sample lesson plans for students in elementary, middle, and high schools are supplied as guidelines for your Affiliate's programming.

The Law Day Store provides one stop shopping for all your Law Day needs. In the Law Day Store, you can purchase everything from promotional items (such as balloons and Law Day posters) to wearable merchandise (T-shirts, hats, and wristbands). You can also purchase awards online for your Law Day programs and contests, including medals, certificates, ribbons, and plaques.

The store also features mock trial resources for all grade levels, kindergarten through high school. For younger students, the trial materials are based on well-known fairy tales and include full scripts, as well as instructions for putting on the mock trial. Discounts are available when you purchase products from the Law Day Store early.

The Law Day Planning Guide will be available in January 2011. This guide is a tremendous resource full of information to assist you in planning Law Day events, including messages from the ABA President and National Law Day chair. Among other tools, the American Bar Association provides sample organizational schedules and outreach programs for students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Visit the Law Day webpage at www.lawday.org for additional information. You can sign up online to be a part of the Law Day listserv. In addition, the ABA has a Facebook page dedicated to Law Day 2011. Join the "ABA Law Day" group for more updates and information.

Outstanding Law Day Activity Awards

Affiliates can win awards for their exceptional Law Day activities. Any individual or group that holds a Law Day event is eligible to apply.

Activities are judged on the following criteria:

- whether the event highlights the Law Day theme,
- engages the targeted audience,
- creates partnerships or collaborates with members of the legal community,
- overall quality and innovation of the project,
- use of the media to promote the project, and
- whether the event extends beyond Law Day.

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Law Day activities can fall within one or more of the following categories, depending on their target audience: kindergarten through twelfth grade and undergraduate students, law students, adults and the public, legal professionals, and special use of the Law Day theme. If a program falls into multiple categories, the American Bar Association may consider the activity under additional categories.

Entry forms will be available online at www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/awards/awards.shtml. Application deadlines for the 2011 entries have not yet been set; however, in 2010, all entry forms had to be postmarked by June 18, with winners set to be announced in November 2010.

Winners of the 2010 ABA Outstanding Law Day Activity Awards will receive a \$100 credit in the Law Day store, and an announcement in the 2011 Law Day planning guide and on the Law Day website. Winners also will be presented a plaque at the 2011 ABA Midyear Meeting in Atlanta, as well as one free ticket to the awards luncheon.

Now that the summer is over and the new court year has begun, it is the perfect time to start planning for your affiliate's Law Day activities. Using the print and online resources available to you through the ABA will help make your event a success.

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