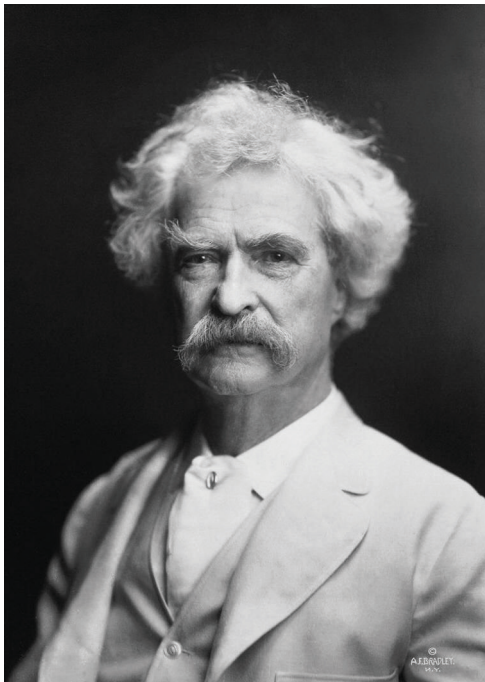


Loyalty, Honesty and the Rule of Law

As I write these President's Page submissions each month, I agonize on what to write about. I feel that while it is "my" page as president, I should steer away from topics that could polarize or upset our members. But this month I might just not worry about that.

In my previous President's Pages, I have highlighted each month's significance. We will continue to do that as we recognize that there are more than 20 different "months" for August. Some of them, in no particular order of importance, are Black Business Month, National Golf Month, Happiness Happens Month, National Sandwich Month, International Peace Month and National Dog Month.



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said, "Never discuss politics and religion in polite company." He also said, "Loyalty to country ALWAYS. Loyalty to government, when it deserves it." The Cambridge Dictionary defines polite company or society as "people who have been taught how to behave in a socially correct way." Since I was taught to speak up for the underdog, defend myself and my siblings as necessary and vote my conscience, I do not think that definition feels right for me. I agree with the proverb, "honesty is the best policy."

This month's edition of *Bar Briefs* is the Taxation and Bankruptcy edition, featuring articles on both of those subjects.

For many of us, August also represents the month where summer ends and school starts. As a child, I remember going back to school after Labor Day. Some of my childhood friends were still on vacation during Labor Day weekend. A few missed the first week of school and no one was ever worried about missing class or homework.

August is also the month that many universities and colleges start their fall semesters. For many students, it is the first time that they are away from their families, their support systems and friends. It is their first foray with independence and what they should do—or not do—and still stay out of trouble.

I went to college in Miami, Florida—not a small place to grow up in or study, and a place surrounded by temptations. I am proud to say I was never in trouble or arrested. I was a member of student government organizations and other groups that sometimes participated in sit-ins and peaceful protests. I worked on political campaigns and helped manage a couple of them.

I have been reminded more than once recently that Mark Twain

In recent months, the Louisville Bar Association has issued a statement regarding the importance of the rule of law, <https://www.loubar.org/louisville-bar-association-issues-statement-on-protecting-the-rule-of-law/>.

The LBA has also made a statement standing in solidarity with other bar associations, including the American Bar Association, supporting the rule of law, <https://www.loubar.org/louisville-bar-association-supports-collective-bar-association-on-the-rule-of-law/>.

Additionally, we have signed on to an editorial supporting the Legal Services Corporation and funding for the Legal Aid Society. In full disclosure, I also serve on the Board of the Legal Aid Society.

The LBA has formed a Civics Education Committee to pursue initiatives that explain and support of the rule of law, including community outreach and education. We are seeking individual member participation on this project. If you'd be interested in helping our efforts, email Executive Director Kristen Miller at kmiller@loubar.org.

I get questions from non-lawyers about what the Rule of Law is and why it matters. I was asked by someone who I considered very well educated (multiple degrees) what is the "big deal" about these "checks and balances."

How do we define that term? According to the United States Courts' website, the definition of the rule of law is:

Rule of law is a principle under which all persons, institutions and entities are accountable to laws that are:

- Publicly promulgated
- Equally enforced
- Independently adjudicated
- And consistent with international human rights principles.

<https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/overview-rule-law#:~:text=Rule%20of%20law%20is%20a,with%20international%20human%20rights%20principles>.

My family emigrated to the United States in the 1950s to escape a dictatorial country. My father served in the military during the Vietnam War, and I and my siblings were born in the United States. He and my mother worked many jobs to maintain our growing family. My mother worked at different factories. My father was a union organizer (I walked a picket line when I was four years old), a salesman for duplicator company and a fiberglass bathtub manufacturer, and ultimately, they became business owners. He used to say that the United States was the greatest country in the world. It saddens me to see what is happening in our country and shudder to think what could happen to others like my father because they are Hispanic.

I just hope the American people stand up for the rule of law, the separation of powers and the Bill of Rights. To paraphrase Mark Twain, our loyalty should be to our country, not necessarily the government or politicians. That is the end of the editorial on my President's Page, and I hope no one is offended.

Just a reminder, we are finalizing plans for our 125th Anniversary celebration, a Picnic Party, details will be shared soon. It is a family-friendly event and I hope to see you all there.

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Maria
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