

## P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

**The theme of Law Day USA** for 1971 is "Channel Change Through Law and Reason." The American Bar Association, which sponsors the annual May 1 observance, merits appreciation and support for recognizing the importance of change and the need to associate meaningful change with law. A recent issue of the Association's *Coordinator* notes that a host of new promotional materials is being prepared, and it is significant that stress will be placed on acquainting young people with the roles of the law.

This vital task can scarcely be completed with slide films and promotional ads and posters, however. There is a void in the minds of many young people—to say nothing of those of their seniors—about the nature and capacity of law as an instrument of change; and unfortunately, the professional associations have to bear some of the responsibilities for the void.

For many years, the emphasis on professionalization of the Bar carried as a concomitant the view that law was so powerful and complex that it could be taught to and understood only by those preparing for professional careers as lawyers. The need went unfilled for popular understanding of law's social political, economic, psychological, philosophical, and historical contexts; of its mechanisms and methodologies for change, and of its proximities to and variations from ideals of justice.

New opportunities for understanding the interrelationships of law and society are now feasible as more social scientists, teachers, and lawyers work together year-round in developing and utilizing curricula. At the undergraduate level, for example, the innovative program under way at Hampshire College deserves examination and emulation. In a similar sense, the materials developed by the Law in American Society Foundation for elementary and high school use help to convey with thoroughness and candor an understanding of the processes, complexities, aspirations, and inadequacies of the legal system.

The experience of Charles Robert, an instructor in a Chicago elementary school, reinforces the view that teaching youngsters about law is both feasible and productive:

After working as a teacher with children of the fifth and sixth grades, ages 9-13, for almost three years, I have observed a remarkable ability of children, both quick learners and textual nonlearners, to understand principles of law such as statute codification, the adversary system, court structure and roles, rules of procedure, evidence and courtroom decorum. The children are students of a Chicago inner city school and for a social studies project have created a mini governmental system . . . . There is a minimum of coaching and interference by the teacher . . . . Over the school term the level of participation becomes more sophisticated. The students are learning nuances of questioning and especially of human social interaction. They begin to believe in the system and to request and demand that we use it more often.

Joel Grossman has asked me to remind authors of manuscripts bearing on law and society that the *University of Wisconsin Law Review* regularly devotes a section of its *Review* to law and society manuscripts and would be happy to receive submissions.

I would also like to call our members' attention to a note from Carlton Lowenberg, the Director of Books for Asian Students, who is seeking donations of books published since 1958 and of professional and technical journals in ten-year runs, commencing 1946 or later, for distribution to institutions and individuals in Asia. For details of what is needed and where to send it (at no cost to the donor), write Carlton Lowenberg, Director, Books for Asian Students, 451 Sixth Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

—VICTOR G. ROSENBLUM  
PRESIDENT