

I congratulate also all who had a hand in its creation. I am proud that I was able to play a modest part in shaping it.

It was my happy privilege, as Governor of the State, to proclaim this day, Monday, May 1, 1961, as "Law Day USA" in Maryland, a date on which we may demonstrate to the world the determination of Americans to preserve our freedom and our way of life through our institutions of law and justice.

When we speak of the rule of law in this country, we are describing a system under which people govern themselves by established rules, where the freedom and dignity of the individual are guaranteed and where disputes among ourselves are settled by courts administering justice with impartiality.

In this great republic, we rely upon the rule of law to safeguard us in our right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The rule of law, as we understand it, does not exist in communist nations, and we know that as a result individual citizens of those countries enjoy no freedom and can claim no individual dignity.

We hope that this observance of "Law Day USA" will serve to impress upon the minds of Americans everywhere the necessity for law observance and respect for our laws and the institutions which administer them. We hope it will serve to revive in the hearts of our people a wholesome respect for the Bill of Rights and the other noble documents which constitute our body of written laws.

But we know that, as important as these great documents are, they of themselves, afford no unshakeable guarantee of our freedoms. We know that ultimately this guarantee rests upon the devotion of our people to a system of law and their respect for that system.

This concept was ably stated by Chief Justice Hughes:

"We have in this country but one security. You may think that the Constitution is your security—it is nothing but a piece of paper. You may think that the statutes are your security—they are nothing but words in a book. You may think that elaborate mechanism of government is your security—it is nothing at all unless you have sound and uncorrupted public opinion to give life to your Constitution, to give vitality to your statutes, to make efficient your government machinery."

Organized crime, juvenile delinquency and other examples of defiance of our laws are indications that there is some need today for measures to encourage a greater respect of our laws.