

Lawyers are Principally Responsible for Maintaining Order in a Just Society

As lawyers, we understand that when the conspirators in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Act IV, Scene II said, "The first thing we do, let's kill all of the lawyers," they wanted to destabilize their country and not improve it. We understand, as did the conspirators, how lawyers are principally responsible for maintaining order in a just society. I wonder if the general public still understands this vital concept.



By Tyler S. Thompson
KATA President

Wealthy insurance companies, and the powerful corporations they insure, lobby for any measure that will decrease their accountability and increase their profitability. As they battle to institute tort reform measures, the main weapon in their arsenal is a withering criticism of lawyers, juries, and the judiciary. Their propaganda consists of distortions, half-truths and outright falsehoods, all in an effort to gain immunity from their own negligence, evade responsibility for their actions, and gain advantage in the courtroom by prejudicing public opinion.

In essence, they seek to foster in the public a lack of trust and confidence in our judicial system, which they believe will induce the public to accept reform measures that will increase their profits and monetary gain. Those who campaign against our system of justice are irresponsible, not only because they seek to evade responsibility for their actions, but also because they weaken the entire fabric and framework of our society, our legal system, for their own self interest.

It is sobering to think where we, as a nation, would be without the guidance, wisdom, and good sense of lawyers. The Declaration of Independence, our stepping-stone as a nation, and the Constitution of the United States, the bedrock of our society, are chiefly the works of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, founding fathers and lawyers all.

In a recent survey, readers were asked to select the top ten milestone U.S. historical documents from the holdings in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and selected as follows:

1. Declaration of Independence (1776)
2. Constitution of the United States (1787)
3. Bill of Rights (1791)
4. Louisiana Purchase Treaty (1803)
5. Emancipation Proclamation (1863)
6. 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920)
7. 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery (1865)
8. Gettysburg Address (1863)
9. Civil Rights Act (1964)
10. Social Security Act (1935)

It is not surprising that all of the above were written or brought about entirely, or substantially, by lawyers. As lawyers, we understand the important contributions legal professionals have made to our society. We recognize that respect for the rule of law is paramount in every aspect of our daily lives.

I am not sure the public still does, and this is why I find the rhetoric of these special interest groups so disturbing. They wrongly encourage the public at large, and especially our younger generation, to disrespect and devalue our judicial branch, one of the three pillars of our society.

Worse still, those who foster this disdain and disrespect for our legal profession do so with an agenda of avoiding legal accountability and increasing their own monetary gain. They seek to profit at the expense of the very institution that maintains order in our society and makes us strong and secure as a nation. Those who campaign against our legal profession and attempt to subvert our legal institutions would, if successful, cause long-term chaos and instability in our society, in return for short-term monetary gain.

We should call these groups and individuals what they are, the kind of ruthless profiteers who, for 30 pieces of silver, would betray our country and the values upon which it was founded.

Tyler Thompson, Barrister's Club member, is a partner in Dolt Thompson Shepherd & Kinney, located in Louisville, Ky.



Annual Convention

KATA's Annual Convention is Sept. 14-16, 2005 at Caesars in Indiana.

The Convention begins with a golf scramble at Caesars Chariot Run Golf Course. There are lots of prizes, including a hole-in-one contest for a brand new car.

Education sessions begin on Thursday and conclude Friday. Check KATA's Web site for a full list of some of the nation's best speakers.

A Silent Auction will take place during the Thursday night reception and dinner. The first-ever "Zipper Award" presentation will follow dinner. You still have time to submit one of your most embarrassing trial stories.

For more information call (502) 339-8890 or email kata@kata.org

Advocate has New Editor

After nearly ten years as Editor of *The Advocate*, Jay Fossett has stepped down.

Jay has been an active KATA member for many years. He became Editor in 1996. He has served on the KATA Board of Governors and has volunteered much of his time soliciting and editing articles for *The Advocate*. His contributions will be missed and we wish him well in his new position as City Manager of Covington.

With this issue, Sheila Hiestand takes over as Editor. Sheila is with the Lexington firm of Bubalo & Hiestand. She obtained her B.A. from Centre and her J.D. from the University of Kentucky.

Sheila and husband, David, are the proud parents of Michael, Maggie, and Grace.

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