



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Chief Justice to speak at Law Day event in McDowell County **For immediate release Monday, May 23, 2011**

WELCH, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Margaret L. Workman will be the main speaker at the McDowell County Law Day event at 10 a.m. Thursday, May 26, at the McDowell County Courthouse in Welch.

Law Day was proclaimed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958 as a day to reflect on the role of law in the founding of our country and recognize its importance in society. It is usually held on or around May 1. The event for McDowell County school students was delayed this year because of the school calendar and number of snow days. The national theme for Law Day 2011 is a celebration of the legacy of John Adams, the second president and first lawyer-president.

Adams had one of the largest legal practices in pre-Revolutionary Massachusetts and was an ardent resistance leader when he agreed to represent the British officer and soldiers charged in the 1770 "Boston Massacre." With his help, the officer and all but two soldiers were acquitted. His role is seen as an example of the rule of law and defense of the rights of the accused, even in cases when advocates may represent unpopular clients and become involved in matters of public controversy.

Adams went on to become a Massachusetts Delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, and was a leader in the movement for independence. He seconded Richard Henry Lee's motion for a resolution of independence on June 7, 1776, and he served on the committee which drafted the Declaration of Independence, which he signed.

After the First Continental Congress, in 1775, he published a series of essays in the *Boston Gazette* under the name "Novanglus" on the provocations that led ultimately to the break from British rule.

In the essays he first referred to "a government of laws, not of men" to express his belief in the rule of law as the foundation for republican government and the basis for political liberty. He incorporated that idea when he wrote the 1780 Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. That document was a model for the U.S. Constitution of 1787. The phrase was also famously quoted in the landmark 1803 U.S. Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison*, which established judicial review.

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