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Law Day 2012 theme recognizes role of courts in securing freedom, justice

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How would our lives be different if we had no effective system of justice? How would society be different? Would it be possible to have justice and freedom? These are good questions to contemplate as we celebrate Law Day 2012 on May 1.

Law Day was officially established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958 to recognize the crucial role the law plays in our democracy. As Eisenhower [put it then](#): “In a very real sense, the world no longer has a choice between force and law. If civilization is to survive, it must choose the rule of law.”

I am honored to have been selected by the American Bar Association (ABA), along with other state Supreme Court justices, to serve as a co-chair of this year’s Law Day celebration. Law Day is a chance for everyone – not just judges and lawyers – to appreciate the law and the justice and freedom it makes possible.

Fittingly, the theme of this year’s Law Day is [No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom](#). The theme reminds us that courts, justice and freedom go hand in hand – we can’t have one without the others.

During this time, many judges and attorneys around Wisconsin – in cities large and small – will take time to meet with the public to help improve understanding of the courts and the role of the judiciary.

In Columbia County, circuit court Judge Alan J. White has joined with District Attorney Jane Kohlwey, defense counsel Mark Lawton and other local attorneys in inviting high school students to the courthouse for a mock trial with a panel discussion to follow.

[In Dane County](#), judges and lawyers will present short informative programs about the role and work of the courts during an open house event. Attorneys also have volunteered to be available for free legal consultations.

On May 2, I will join Deputy Chief Judge Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County Circuit Court; Milwaukee Municipal Court Judge Derek Mosley; and attorneys Mark Goldstein and Rob Ricigliano in meeting with fifth and sixth graders at Maple Dale School in Fox Point. The also [Milwaukee Bar Association](#) is providing information about the courts and sponsoring legal advice clinics and other activities.

On May 4 in Lincoln County, the Optimist Club of Merrill is hosting a law fair at Prairie River Middle School. About 900 students are expected to visit booths and displays sponsored by law-related organizations.

These are among just a few of the many events scheduled around the state for Law Day. The State Bar of Wisconsin’s [Young Lawyers Division](#) also has arranged visits between lawyers

and students in classrooms throughout the state. Each event and activity is designed to promote understanding of the law, the courts and our system of justice and to listen to concerns of the public.

Our courts help protect rights, settle disputes, and hold each of us and the government accountable to the law and the state and U.S. constitutions. Thanks to our courts, justice and freedom are more than just words on a page.

ABA President William T. (Bill) Robinson III reminds us this Law Day that courtrooms must be open to protect families; to validate and protect contracts for business; to keep the wheels of justice turning; and to defend our individual rights and to maintain our free society.

It's important to all of us who appear in court that judges dispense justice in a fair, neutral, impartial and non-partisan manner.

Without our courts, we truly would not have the freedom and justice we enjoy. Please join me in celebrating Law Day this year and working with us to improve our system of justice each day.

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