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What Law Day Means to Me

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first. The end to be reached does not come first. Adherence to orderly process entails a certain amount of drudgery and repetitious effort. Day after day, in long procession, defendants in criminal cases are brought before the court for arraignment, for pleas, or for judgment. The court is required to, and does, on each occasion, meticulously advise each defendant of his rights, particularly his right to counsel. This process is repeated day after day, in case after case. I don't know how many times, perhaps hundreds or thousands, I myself have gone through this process. How easy it would be to overlook saying the familiar words! Yet, they must be said. There can be no departure from this process without yielding indispensable protection for individual rights.

There is no more worthy goal for your achievement than to work and fight for the dominance of law, a law like our own worthy one, for the preservation, safety, and happiness of all peoples. It is a law so inherently good for human freedom that even those who are building the opposing system of tyranny and slavery cannot forever conceal from themselves, and from those whom they rule, the vast extent of its achievement. It is a law so dynamic in its power that it neither abandons freedom or justice, nor promotes belligerence or aggressive force. Your vision should be to make our law victorious in the minds and hearts of men everywhere. That will be a victory that will require not the sword, nor the bomb, but the same old weapon, mightier than all, the pen.

I have an abiding conviction, that if you build up in your hearts a passionate belief in the doctrine that life, liberty, and human happiness are natural inherent rights to be protected and preserved by law, you will forever bask in the warmth of God's countenance.

WHAT LAW DAY MEANS TO ME*
Lois P. Mitchell**

What does Law Day mean to me? From its inception, the venerable practice of law has been man's finest effort to arbitrate those differences to which our human frailties subject us. It is no respecter of persons in its jealous guardianship over the right of freedom, justice and equality for all. It speaks in a clear strong voice in its advocacy of the perpetuation of these rights as our national purpose. It firmly cautions us to turn our efforts away from a gigantic, grim race to monopolize the nation's wealth. It administers justice from a rich history when it chastises those inherent base motives which, if left unchecked, weaken and destroy our higher principles.

What does law day mean to me? Who is "me?" In this instance it is an average married woman, mother of three adolescent sons, who began the study of law on her fortieth birthday. The decision to study law was the cumulative result of those prior years. The study and practice of law appears to me to be the most effective means of safe-guarding the national birthright and heritage which will pass from my generation to that of my three sons.

What does law day mean to me? Simply the conscious realization of the vital part the law takes in assuring and insuring the perpetual American legacy.

* Awarded first place in statewide and first runner-up in national competition; Law Day Essay contest, National Association of Women Lawyers.
** First-year student, University of Santa Clara School of Law.