

MONROE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

LAW DAY – 2011 ESSAY CONTEST

John Adams's role in the 1770 Boston Massacre trials is regarded as a noteworthy example of commitment to the rule of law and the defense of the rights of the accused, even in cases where advocates represent unpopular clients and become involved in matters that generate public controversy. Patriot, advocate, diplomat, constitutional theorist, and political activist, Adams became our nation's first lawyer-president in 1797. The 2011 Law Day theme provides us with an opportunity to assess and celebrate the legacy of John Adams, explore the historical and contemporary role of lawyers in defending the rights of the accused, and renew our understanding of and appreciation for the fundamental principle of the rule of law.

Monroe County high school students are invited to submit an essay for the Monroe County Bar Association Law Day Ceremony on Friday, April 29, 2011. The deadline for submission is Friday, April 15, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.

THEME

Introduction: Resistance leader and patriot, advocate and diplomat, constitutional theorist and political activist, John Adams became our first lawyer-president in 1797. Just five years before the Revolutionary War began; he represented the British officer and soldiers charged with firing into a crowd of protestors and killing five civilians in the "Boston Massacre." Already a prominent leader in the American colonial resistance to British parliamentary authority, Adams agreed to take on the cases and ably defended the accused at trial. His role in the 1770 trials has come to be seen as exemplifying a lawyer's adherence to the rule of law and defense of the rights of the accused, even in cases when advocates may represent unpopular clients or become involved in matters that generate public controversy.

Question: Although each is unique in circumstance and significance, there have been other such noteworthy cases in American history. Some examples include: the 1846 "insanity" defense of William Freeman by William Seward; Sigmund Ziesler's and William Perkins Black's 1886 representation of the "Haymarket 8," accused of killing a Chicago police officer; Samuel Leibowitz's 1930s defense of nine black Alabama teenagers, "the Scottsboro Boys," who were accused of rape; the representation by Michael Tigar and Brian Hermanson of Terry Nichols in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing case; and contemporary efforts by a variety of lawyers to represent Guantanamo detainees in the global war on terrorism.

Write an essay explaining why the right to an attorney is considered a fundamental principle of the rule of law."

The essay should be typewritten, double spaced and no longer than three (3) pages in length. Winning essays will be requested in a digital format to be posted on the MCBA website.

The winning essay will be judged on creativity, originality, clarity and composition of prose and how well it conveys the ideals of America, with adherence to the chosen essay theme.

Cash Awards (\$200.00, \$100.00 and \$50.00) will be offered for the top three essays. The three top winners will be invited to attend the Monroe County Bar Association's Annual Law Day Luncheon held at the Pocono Inne Town, 700 Main Street, Stroudsburg, PA on Friday, April 30, 2010 at 12:00 Noon. The First Place Essay Winner will be invited to read the Essay at the luncheon. Please submit your essay no later than April 16, 2010 to:

Essay Contest-Law Day Committee
Monroe County Bar Association 913 Main Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
(570) 424-7288 Email: skenny2@monroebar.org