In the Supreme Court of the State of New Mexico

LAW DAY RECOGNITION – LAW DAY 2024

Sixty-six years ago, in 1958, President Eisenhower proclaimed May 1st "Law Day" to honor the rule of law, a cornerstone in the foundation of the United States of America, and in 1961, Congress issued a joint resolution declaring May 1st as Law Day "to foster a full understanding and appreciation of our liberties and of the legal and judicial institutions which protect them."

Since its inception, Law Day has evolved to reflect the changing landscape of our society. Today, in the Land of Enchantment, we continue to celebrate Law Day as a tribute to the principles that uphold our democracy.

In observance of Law Day 2024, the Judiciary reflects on the vital role of the rule of law in a functioning democratic society, ensuring justice, fairness, and equality for all.

Through initiatives like the New Mexico Supreme Court's Rule of Law Program, students across our state have the opportunity to engage with the legal system firsthand. From witnessing a live Supreme Court oral argument to studying cases that shape the law in New Mexico, these experiences deepen New Mexican students' understanding of the role of our Judiciary, the rule of law, and inspire future leaders.

The inaugural program, held in Las Cruces, reached over 580 students in schools statewide, and in 2023, students in rural northern New Mexico attended an in-person oral argument at Northern New Mexico College in Española. On April 29, 2024, the Rule of Law Program traveled to Central New Mexico Community College, and students observed oral argument in a case involving a student alleging a violation of the New Mexico Human Rights Act. By bringing the courts directly to our students, we expand access to civics education and empower our youth to understand, and therefore, value and uphold the principles of fairness and equality.

Through these cases, we seek to illuminate the Judiciary's role in interpreting federal and state law, and we endeavor to provide an opportunity to discuss how our state constitution can provide equal and, in some cases, greater protections than its federal counterpart.

We also seek to honor the contributions of those who have worked tirelessly to safeguard the rule of law and protect the rights and freedoms of every individual; we reaffirm our commitment to promoting awareness and understanding of the rule of law among all members of our society, fostering a culture of respect for legal principles and institutions; and we acknowledge the ongoing efforts to address challenges to the rule of law and to promote justice and equality, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

Today, and every day, let us reflect on the importance of the rule of law in our society and strive to work together to preserve and cherish our freedoms and the responsibilities they entail.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, David K. Thomson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico, do hereby recognize Wednesday, May 1, 2024, as Law Day, and I urge the legal professionals of New Mexico to recognize and participate in the observance of this designated day by renewing their commitment to civics education by engaging our youth in understanding the rule of law.

DONE in Santa Fe, New Mexico, this 30th day of April, 2024.

David K. Thomson, Chief Justice