

“JUSTICE AND EQUALITY DEPEND UPON
LAW—AND YOU.”

LAW DAY SPEECH, APRIL 13, 1969

This 1969 Law Day theme focuses on justice and equality and our personal part in them. The words may sound like generalities, but they are vitally important to us all. And they surely take on a lively importance when some injustice threatens our family or job or business or personal welfare. Then we come to know that our standards of justice and equality, spelled out in constitutions and laws, really count when the chips are down.

As for most Americans, for me the guarantees of constitutions and laws have worked so well that I have not needed to claim their protection in court or elsewhere. For government and business organization and labor union and private citizen all know—or shortly learn—that both the protections and restraints of constitutions and laws apply to all. While there are shortcomings in our system of government, on the whole our guarantees are available to protect us all.

Watching the observance and enforcement of our guarantees of law has been a thrilling experience to me, as to others. We see a jury of men and women struggling to do right—giving a fair trial guaranteed by due process under the constitution. We see high officers of government called to court to show why their acts are lawful—with our system affording an ordinary citizen a hearing to protect his constitutional right to equal protection of the law. The day-to-day working of this constitutional government of ours is really a thrilling sight.

These are the thoughts that this theme of justice and equality brings to me. Let us hope that re-dedication by us all to this constitutional government of ours will be one result of Law Day in 1969.

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