



# THE DECALOGUE TABLETS

FALL 2025





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SAVE THE DATE  
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2026  
92ND ANNUAL INSTALLATION AND AWARDS DINNER



*by Alex Marks*

I am deeply humbled and honored to begin my term as the Decalogue Society of Lawyers' 91st president. Founded in 1934, Decalogue, the oldest Jewish bar association in the United States, has been committed

to upholding the highest standards of the legal profession, fostering relationships within the Jewish legal community, and working to combat antisemitism and discrimination. Our members have played a pivotal role in advocating for social justice, honorably serving both the bench and the bar, and engaging in community service. Regrettably, carrying out our mission is more critical now than ever.

We are living in a perilous era, one haunted by historically familiar foes, two ghosts of the past and present that are often inextricably linked.

First, antisemitism has again reared its ugly head. We are flanked on both the left and right by this vileness. In just the last few months alone we've seen an arson attempt at Governor Shapiro's home during Passover, the shooting of two Israeli embassy employees at the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, and the firebombing in Boulder of people rallying for the release of the hostages. Equally as concerning, loyalty tests have been openly raised, with those critical of certain incumbent administrations being told they need their "head examined," are "disloyal," or are "not real Jews." Being Jewish today presents a physical, social, and emotional vulnerability not experienced in generations.

Second, anti-democratic, authoritarian forces are also strengthening. Free and fair elections have been cast into doubt. Political foes targeted and political violence tolerated and whitewashed. Freedom of speech silenced. Freedom of the press attacked. Minority groups are increasingly marginalized, told they are beneath the equal protections of the law by the people who believe they are above them. Due process is being eliminated for immigrants. Secret police are whisking people off the street. Respect for constitutional checks and balances, including an independent judiciary, openly tossed aside. Judges are threatened, both with impeachment and physical violence. Law firms have been singled out for clients they have represented, with many capitulating, unable or unwilling to meet the moment. And citizens are thinking twice before criticizing the government for fear of retribution.

When all of this occurs and society fails to live up to its promise, when the better angels of our nature do not appeal to the chorus of our union, and when the arc of the moral universe is not bending toward justice, all notions we have romanticized throughout American history but entirely dependent on the leadership, integrity, and good faith of those wielding power, it is then when only the rule of law can serve as a final backstop to ensure a fair and equal democratic society.

This is of particular importance to us as Jews because it is a constitutional democracy without religious tests that has provided safety and security, and allowed us to flourish over the last century. And it is up to us as members of the legal profession, and particularly as Jewish judges and lawyers, to do everything within our power to uphold the institutions that ensure adherence to the rule of law.

I encourage everyone to find a way to make a difference in the coming year. We must work to support and defend the Constitution and the independence of our judiciary. We must perform pro bono work, protecting the rights and freedoms of those most vulnerable, and doing our part for Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world. We must loudly stand up to antisemitism and all forms of hate and discrimination. And as a people we must have the means, the intent, and the courage to continue serving as the torchbearers in the quest for truth, justice, and the rule of law. In this fight, we cannot fear, we cannot waver, and we cannot be silent. To quote an old Jewish proverb, "there are times when one must not ask for a lighter burden, but rather only broader shoulders." And that time is now.

Thank you to our outgoing President, Joel Bruckman, for his outstanding leadership over the past year, and to our outgoing Board of Managers, and the Decalogue Foundation Board, for their service. Our incoming Board will work tirelessly to continue strengthening the Society and to carry on its traditions and values.

Know that today and every day we draw inspiration from the Decalogue motto, Deuteronomy 16:20: "Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue." And you can rest assured that over this next year, pursue justice we shall.

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# From the Other Side of the Bench: “Getting Personal” - The Often Overlooked “Personal Consultation” Requirement Before Filing Motions to Compel

*by Judge Alon Stein and Judge Yolanda Sayre*

You have issued written discovery requests. The response deadline passed without receiving any responses. You are annoyed, and you would like to file a motion to compel.

When can you file such a motion?

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 201(k) answers that question, stating, in part, the following:

The parties shall facilitate discovery under these rules and shall make reasonable attempts to resolve differences over discovery. Every motion with respect to discovery shall incorporate a statement that counsel responsible for trial of the case after personal consultation and reasonable attempts to resolve differences have been unable to reach an accord or that opposing counsel made himself or herself unavailable for personal consultation or was unreasonable in attempts to resolve differences.

Specifically, the plain language of Rule 201(k) requires that prior to filing a motion to compel, “counsel responsible for trial” needs to have a “personal consultation” and engage in “reasonable attempts to resolve differences” and after such a personal consultation, be “unable to reach an accord,” or if opposing counsel could not be reached, that “opposing counsel made himself or herself unavailable for personal consultation or was unreasonable in attempts to resolve differences.”

Despite the clear requirement for a personal consultation, a practice that has become quite rampant throughout the legal community in Cook County is that lawyers seeking outstanding discovery responses are sending e-mails or letters demanding compliance and asserting that such “201(k) letters” or “201(k) notices” are being sent “pursuant to rule 201(k).”

However, that is improper. Sending a so-called “201(k) letter” is insufficient pursuant to the language of Rule 201(k).

Instead, every motion to compel must incorporate a statement stating that trial counsel had a personal consultation to resolve the discovery dispute but that the personal consultation was unsuccessful or that opposing counsel failed to make himself or herself available for personal consultation or was unreasonable in attempts to resolve differences.

Why is a “personal consultation” required? The answer is that people tend to be more likely to be reasonable in face-to-face meetings or on the telephone than by e-mails, texts, or letters.

Think about all the agreements that you made over the years in the hallways outside of the courtroom when the judge sent you out there with opposing counsel to discuss the discovery dispute.

Accordingly, a “personal consultation” is mandatory and must be attempted prior to the filing of a motion to compel.

Indeed, the Illinois Supreme Court, in *Robidoux v. Oliphant*, 201 Ill. 2d 324, 340 (2002), explained how the Supreme Court rules are to be applied:

the rules of this court neither are aspirational nor are they mere suggestions; [t]hey have the force of law, and the presumption must be that they will be obeyed and enforced as written.’

As the Illinois Appellate Court has stated, “circumstances wherein the plaintiff consulted personally with the defense attorney and made reasonable attempts to resolve all differences regarding discovery constituted substantial compliance with Supreme Court Rule 201(k).” *Lavaja v. Carter*, 153 Ill. App. 3d 317, 325 (2d Dist. 1987).

In sum, before you file a motion to compel, you need to engage in a personal consultation, in person or via telephone or videoconference, in an attempt to resolve discovery disputes. There is no substitute for such a personal consultation. There is no such thing as a “201(k) letter” or a “201(k) notice” under the plain language of Rule 201(k). You can have a personal consultation by talking on the phone with opposing counsel, or you can even meet over a cold beer, good wine, a meal, or a warm cup of coffee to discuss the discovery dispute.

If you do not have a personal consultation and/or do not include a statement in your motion to compel stating that you had a personal consultation (or at least attempted to have a personal consultation), you run the risk of having your motion to compel denied. It is not worth the risk, so just pick up the phone, dial your opposing party’s number, and try to work it out before seeking judicial intervention.

You will be glad that you did.

*Alon Stein and Yolanda Sayre are judges with the Circuit Court of Cook County. Alon Stein is assigned to the First Municipal District and Yolanda Sayre is assigned to the Domestic Violence Division. Prior to taking the bench, they tried civil cases together as a trial team at Stein Law Offices. Judge Stein dedicates this article in memory of his father, Mayer Stein ז”ל.*

# Trump's Executive Orders Attack the Rule of Law

by Colleen K. Connell

President Trump's Executive Orders (EOs) relentlessly attack the rule of law. The EOs contravene specific constitutional provisions, exceed statutory grants of authority, substitute fantasy for factual justification, and target those who have incurred Trump's personal wrath. Taken as a whole, they threaten not only our democracy, but also, ultimately, each of us.

It is axiomatic that each of the three branches of the federal government, including the presidency, has only limited power. As Justice Hugo Black made clear in *Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer* (1952), the seminal case on presidential power, "The President's power, if any, to issue [an executive] order must stem either from an act of Congress or from the Constitution itself."

Taken as a whole, Trump's EOs are intended to defy all checks—constitutional, statutory, or normative—on presidential power. Coupled with Trump's oft-repeated claim that "he who saves his country does not violate any law," the EOs must be seen as autocratic campaigns to replace the rule of law with the rule of one man, Donald J. Trump. The submission of the GOP-controlled Congress and the acquiescence of the six GOP-appointed Supreme Court justices to these EOs only exacerbate the erosion of the rule of law.

The EO purporting to end birthright citizenship exemplifies Trump's defiance of explicit Constitutional commands. The Fourteenth Amendment states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." As Justice Sotomayor states in her dissent in *Trump v. CASA*, "Few constitutional questions can be answered by resort to the text of the Constitution alone, but this is one. The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees birthright citizenship." *Trump v. CASA*, 606 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (June 27, 2025) (Sotomayor, J., dissenting), slip op. at 4.

The drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment and those who ratified it intended it to explicitly grant citizenship to all children born in the United States. Justice Sotomayor explains that the Citizenship Clause was no legal innovation, it simply restored the longstanding English common law doctrine of *jus soli* abrogated by *Dred Scott*. *Id.* at 5 (internal citations omitted). Demolishing the fatuous argument that undocumented people are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, Sotomayor states the shining constitutional truth "that birthright is protected no less for children of undocumented persons than for descendants of Mayflower passengers."

Justice Sotomayor also notes that the birthright citizenship EO is contrary to Supreme Court precedent. In *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 649 (1898), the Supreme Court confirmed this plain meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment a mere 30 years after it was ratified. The Court held that "[t]he Fourteenth Amendment affirms the ancient and fundamental rule of citizenship by birth within the territory." *Id.* at 693.

The six Justices in the majority of *Trump v. CASA* refused to call the EO for what it is: an unconstitutional rejection of the explicit directive of the Fourteenth Amendment. Instead, the majority concluded that the district court judges who heard the three cases lacked authority to issue a nationwide or universal injunction. The majority's application of the standards for injunctive relief reveals a disingenuous ducking of their obligation to grapple with the requirements of a preliminary injunction — which plaintiffs had clearly met—and thus avoid ruling against Trump on the unconstitutionality of the EO.

As the dissents make clear, the text of the Fourteenth Amendment make clear that the EO was unconstitutional on its face and in all applications, thus satisfying the "merits" requirement for a preliminary injunction. The majority did not find the risk of nationwide confusion created by birthright citizenship being recognized in some states but not others sufficient reason to maintain the status quo of birthright citizenship recognized in all states. The majority did not find the risk of some infants being rendered stateless sufficient evidence of irreparable harm.

In contrast, the same six-Justice majority found sufficient harm to Republican-led states to uphold a nationwide injunction of President Biden's student loan relief program. *See Biden v. Nebraska*, 600 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2023). The contrast between these two cases, coupled with other cases, particularly the Court's rampant use of the shadow docket, threatens the integrity of the Court. It also undercuts Chief Justice Roberts' claim, at least at the Supreme Court level, that there are no Republican and no Democratic judges. (Federal district court judges appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents, including Trump, have ruled against the Trump administration.)

An example of Trump substituting fantasy for fact is his EO invoking the 19th century Alien Enemies Act (AEA) to detain and deport immigrants accused of being members of Tren de Aragua to a gulag in El Salvador. The AEA requires the physical invasion of the United States to be invoked, and the executive order signed by the President on March 15 (but not announced until the next day, as the administration attempted to effectuate the deportations before they could be challenged in court) confidently asserts that the government of Venezuela is working in concert with the Tren de Aragua gang to "invade" the United States. This assertion was always highly dubious. Indeed, the vast consensus of the United States intelligence community rejected this finding, and told the President and the Director of National Intelligence that this was the case.

This EO was predicated on a false pretense. Those national security officials who would not fall in line and cosign the President's fanciful view of the world were fired from their jobs—a personal tragedy for those employees and a likely tragedy for all of us, as we see our national security programs purged of all who adhere to the facts and the constitution rather than fealty to a person.

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In the succeeding months, a number of courts hearing challenges to the invocation of the Alien Enemies Act have ruled that the situation with Tren de Aragua did not meet the necessary elements for the President to act.

The EOs targeting law firms provide additional examples of Trump's disregard of specific constitutional protections. These EOs not only violate the First Amendment right of freedom of speech, Fifth Amendment due process protections, and the Sixth Amendment right to counsel, but they also reveal a vindictive use of executive power to settle Trump's personal grievances against those who represented people or causes anathema to Trump. As such, these EOs violate specific constitutional provisions but also reflect the arbitrary abuse of power that is the antithesis of foundational principles of our democracy—that ours is a governmental of neutral and universally applicable laws, not bills of attainder targeting disfavored individuals, law firms, or organizations.

The first paragraphs of Judge Howell's decision enjoining the EO attacking the Perkins Coie firm distill the dangerous and corrosive intent and impact of such attacks on the rule of law:

No American President has ever before issued executive orders like the one at issue in this lawsuit targeting a prominent law firm with adverse actions to be executed by all Executive branch agencies but, in purpose and effect, this action draws from a playbook as old as Shakespeare, who penned the phrase: "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part 2*, act 4, sc. 2, l. 75. When Shakespeare's character, a rebel leader intent on becoming king, *see id.* l. 74, hears this suggestion, he promptly incorporates this tactic as part of his plan to assume power, leading in the same scene to the rebel leader demanding "[a] way with him," referring to an educated clerk, who "can make obligations and write court hand," *id.* l. 90, 106. Eliminating lawyers as the guardians of the rule of law removes a major impediment to the path to more power. *See Walters v. Nat'l Ass'n of Radiation Survivors*, 473 U.S. 305, 371 n.24 (1985) (Stevens, J., dissenting) (explaining the import of the same Shakespearean statement to be "that disposing of lawyers is a step in the direction of a totalitarian form of government").

The importance of independent lawyers to ensuring the American judicial system's fair and impartial administration of justice has been recognized in this country since its founding era. In 1770, John Adams made the singularly unpopular decision to represent eight British soldiers charged with murder for their roles in the Boston Massacre and "claimed later to have suffered the loss of more than half his practice." David McCullough, *John Adams* 68 (2001). "I had no hesitation," he explained, since "Council ought to be the very last thing that an accused Person should want in a

free Country," and "the Bar ought . . . to be independent and impartial at all Times And in every Circumstance." 3 *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* 293 (L.H. Butterfield et al. eds., 1961). When the Bill of Rights was ratified, these principles were codified into the Constitution: The Sixth Amendment secured the right, in "all criminal prosecutions," to "have the Assistance of Counsel for . . . defence," U.S. Const. amend. VI, and the Fifth Amendment protected "the right to the aid of counsel when desired and provided by the party asserting the right," *Powell v. Alabama*, 287 U.S. 45, 68 (1932). This value placed on the role of lawyers caught the attention of Alexis de Tocqueville, who in reflecting on his travels throughout the early United States in 1831 and 1832, insightfully remarked that "the authority . . . intrusted to members of the legal profession . . . is the most powerful existing security against the excesses of democracy." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* 301 (Henry Reeve trans., 2002) (1835).

The Supreme Court, too, has recognized the importance of lawyers to the functioning of the American judicial system, since "[a]n informed, independent judiciary presumes an informed, independent bar." *Legal Servs. Corp. v. Velazquez*, 531 U.S. 533, 545 (2001). This is so because Congress may legislate, the President may implement, and courts may adjudicate, "but only the lawyers can prepare and submit the great issues of human justice under law in such manner and form that courts, in the ultimate, may be effective." *Williams v. Beto*, 354 F.2d 698, 706 (5th Cir. 1965). Absent their crucial independence, lawyers would "become nothing more than parrots of the views of whatever group wields governmental power at the moment." *Cohen v. Hurley*, 366 U.S. 117, 138 (1961) (Black, J., dissenting).

*Perkins Coie LLP v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, No. 25-716 (BAH) (D.D.C. May 2, 2025) (footnote omitted, emphasis added).

Trump's EOs attempt to remake our system of laws into his vindication of his financial aims and his personal grievances. As such, they attack the rule of law and present an existential threat to our democracy. That six Supreme Court Justices frequently use the shadow docket to sustain the application of these EOs, at least "temporarily," intensifies the threat to the rule of law. defiles the honor and integrity of the legal profession of which they are a part, and increases the threat not only to our liberty, but also to the lives of many of us, particularly the most vulnerable. Lawyers must stand strong in their commitment to the neutral, non-partisan application of the rule of law. All of us, lawyers and non-lawyers, originalists and adherents of a living constitution, must resist this effort to replace the rule of law with the rule of an autocrat.

Colleen K. Connell is the Executive Director of the [ACLU of Illinois](#). She is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Law.

# The Push to Display the Ten Commandments in Public Schools

by Rebecca S. Markert

“I am the Lord Thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

This is the first of Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt. It’s also the sacred scripture on the opening of posters that states like Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas have required, by law, to be posted in every classroom in every public school in their states. The displays include religious directives such as: “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images; Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; and, Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” They’re derived from the King James Version of the Bible, and do not account for the other versions used by Jews and Catholics.

The push to display this reworked version of the Decalogue in public school is a prime example of Christian nationalism that is on the march across the country. Just this year alone, there were 37 bills on Ten Commandments displays in public schools, introduced in 20 states. We’ve also seen efforts to inject into our public schools Christian-infused curriculum, in-school chaplains, and school prayer. These proposed laws are a transparent attempt to pressure young schoolchildren to convert to the state’s preferred brand of religion. Public schools are for education, not indoctrination. Parents, not politicians, should decide if and when their children engage with religion. Our public schools are not Sunday schools.

For these reasons, and because children are obliged to attend school and are subjected to an increased risk of religious coercion, the U.S. Supreme Court has always jealously guarded the religious freedoms of our children in public schools. *See, Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962) (declaring mandatory, state-authored prayers in public schools unconstitutional); *Sch. Dist. of Abington Twp., Pa. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963) (declaring unconstitutional mandatory Bible reading and the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer in schools); *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992) (ruling, as unconstitutional, prayers at public school graduations).

Posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms across the country is blatantly unconstitutional. These laws violate the Establishment Clause because they coerce children to observe, venerate, and obey a religious text; they favor some religions over others; and the states have taken an official position on religious issues and prescribed an official religious text. These laws equally violate the Free Exercise Clause because they usurp the families’ rights to direct and control the religious upbringing of their children; they coerce children to observe, venerate, and obey a particular religious text against their own religious or other beliefs; and they discourage children who hold religious beliefs different from those set forth in the state-mandated version of the Ten Commandments from expressing those beliefs. Put more simply, these displays divide children along religious lines, at a time when our country is already so divided.

## Nearly a Half Century of Precedent: *Stone v. Graham*

More than forty-five years ago, four Louisville residents—a Jew, a Catholic, a Unitarian, and an atheist—sued about a Kentucky state law requiring a “durable, permanent copy” of the Ten Commandments to be displayed on a wall in every public school classroom in the state. *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1980). The case found its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down the law as unconstitutional. The High Court ruled that there is no secular legislative purpose in posting the Ten Commandments. It wrote, “[t]he preeminent purpose for posting the Ten Commandments on schoolroom walls is plainly religious in nature. The Ten Commandments are undeniably a sacred text in the Jewish and Christian faiths and no legislative recitation of a supposed secular purpose can blind us to that fact.” *Id.* at 41. It also didn’t matter that the displays were financed by voluntary private contributions.

*Stone* has been the law for nearly a half century. It remained undisturbed even when the Supreme Court upheld a Ten Commandments display on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol. In *Van Orden v. Perry*, the Court highlighted the difference between the displays on public grounds versus those in public schools: “There are, of course, limits to the display of religious messages or symbols. For example, we held unconstitutional a Kentucky statute requiring the posting of the Ten Commandments in every public schoolroom.” 545 U.S. 677, 690 (2005). (Notably, on the same day, the Supreme Court struck down a Ten Commandments display on courthouse grounds in McCreary County, Kentucky (*McCreary Cnty., Ky. v. Am. C. L. Union of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844 (2005)).

If the Constitution is so clear in the context of public schools, why are we seeing a surge of laws injecting Christianity into our public-school classrooms? That’s essentially the same question U.S. District Court Judge Timothy Brooks posed

in his recent order granting a preliminary injunction in a case challenging a Ten Commandments law in Arkansas, and, as he noted in the opinion, the answer is clear: “Most likely because the State is part of a coordinated strategy among several states to inject Christian religious doctrine into public school classrooms.” *Stinson v. Fayetteville Sch. Dist.*, No. 5:25-CV-5127, 2025 WL 2231053, at \*1 (W.D. Ark. Aug. 4, 2025).

Christian nationalists are on the march. They’re working to upend decades of settled law and radically reinterpret the religion clauses to benefit and privilege Christians. They see an opportunity to do just that with this Federal bench. They have six allies on the U.S. Supreme Court. The biggest roadblock to attaining legal favor is the doctrine of separation of church and state, which was designed to prevent precisely what they’re seeking.

Only three years ago, Christian nationalists removed one of those barriers when the Supreme Court shelved the *Lemon* test in a case involving a mid-field prayer by a high school football coach. *Kennedy v. Bremerton Sch. Dist.*, 597 U.S. 507 (2022).

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This test was used for decades in evaluating Establishment Clause cases and holds that for a law to be constitutional, it “must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion. . . ; finally the statute must not foster ‘an excessive government entanglement with religion.’” *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 612-613 (1971) (citations omitted). If a statute violates any of these three principles, then it is unconstitutional. This analysis had been criticized by various justices of the Supreme Court since the *Lemon* test’s inception. Critics have claimed that the test and the endorsement test based on *Lemon* led to chaos in the lower courts and differing results. The Court replaced it with a so-called history and tradition analysis instead, such that “the Establishment Clause must be interpreted by ‘reference to historical practices and understandings.’” *Kennedy*, 597 U.S. at 510.

Even though *Stone* remains binding law that the Supreme Court has never overruled, Christian nationalists are attempting to use these recent, plainly unconstitutional, Ten Commandments laws to challenge *Stone*.

## **Louisiana: *Roake v. Brumley***

In 2024, my organization, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, along with our coalition partners, the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Louisiana, and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, sued in Louisiana about a state law mandating the posting of the Ten Commandments in every classroom. The state law, House Bill 71, requires “...each public school governing authority shall display the Ten Commandments in each classroom in each school under its jurisdiction.” *Roake v. Brumley*, 756 F. Supp. 3d 93, 113 (M.D. La. 2024). Like the Kentucky statute overturned in 1980, the Louisiana law prescribes a version of the commandments resembling the Protestant text and allows for donations, including monetary contributions.

The state law also allows the display to be alongside posting of historical documents like the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and the Northwest Ordinance, though “the Ten Commandments shall be the central focus of the poster or framed document and shall be printed in a large, easily readable font.” La. R.S. §17:2124(B)(1). One wonders why the Constitution was not chosen.

Representing a multi-faith group of nine Jewish, Christian, Unitarian Universalist and non-religious families with children in the state’s public schools, Americans United and its partners asserted in federal court that H.B. 71 is a violation of the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. The district court issued a preliminary injunction on November 12, 2024, prohibiting the Louisiana defendants from enforcing H.B. 71, adopting rules or regulations for its enforcement, and requiring the Ten Commandments to be posted in every public-school classroom. Judge John W. DeGravelles wrote, “... the question is not whether Biblical laws can ever be put on a poster; the issue is whether, as a matter of law, there is any constitutional way to display the Ten Commandments in accordance with the minimum requirements of the Act. In short, the Court finds that there is not.” *Roake*, 756 F. Supp. 3d at 160. He pointed out that “[e]ach of the Plaintiffs’ minor children will be forced ‘in every practical sense,’ through Louisiana’s required

attendance policy, to be a ‘captive audience’ and to participate in a religious exercise ... for the entire school year, regardless of the age or subject matter of the course.” *Id.* at 193.

The decision was appealed and in June, the Fifth Circuit unanimously affirmed the district court’s entry of a preliminary injunction. *Roake v. Brumley*, 141 F.4th 614 (5th Cir. 2025). The Defendants’ *en banc* motion is still pending as of the date of this publication.

## **Arkansas: *Stinson v. Fayetteville School District***

Americans United and its coalition partners represent a multi-faith group of Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, and nonreligious families in Arkansas who object to their state’s copycat law requiring the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public-school classroom in Arkansas. “As American Jews, my husband and I deeply value the ability to raise our children in our faith, without interference from the government,” said plaintiff Samanatha Stinson. Plaintiff Carol Vella agreed: “My children are among a small number of Jewish students at their school. The classroom displays required by Act 573 will make them feel like they don’t belong simply because they don’t follow the government’s favored religion. The displays will also violate core Jewish tenets, which emphasize tolerance and inclusion and prohibit evangelizing others.”

Act 573 mandates that public schools “prominently display” the Commandments in a “conspicuous place” in every classroom and public library in Arkansas. Act 573 §§ (a)(1)-(2). Once again, our Plaintiffs allege that Act 573 violates the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause.

Just last month, on August 5, a Federal district court issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the school district defendants from implementing the law. In his decision, U.S. District Court Judge Timothy Brooks held that Arkansas Act 573, “is plainly unconstitutional” under both the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment. *Stinson*, 2025 WL 2231053, at \*1. Judge Brooks wrote, “This case begins and ends with *Stone*, a Supreme Court decision from 1980 that analyzed a law almost identical to the one before this Court and found that it violated the Establishment Clause.” *Id.* at 11. He found that the only purpose to display the Decalogue is “to induce...schoolchildren to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey, the Commandments.” *Id.* (quoting *Stone*). Judge Brooks concluded, “that is illegal.” *Id.*

Furthermore, the Act is “incompatible with the Founding Fathers’ conception of religious liberty” and there is “no tradition of permanently displaying the Ten Commandments in public-school classrooms.” *Id.* at 13.

The Court also found that the Free Exercise Clause was violated because the Act interfered with the parents’ rights to direct the religious upbringing of their children, picking up on our Plaintiffs’ concerns for how their children may be treated in school. Judge Brooks noted that it would send an exclusionary message to children who didn’t adhere to that version of the Ten Commandments. As stated previously, this law would coerce children into religious observance.

(continued on next page)

## Texas: *Rabbi Nathan v. Alamo Heights ISD*

On July 2, 2025, Americans United and its partners filed yet another lawsuit in the Western District of Texas on behalf of a multi-faith group of sixteen Jewish, Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Hindu, and nonreligious families with children in Texas public schools. The plaintiffs, who are Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Unitarian Universalist, and non-religious, assert that S.B. 10 is a violation of the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment.

Our suit argues that, by S.B. 10, Texas is adopting an official religious text and taking an official position on religious issues, in clear violation of the Establishment Clause's guarantee of separation of church and state. S.B. 10 coerces children to view, venerate, and obey commandments that are against their beliefs, and the displays interfere with parents' ability to direct their children's religious upbringing. The law therefore also violates the

Free Exercise Clause, which protects the right to hold and exercise religious beliefs of one's choice, including no religious beliefs.

Plaintiffs are asking for a judgment from the court that the law is unconstitutional and an order that prohibits implementation of the law and the posting of the Commandments. On August 20, the court issued a preliminary injunction against the defendant school districts, prohibiting them from displaying the Ten Commandments.

## Conclusion

No student should feel like they belong less than others based on their religious beliefs, or that they will be ostracized or bullied for them. AU and its allied organizations are fighting every day for the religious freedom of all Americans.

Rebecca S. Markert is the Vice President and Legal Director for [Americans United for Separation of Church and State](#).

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| <h2>Book Banning &amp; Barbie CLE &amp; Social</h2>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <h3>Co-Hosts:</h3>                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><i>Tuesday, September 16, 2025</i><br/> <i>5:15pm Check-in, 5:30pm CLE</i></p> <p><i>The Arts Club of Chicago</i><br/> <i>201 E. Ontario</i></p> <p><i>An evening with author Renée Rosen</i><br/> <i>&amp; CLE with Daliah Saper</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                          |
| <p><b>Tickets \$50</b><br/> <i>(\$35 for members of co-hosting associations)</i></p> <p><b>Sponsors:</b><br/> <b>Bibliophile Backer \$500</b><br/> <i>(6 tickets and sponsor listing)</i><br/> <b>Book Buddy \$350</b><br/> <i>(4 tickets and sponsor listing)</i></p> <p><b>Register at</b><br/> <b><a href="http://bit.ly/4fkVzLr">http://bit.ly/4fkVzLr</a></b></p> | <p><b>Renée Rosen</b> is the USA Today bestselling author of nine novels, including <i>Let's Call Her Barbie</i>, <i>Fifth Avenue Glamour Girl</i>, <i>The Social Graces</i>, <i>Park Avenue Summer</i>. Her novels often feature strong, enterprising women. Renée is a native of Akron, Ohio, and a graduate of the American University in Washington D.C. She now lives in Chicago with her partner, John Dul, and is currently working on a new novel coming from Penguin Random House / Berkley in 2027. Renée's books are available at <a href="https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/671725/lets-call-her-barbie-by-renee-rosen/">https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/671725/lets-call-her-barbie-by-renee-rosen/</a></p> <p><b>Daliah Saper</b> is nationally recognized for drafting and negotiating complex contracts, helping brands protect their trademarks and copyrights online, and litigating cutting-edge cases involving anonymous online defamation, revenge porn, sexting, cyberbullying, and other emerging Internet Law issues. Daliah made international headlines when she represented a "catfishing" victim before the Illinois Supreme Court. In addition to managing Saper Law for the last 19 years, Daliah has served as an Adjunct Professor of Entertainment and Internet Law at Loyola University Chicago School of Law since 2010. <a href="http://saperlaw.com/attorneys/">http://saperlaw.com/attorneys/</a></p> | <p><b>Register</b></p>  |



# The New Chicago Board of Education

by Karen Zaccor

*Effective in 2025, the Chicago Board of Education has been half elected and half appointed. This article assesses how the new hybrid board has changed policy at Chicago Public Schools.*

A quick summary of how the new school board, half elected and half appointed, is changing CPS policy is “too soon to tell.” Certainly, some major departures from business as usual have occurred. But significant work toward changing the educational experience for students began when Brandon Johnson became mayor and brought his vision of what needed to be transformed in CPS.

Mayor Johnson’s first board oversaw major initiatives such as the creation of the five-year strategic plan, which is grounded in creating conditions that will promote student daily experiences that are rigorous, equitable and joyful. That board also eliminated school resource officers and replaced them with the more restorative, student-centered approach embodied in the Whole School Safety policy. And it initiated the transition of the district away from student-based budgeting to a more holistic budgeting method that, despite some bugs to be worked out, is a move toward more equitably funding historically under-resourced schools.

Although, in these few months, the new larger board has yet to match the impact of that previous board, some fundamental changes in how the board acts have occurred. Some of the early actions related to charter schools. In October, the Acero charter school network announced plans to close seven of its campuses at the end of the 2024-25 school year. The new board voted to transfer five of these schools to district leadership rather than allowing them to close, a vote different from the position that was advocated by CPS leadership, but one that was rooted in a deeply felt commitment that school closings harm children and communities. In addition, some members of the new board drafted a resolution aimed at preventing future sudden closings and garnered community support for it. The resolution also called for increased accountability for charters in problematic areas, such as their support for students with Individualized Education Plans and English-language learners, and directed CPS to give increased feedback to charters on areas needing remediation. Taking the initiative to put together our own resolution was also a departure in terms of how policy is usually moved on. The Green Schools resolution, put together in cooperation with a network of community groups and supported by many school communities, organizations, and unions, was another example of the board taking that initiative.

In fact, work to connect with our school communities is the biggest change made possible by a representative school board thus far. All of us have made visits to our schools, taken school tours, attended Local School Council meetings, and celebrated

school achievements at events. We have attended numerous events in our communities, speaking to groups of constituents and answering questions. We have also met with constituents on a more individual basis. While we do not solve individual problems, we can uplift them to the appropriate office. And when we hear common concerns, we can seek broader changes to address these concerns in a more systemic way. Because we represent specific districts, we are both more accessible and more accountable to our communities and are constantly looking for ways to reach out to both gather information and share what the board has done.

I am just one individual on the board, but I see as one of my primary responsibilities to encourage local communities to embrace their neighborhood schools whether or not they have children who attend them and to view them as theirs, and to invest their time and resources to ensure that the students there have a positive and nurturing experience. We know from the long years of fighting for an elected representative school board that families deeply desire high quality, well-resourced schools that their children can walk to. CPS has a comprehensive plan for ensuring that schools are high quality and well-resourced, and we as board members can work to build trust with families that we are committed to that goal and encourage them to get involved in their local schools.



All of us as board members would no doubt like to spend more time on education issues and working with our school communities, but the dire financial situation we inherited has dictated otherwise. We have spent considerable time in budget briefings, trying to dissect the information we are given. Many of us have also spent time on how to go beyond what often seems like a limited vision presented by CPS, by reaching out to outside

budget experts for ideas and analysis, as well as beginning to work with legislators, community organizations, and school boards in other parts of the state on collective solutions. This is a new level of advocacy for the board and reflects that we are board members who are involved in our communities and have connections on a more grassroots level than most members of previous boards.

I wanted to become a school board member because I believe in the importance of transforming CPS into a truly equitable system that provides the resources and support for every child in every neighborhood to thrive and develop to their full potential. More policies are in place now than ever before to reach that goal and our job is to ensure that those policies lead to changes in mindset and changes in practice that will bring it to fruition. In a bureaucracy as large and entrenched as CPS and with the added pressures of a hostile federal government and inadequate funding, it is an uphill climb. One step at a time, we are climbing.

*Karen Zaccor is a long-time resident of Uptown, parent of a CPS graduate, former LSC member at Stockton Elementary, and a retired CPS teacher. She represents [Chicago Board District 4A](#).*

# Chicago Civilian Police Oversight

*by Veronica Arreola*

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, the Chicago City Council passed an ordinance in 2021 creating the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA) -- a first-of-its kind system for civilian oversight of the police. The CCPSA was designed to give residents a real voice in shaping public safety policy and holding officers accountable when they harm civilians. It was the culmination of more than [50 years of community organizing, built on the work and sacrifices of those demanding justice after decades of police misconduct](#), from the killings of Rekia Boyd, Laquan McDonald, and Adam Toledo, to the torture of at least 118 people under Chicago police detective Jon Burge.

It was with this history in my heart that I said "yes" when someone from a community organization asked me to run for a seat on a CCPSA District Council.

Chicago's civilian oversight system links neighborhood voices to citywide decision-making. Born from decades of organizing, it isn't perfect, but it's a significant step forward -- one that other cities are watching. When I ran, some dismissed having a seat on the District Council because the system wasn't perfect. But change comes in steps, and this is a tool whose impact depends on how we use it.

At the local level, each of Chicago's 22 police districts has a three-member District Council elected by voters. I serve on the 24th District Council on the Far North Side (numbered that way because Chicago once had 25 districts). District Councils connect directly with community members, hosting monthly meetings where residents can share their views on how the police department is performing, raise public safety concerns, and propose ways to create safety outside of the traditional policing framework. We meet regularly with the district commander to stay informed about local issues and how they're being addressed.

In our district, we've had honest conversations about why a snap curfew is not true public safety and how it could harm Black and Brown youth. We've also raised concerns about improving safety near our public transit stations.

The work of the District Councils doesn't stop at the neighborhood level- it also shapes who sits on the citywide Commission, which has the power to set policy for the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the Civilian Office of Police Accountability, and the Police Board. Commissioners are nominated by the District Council Nominating Committee and appointed by City Council and the Mayor. The Nominating Committee is made up of one member from every District Council, meaning that each police district in Chicago has a representative in the process. The Nominating Committee reviews applications and interviews candidates before submitting its nominees for appointment.

The strength of this system depends on what we bring from our communities back to the Commission. In my district, residents have raised concerns about the safety of our undocumented neighbors, crime on the CTA, shoplifting connected to store closures, police surveillance, and white supremacy within CPD ranks.

While every district council is different, there are three neighboring councils that the 24th works with on a regular basis. We've partnered with our local alders to host joint meetings, explain CPD's budget, and heard from the independent monitor overseeing [the police consent decree](#).

These local and citywide connections come together when all the District Councils meet quarterly to share trends across our communities and decide whether they should become policy proposals for the Commission. We've debated traffic stops, the use of [ShotSpotter](#), and what it means to build a new public safety system. It often feels like we're building the plane while we're flying it -- and explaining to the public what a plane is.

It has now been three years since the CCPSA was established, and the infrastructure is still catching up. Members of District Councils are expected to work about 5 hours a week for a small stipend, but the responsibilities could easily be a full-time job. Like many of my colleagues, I balance my capacity with the demands of the position. I can't take on everything residents ask, but I do my best with the time I have

There is still a lot of building to do with these positions.

The most powerful tool we have is community participation. Attend our monthly meetings, send us an email, share your concerns. This isn't work we were elected to do in isolation.

It took over a year to negotiate a process for requesting information from our police district and commander without filing a FOIA. This is a powerful tool -- but one, again, where public engagement unlocks that power. This is part of police accountability.

In my two years in this role, I've spoken with many professionals and elected officials, each with their own definition of public safety and of police accountability. At the end of the day, everyone wants to feel safe. The challenge is creating that safety without it coming at the expense of someone else. Chicago's civilian oversight system is one tool to meet this challenge, but it will only succeed if residents see it as theirs, show up, and speak out.

*Veronica Arreola is a freelance writer, social media consultant, and community activist. She chairs the [CCPSA 24th District Council](#).*



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# Justice at the Intersection of Race, Gender, and Religion

*by Judge Abbey Romanek*

In May, I had the privilege of joining a civil rights tour led by Rabbi Dr. Rachel S. Mikva and Rev. Dr. Christophe Ringer of the Chicago Theological Seminary. The trip was a part of the Master of Divinity and Ph.D. programs for leaders of all religions. The tour spanned five days and four cities, going from Birmingham, Alabama to Montgomery with a stop in Selma, Alabama, and ending in Atlanta, Georgia. Each and every day was jam packed with tours, museum visits, and meetings with current and historic civil rights leaders. Following are highlights and my reflections from that experience.

## Day One: Birmingham/Selma



Our first early morning began with a visit to the 16th Street Baptist Church and Kelly Ingram Park. On September 15, 1963, this church was bombed by white supremacists, killing four young girls named Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carol Denise McNair. This church was the epicenter of the early civil rights marches where children were sent out to march. The park across the street is both a beautiful memorial to the four young

girls, as well as a harsh reminder of the perils wrought by the marching children. These included statues of growling dogs and fire hoses, all of which were let loose on these children. Most surprising to me was the small yet stirring dedication of a horse chestnut tree to victims of intolerance and discrimination citing the Anne Frank quote: “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

Next, we met with Dr. Martha Bouyer, the executive director of the Historic Bethel Baptist Church. Dr. Bouyer harkened us back to the iconic photograph of the sailor kissing the nurse at the end of World War II. “Notice,” she said, “there are no black people in that photo.” She explained that the black sailors were not allowed off the ship. Yet, I thought, all the soldiers fought and won the same war, all the soldiers of every branch of the military and of every creed and color had a hand in the liberation of the German concentration and death camps and experienced the horror of those camps -- not to mention the horrors of war. Yet the returning black soldiers were barred from partaking in any celebrations. They were not rewarded in any way and did not even qualify for VA loans for college. Instead, they were hidden from view and returned to their prior place of subjugation. Those proud soldiers were reviled in Birmingham. Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth of the Historic Bethel Baptist Church spoke out about the inequity in treatment of the returning soldiers. As a result, he became the target of white supremacists. Reverend Shuttlesworth’s home, which was attached to the church, was bombed. Miraculously, though the bomb was just outside his bedroom, he escaped without injury.

Mrs. Barbara Shores, a resident of “Dynamite Hill,” was a foot soldier in the fight for civil rights and the daughter of the attorney working with Dr. Martin Luther King. We heard her story and sat in the room where her father strategized with Dr. King. She pointed to the scars on her home where dynamite had been set off.

In Selma, we walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, following in the footsteps of Congressman John Lewis on Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, and in the footsteps of Dr. King and Rabbi Abraham Heschel on March 21, 1965.

Later, we arrived in Montgomery, Alabama and walked the grounds of the Capitol building. Our initial observation was that there are no signs, statues, or commemoration of any kind of the march from Selma to Montgomery on the grounds. The only marking is hundreds of feet away in the street facing the building. What we did discover on the grounds, however, was a statue of Dr. James Marion Sims, the “father” of modern gynecology. Dr. Sims, we learned, experimented on enslaved black women without anesthesia. I had never heard of this man. Yet this statue stands like a beacon harkening to Dr. Josef Mengele’s brutal experiments on Jewish women at Auschwitz.

## Day Two: Montgomery

In Montgomery, we met with an abortion rights activist, religious leaders from Temple Beth Or, St. Paul AME Church, and Metropolitan Methodist Church, and activists fighting the crime of poverty with work on fines and fees and asset forfeiture. We also visited the Rosa Parks Museum, learning more about Rosa as a person and the details of the Montgomery bus boycott that brought racial integration to transportation and international attention to civil rights. We met with senior researcher Rachel Goldwasser at the Southern Poverty Law Center. She works on The Intelligence Project which is internationally known for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups and other domestic extremists. SPLC works closely with the Anti-Defamation League tracking antisemitism around the country.

## Day Three

The Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum, the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, also known as the Lynching Museum, are all in Montgomery. The work being done by EJI is breathtaking on so many levels. Listening to one of their lawyers discuss the clients she has defended and the work she has done to right wrongful convictions is nothing short of inspirational. The museums and parks are more than everything you may have seen or read about. They teach, inspire and sober a visitor all at the same time. The Lynching Museum names over 4,400 victims in more than 800 counties in both the North and the South. These names are etched onto slabs representing each of the 800 counties. This museum reminded me of the halls of names and rooms of shoes at Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Museum, and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.

*(continued on next page)*

Our next stop was the Dexter Street Parsonage, the home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This home was left just as his family left it. As solemn as one may think this visit would be, it was anything but. The home has been kept largely as it was after Dr. King and his family moved to Atlanta, down to the brand of cigarettes kept near the ashtray. Everyone on the tour pointed out the most mundane items in the household as those they too grew up with in their homes. These items included bread boxes, metal cups and pitchers, toasters and ashtrays. As sweet as this was, we were called back to the stark reality of living during the civil rights era as our attention was brought to the scars left on the home and the porch from bombings.

## Day Four: Atlanta

The Carter Center runs a Rule of Law program meant to facilitate all people to live up to their full potential and the government is meant to help create conditions that allow for that. Their programs include the Digital Threats to Democracy initiative and the Human Rights program. The Human Rights program goals are to advance the rights of protected groups; apply comprehensive human rights frameworks through programming within the United States; promote climate and environmental justice; and provide responsive expertise to pressing human rights issues.

We then met with SisterLove founder Dazon Diallo. SisterLove's mission is to eradicate the adverse impact on HIV, sexual and reproductive health rights and justice challenges impacting women and their families through education, prevention, support, research and human rights advocacy in the United States and around the world. Southerners on New Ground (SONG) was our next visit where we met with DJ Hudson. DJ informed us of SONG's home for LGBTQ liberation across all lines of race, class, abilities, age, culture, gender and sexuality in the South. It is noteworthy that neither of these organizations could likely exist anywhere in the South other than Atlanta. It is fortunate they do exist there.

Our final meeting of the day was with Jenny Hernandez, the lead senior attorney for the Atlanta Office of the Public Defender's Immigration Defense Unit. She provides representation and consultation to clients facing deportation. She is in charge of making sure that clients who plead guilty to crimes are aware that deportation may be a consequence of their plea. We also discussed the major issue of lack of notice and hearing faced by most of her clients.

## Day Five

Our final morning included visits to the Refugee Women's Network, which empowers women survivors of war, conflict and displacement to overcome barriers and survive; the Emory University Center for the Study of Law and Religion, which provided us with insight into their work to produce and promote scholarship, teaching and programs on the interaction of law and religion around the world; and the Southern Center for Human Rights, founded by ministers and activists concerned with the reinstatement of the death penalty and the horrendous conditions in Southern prisons and jails. SCHR works to promote equality, dignity and justice for those impacted by the criminal legal system in the deep south. They fight for a world free of mass incarceration, the death penalty, the criminalization of poverty and racial injustice.

Our final visit was to the famed Ebenezer Church and the King Center. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King served as co-pastor at the church with his father from 1960 to 1968. Today Reverend Dr. and Senator Raphael Warnock leads this 6,000-member congregation. The original church still stands as part of a memorial and tourist center to the King family while the new church gleams across the street. At the King Center we saw the crypts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and his wife. We stood at the Eternal Flame and reflected on our trip.

On my personal reflection then and now, I see less an intersection than a straight line directly from the Holocaust to and through civil rights. This was immediately clear on Day One: finding the plaque to Anne Frank; connecting the iconic return from World War II photo of the sailor and the nurse and learning of our black brothers' inability to reap any benefit from their service in the war; and walking across the bridge in the footsteps of rabbis, reverends and congressmen. I see a straight line through my father, who went overseas to help Holocaust survivors regain their sense of self, dignity and religion who, on return to the United States worked in the civil rights movement and personally witnessed Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. I see a straight line to my own work today with the Illinois Holocaust Museum, Decalogue, the Illinois Jewish Judges Association, the Cook County Bar Association, the Illinois Judicial Council, the Alliance of Illinois Judges, and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, where I help produce programming and exhibits that remind us of this straight line from before the Holocaust through civil rights and including current issues in immigration and genocide. All of this is to remind all of us of our collective history of discrimination, our historic brotherhood, and our transformative future work together.

*Hon. Abbey Romanek is a Circuit Court judge in the Domestic Relations Division and a Decalogue Board member.*

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# The Temple Mount in Law and Practice

by *Adv. A. Amos Fried*

The renowned British historian Arnold Toynbee made no secret of his derisive attitude towards Jews and Judaism, maintaining they were no more than “a fossil of history...a relic of a past organism which has had no vital role in shaping the civilization of the present.” Yet in a high-profile debate held in 1961 with Israel’s ambassador to Canada, Yaakov Herzog, Toynbee was forced to recant somewhat, proffering that “Israel can ‘defossilize,’ just as you can defrost a car.” Regardless, Toynbee was no lover of Jews and was wont to equate the establishment of the State of Israel with atrocities committed by the Nazis. And to this day his manifest revulsion for Jews and their national homeland continues to find growing currency in a period of fermenting Jew hatred.

But the fossil analogy is not without its support in the evidence, and the lowly mound at the base of Jerusalem’s Old City bears this out quite starkly. To this day we refer to this small tract of land as the Temple Mount, but no temple has stood there for almost 2,000 years. Rather, an enormous structure known as the Dome of the Rock (built in 692 CE) dominates the center, while on the southern edge is a smaller domed complex called the al-Aqsa Mosque. For the most part, the only noticeable remainder of the Temple Mount is its name, and even referring to it as a “mount” is somewhat ironic, given its location at the lowest point of the entire Old City.

Nevertheless, this exact spot has persevered as the most sacred site in Judaism for almost four millennia. According to Jewish lore, it all began with creation of the world itself which was spawned from *Even Hashtia* — the very stone now concealed under the aforementioned Dome of the Rock. The Torah calls this the Land of Moriah, where the binding of Isaac by Abraham took place; G-d instructed the Israelites to sanctify the spot he chose for His Name to dwell (Deuteronomy 12:5); King David purchased the site for 50 shekels of silver, built there an altar and offered sacrifices to G-d (2 Samuel 24:18-25); his son King Solomon built there a grand Temple, which after it was destroyed was rebuilt even grander by the Jews returning from the Babylonian exile. Eventually, in 70 CE that Second Temple was destroyed as well, leaving only the Kotel, a small section of the Western Wall supporting the Temple Mount — a pale remnant of past glory.

For nearly 2,000 years, none of this area was under Jewish control and during certain periods Jews were effectively prohibited from even approaching the site. But the Temple never ceased to serve a central role in the Jewish psyche, tradition, liturgy and study.

Then in 1967 a miracle occurred, the magnitude of which rivalled even the founding of the modern State of Israel some nineteen short years previous. Surely this would introduce an entirely new stage in the Redemption process whereby Jews, finally uninhibited by hostile foreign rulers, would be allowed to worship freely at this most holy place with prayer, perhaps even reinstating sacrificial ritual, perhaps even preparing the construction of a Third Temple...

In actuality, scarcely a few hours following the Israeli Defense Forces’ victorious reclamation of the Temple Mount, then-Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan ordered the immediate removal of the

Israeli flag paratroopers had raised over the Dome of the Rock, instructed all Israeli military personnel to vacate the area, and, shockingly, deposited the keys to the gates surrounding the Temple Mount with the Muslim Waqf — a Jordanian council of local clerics, thereby relinquishing any operative control over the site.

Thus was established what would come to be known as the “status quo,” to which Israel adhered adamantly: Jews would not be allowed to pray anywhere on the Temple Mount and the entire site would be managed and maintained exclusively by the Muslim Waqf, in essence bestowing “religious sovereignty” upon the Jordanian authorities.

Notwithstanding these distinct facts on the ground, Israel continued to profess an unwavering commitment to freedom of worship for all religious adherents, first enshrined in its Declaration of Independence from 1948, which ostensibly guaranteed “freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

In what can best be described as a sort of cognitive dissonance, shortly after the Six-Day War the Israeli Knesset enacted the Protection of Holy Places Law, boldly proclaiming, “The Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places.” More to the point, the statute instructs that “Whosoever does anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of five years.” Even Israel’s penal code imposes a sentence of up to one year incarceration for “grossly offending the religious beliefs or feelings of others.”

Then in 1980, the Knesset passed Basic Law: Jerusalem the Capital of Israel, which again proudly declared the exact same sentiments, protecting against “anything that is liable to violate the freedom of access of members of the various religions to the places sacred to them, or to offend their feelings towards those places.”

Coincidentally with the above Basic Law, the Minister of Religious Affairs instituted official Regulations for the Protection of Holy Places to the Jews, which included a list of no less than 16 such “Holy Places.” And yet, the Temple Mount, where once stood the Holy of Holies, was conspicuously absent from this list.

Already in 1968, the first petition was filed before Israel’s Supreme Court challenging the prohibition against Jews praying on the Temple Mount, and since then literally hundreds of cases have been heard in this regard unto today. While giving lip service to the principle that Israel remains sovereign over the Temple Mount and the law indeed mandates free access to all holy sites regardless of religious or national affiliation, the courts have unfailingly upheld the prohibition against Jews praying on the Temple Mount, employing the most convoluted of legal reasonings.

*(continued on next page)*



In HCJ 222/68 *National Groups-A Registered Association v. Minister of Police*, a 3-2 majority of Supreme Court justices ruled that in this matter, acts by the British government during the Mandate period still pertain, despite subsequent Israeli legislation. Section 2 of the King's Order in Council about the Holy Places, 1924, essentially removed the principle of freedom of worship from the purview of the court's jurisdiction: "No cause or matter in connection with the Holy Places or religious buildings or sites in Palestine or the rights or claims relating to the different religious communities in Palestine shall be heard or determined by any Court in Palestine." In a judicial maneuver of splitting hairs, the court found that while Israeli law guarantees access to religious sites, the right to *prayer* is a different matter entirely. And whereas the Protection of the Holy Places Law quoted above does not address the question of worship *per se*, the King's Order in Council prevails, whereby the courts have no jurisdiction to rule here and the issue as whole is relegated to the immune discretion of the government.

Such judicial deference to government authority is quite an anomaly in Israel, practically to the extent of non-existence. Aharon Barak, who was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1978 and eventually served as the court's president until his retirement in 2006, was notorious for his ultra-expansionist activism on behalf of the judiciary's authority. "The world is filled with law... There are no areas in life which are outside of law," he repeatedly avowed, thereby empowering the courts to intervene (interfere) virtually unrestrained in every matter of public policy. "*No areas in life*" perhaps, except for freedom of religious worship for Jews on the Temple Mount – the one most important site in all the world for them.

Thus, in HCJ 7128/96 *Temple Mount Faithful v. Government of Israel*, an astoundingly reticent Barak sheepishly conceded that "even when the court is authorized to hear a matter concerning a holy place, it is well aware that a holy place is not just some place, like any other place." While there are indeed matters meriting adherence with "utmost severity to the language of the law ... there are other matters, which are also matters of law, which are no less matters of society, faith, morality and policy. In such matters, the court may not be meticulous about the language of the law, but interpret and apply the law flexibly, in light of extra-legal considerations, to the extent that the public good requires it. Such are, in general, matters concerning holy places."

Time soon revealed that the courts' refusal to protect a Jew's right to pray on the Temple Mount, whether justified under the "lack of jurisdiction" pretense, the guise of the hallowed "status quo" or a sui generis interpretive elasticity, was in actuality nothing more than total capitulation to pure dread of what might happen if...

"The situation is sensitive and fraught with dangers on an inter-communal basis and the place is prone to disaster," the Supreme Court gravely warned time and again. "Any small incident in such a place is liable to lead to a major flare-up," the Justices surmised. In conformance with this panicked disposition, the newly self-appointed president of the Supreme Court, Yitzchak Amit, graphically admonished the petitioner in HCJ 2818/20 *Etzion v.*

*Prime Minister*: "The Temple Mount is an explosive place, the place where the rivers of lava of national and religious conflict pour out, hence the danger of melting into the core of the fiery furnace. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this is one of the most complex and sensitive places in the Middle East, if not the entire world, and it is possible that a match could even ignite a flame."

Such mortal alarm was more than enough for the courts to sanction a plethora of draconian restrictions designed singularly against Jews wishing to exercise any means of worship on the Temple Mount. This included stringent prohibitions against donning or even entering the area with such traditional items as a *tallit* and *tefillin*, silently reciting prayers from a *siddur* (prayer book), standing for an extended period in one spot while moving your lips without uttering a sound (see 1 Samuel 1:13), *shuckling* (the age-old practice of swaying back and forth while *davening*), and of course even a hint of voiced liturgical invocation or saying the *Shema*, as well as any communal expression of worship such as vocally answering "Amen" to a blessing or prayer. For these and similar heinous offenses, Jews were swiftly apprehended, forcibly removed from the Temple Mount compound and issued restraining orders preventing them from entering again for months at a time.

But recently these prohibitions have been gradually relaxed and to some extent even annulled. Jews may gather together, albeit discreetly, for joint prayer in a *minyan* (a quorum of ten men), prayer books (though not Torah scrolls) have been permitted, lectures by rabbis on religious subjects can be heard in public, and most remarkably, Jews have been allowed to prostrate themselves briefly in a secluded area adjacent to the site of the Holy of Holies, a practice derived by the sages from Leviticus 26:1 and reserved uniquely for worship on the Temple Mount.

Despite the fact that these and other "provocations" receive wide exposure in the press and on social media, the skies have not fallen, hundreds of millions of devout Muslims have not converged on Jerusalem to rescue it from Jewish desecration, Israel continues to extend the Abraham Accords with a growing list of Arab states, and the decades-long judicial handwringing over a potential powder keg just waiting to explode has all been proved for naught.

How is it that with unabashed impunity, Israel — of all nations in the world — has tolerated, indeed acquiesced to, so much blatant discrimination against Jews? The Rabbis teach that "three precious gifts the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Israel, and all of them weren't given except by means of suffering: Torah, the Land of Israel and the World to Come." Nothing epitomizes the Land of Israel more than the Temple Mount, so it should come as no surprise that to merit receipt of this priceless treasure, the accompanying trials and tribulations are all just part of deal.

*Adv. A. Amos Fried, a native of Chicago, is a licensed member of both the Israel and New York State Bar Associations and has been practicing law in Jerusalem for over 33 years. He specializes in civil litigation, criminal representation and commercial law. His private law firm is located at 5 Ramban Street in Rehavia, Jerusalem, and he can be reached at 011-972-544-931359, or [aafried@aafriedlaw.com](mailto:aafried@aafriedlaw.com).*

*by Judge Megan E. Goldish  
and Judge Michael Cabonargi*

**While so many towns in other European nations were sending their Jewish neighbors to the Nazi death camps, the residents of Pitigliano sheltered all of theirs from harm.**

Perhaps, as you've strolled through the streets of Rome, eating gelato and trying to navigate cobblestones, you may have noticed small, polished brass plaques embedded in the sidewalks in front of doorways. These "stolpersteine," or "stumbling stones," contain inscriptions: They are intimate memorials commemorating individual victims of the Holocaust at their last place of residence before they were deported or killed by the Nazis. Each stone bears the name of the victim, their date of birth and, if known, their fate, serving as a poignant reminder of lives lost during one of the darkest chapters in history. These memorials honor the victims and serve as a reminder to future generations to never forget the atrocities against them. Stolpersteine can be found in many Italian cities, but no memorial plaques exist in Pitigliano, because its entire Jewish population survived the devastation.

There are long-standing ties between Jews and Christians in Italy, where the Jewish population is among the oldest in Europe. They had already lived in Rome for two centuries when the Romans conquered Judea in 70 B.C. and brought Jewish prisoners back to Italy to be sold as slaves. Legend has it that Jewish slaves were forced to assist in building the Colosseum. In the ensuing centuries, however, Italy has repeatedly served as a haven for Jews during periods of persecutions, including during the Spanish Inquisition. There is a strong tradition of collaboration between both cultures, and that connection is enduring.

This year, we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Despite massive numbers of Jews who perished during the Holocaust, Italy's Jewish population was largely protected, and many Italians proved heroic in risking their own lives to shelter Jewish friends and neighbors. According to historical records, 85 percent of Italian Jews survived; by contrast, in countries such as Germany and Poland, 95 percent of their Jewish population perished, and overall, two of every three European Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. In Italy, however, authorities consistently resisted Nazi directives to deport Jews, or provided forged documents that allowed them to evade capture. Additionally, some Jews were saved due to the remote, protective geography of certain regions of Italy.

Yad Vashem, Israel's official Holocaust memorial, bestows the title "Righteous Among the Nations" upon individuals who rescued Jews during World War II. This recognition is a powerful reminder of the importance of moral courage and ethical action in times of crisis. It underscores the belief that, even in the darkest moments of history, there were individuals who chose to stand on the side of righteousness. More than 700 Italian heroes are recognized as Righteous Among the Nations and their courage is a beacon of hope amid the darkness of that era. Some of these Italian heroes are well-known, and are deservedly a tremendous source of Italian pride, including champion cyclist Gino Bartali and businessman Giorgio Perlasca. Even some European regions earned the designation, having been populated by so many heroes that the entire Jewish population was protected. The Greek island of Zakynthos and the French town of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon earned that distinction.

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As noted above, there is also a town of Italian heroes where every Jewish resident survived the Holocaust: Pitigliano. This picturesque Tuscan burg is known as “Piccola Gerusalemme,” or “Little Jerusalem,” a moniker it earned not only because its landscape resembles that Middle Eastern city, but also because of its history of peaceful coexistence and collaboration with its Jewish population. Pitigliano was a haven for Jews fleeing persecution during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Under the protection of the local ruling family, the Orsini, the town’s Jewish residents have flourished and contributed to the town’s cultural and economic life for centuries.

The documentary “Our Hebrews” follows Christian author Franco Paoletti and Israeli director Naor Meninger as they travel around Pitigliano and gather historical information and accounts from its residents. Through their journey, we learn Jews have been in Pitigliano since the 12th century, with large numbers settling there in the 16th century to escape the restrictive policies of the papal authorities. According to a current Jewish resident, a Jewish physician named Dr. Davide de Pomis moved to Pitigliano back then because Jews were forced to live in ghettos elsewhere. De Pomis became the personal physician of Count Niccolo Orsini, who ruled the region. When de Pomis’ family members passed away, the count granted him a piece of burial land, which today is the town’s Jewish cemetery. Centuries later, the cemetery is still well-tended, with small stones sitting atop many of the headstones, signifying that people continue to pay tribute to these departed Jewish citizens. Additionally, a beautiful synagogue was established in the 1590s, and it remains one of only five still-active synagogues in all of Tuscany. For centuries, the Jewish population thrived in Pitigliano, until the racial laws of the late 1930s.

Even in 1622, when the Medici enclosed Jews in a ghetto, the local population remained steadfastly friendly with their Jewish neighbors. About 30 years ago, an underground system of ancient tunnels was discovered in Pitigliano, and from artifacts recovered, including a mezuzah and crucifixes, it was clear there was peaceful coexistence. When Napoleon occupied Italy in the 1700s, some residents welcomed him, while others formed a group called Via Maria, an anti-Napoleonic and antisemitic group. In 1799, Via Maria soldiers entered the Pitigliano synagogue and desecrated many religious items. The Catholic priests of the town were outraged and ran through the streets of the town, knocking on doors of residents and demanding that Christian residents rush to the synagogue to defend it. In the testimonies of the residents at the time, they called the Jews “our Hebrews.” That likely provided the Jews there a sense of belonging missing for many other Jews of the diaspora.

Many current business owners are from families who have lived in Pitigliano for centuries, and often pay tribute to the area’s Jewish history. For example, the chef at Il Tuffo Allegro mixes

traditional Jewish recipes from the area with dishes passed down to him through his Christian relatives. He believes the preservation of these recipes provides proof of peaceful collaboration. The owner of the hotel Valle Orientina refurbished a building that encompasses the former Jewish baths, or mikveh. There remains a sign near the entrance from more than 100 years ago that reads “Bagni Ebraici” (“Jewish Baths”).

Another meaningful tradition of coexistence between the Jewish and Christian populations was a ritual performed when Pitigliano was in need of rain. Residents of both religions would go to the church at the edge of town and pray together for rain and for prosperity for the region. On the way back into town, everyone would go to the synagogue and again pray together for rain.

One of the Jewish residents interviewed for this documentary described how the family of Fortunato Sonno hid them in a cave to protect them from the Germans. Fortunato’s son, who is now in his 80s and was interviewed while picking olives, tells of how his family assisted his sequestered neighbors. They would leave food for them under a particular tree. He and his father had a secret code whereby they would ride a white horse, meaning all was safe, or a black horse to alert them that the Germans were in the area. It was risky for the Sonno family to help Jews, but despite many close calls, both the Jewish family and the Sonno family survived. Today, Fortunato Sonno is named one of the Righteous by Yad Vashem. Another resident who was interviewed in the documentary displayed an official certificate naming a large number of Pitigliano residents as Righteous.

Today, Pitigliano honors its Jewish heritage through cultural initiatives and commemorative events. The town serves as a symbol of resilience, tolerance and solidarity, reminding us of the importance of standing up against hatred and persecution.

We must never forget and we must always be grateful. Never again is now.

Non dobbiamo mai dimenticare e restare sempre fedeli. Mai più è adesso.

לא נישכח ונשאיר תמיד מודים. לעולם לא עוד הוא עכשיו

*Judge Megan Goldish is a past president of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers. Michael Cabonargi is a member of the Milan-Chicago Sisters Cities Committee and was recently appointed At-Large Circuit Judge in Cook County. Both are members of the Justinian Society of Lawyers.*

*This article was previously published in the April 2025 issue of Fra Noi.*



# Decalogue's Mentoring Project

*by Sharon Eiseman*

What could compete with the value, joy and benefits of a law student having a lawyer for a mentor—other than being the lawyer serving as that mentor?

A few years ago, Cook County Circuit Court Judge Myron F. Mackoff, a past president of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers casually shared his belief, at a Decalogue Board meeting, that recent law school graduates and law school students, at the precipice of serving as lawyers in various roles within the profession, would benefit from having lawyer mentors available to guide them as they begin their journeys “in the field.”

After that future altering statement from Judge Mackoff, I had a casual conversation with attorney Erin Wilson, who has, for many years, been a leader of the Decalogue Womxn's Committee, about doing something to keep Judge Mackoff's theme alive. It was my good fortune and the beginning of our partnership that Erin was very receptive to my invitation.

At that intersection, those thought-altering forces led Erin and me to explore the status of law students in the Chicagoland area and how, with support, they can create a new, and constructive, path toward post-graduation, whether by means of a chosen employment or through the pursuit of higher education, or a combination of those two options, or even some other engagement consistent with their dreams, desires and monetary needs. Our purpose led us to information about the law school's mentoring program. Support for such students' ambitions is now an integral part of the Decalogue Society's sponsorship for those young women who are anxious to determine where they can find a fulfilling future in the careers in law that they learned about and hope to undertake.

In our service as mentors to these young women lawyers of the future, Erin and I have, with pleasure, shared our own experiences,

from the start to now, and including both the challenges and the fulfilling experiences which, in the moment, serve as examples of the lessons learned in our many years of traveling through the stages of becoming and being the lawyers who believe that the sharing of those travels, and how they led us to our current respective statuses in the profession, can provide both comfort and inspiration to our mentees. We have also been the beneficiaries of learning from our mentees how some law schools are preparing their law students for life as successful lawyers no matter where they choose to practice.

After our firsthand experience as mentors to the two recent law school graduates assigned to us, with whom we held several joint meetings over the course of a month, Erin and I can attest to the value of the mentoring process and wish to applaud Judge Mackoff for sharing his vision as to the value of mentoring law students. What our mentees learned from us about serving as lawyers provided them with a degree of confidence about how their studies are preparing them to address and solve legal challenges; to recognize what insights they can offer to future clients; and to decide whether to join a law firm or a government entity or start their own practices, which are just part of an extensive list of options available to new lawyers as they pursue their calling as well-trained and committed attorneys. A number of other Decalogue members have also happily chosen to embrace the opportunity to become mentors and have seen the benefits that can accrue to the individuals on both sides of a mentor-mentee relationship. We are grateful for Judge Mackoff's brainchild of such an inspiring project and the ongoing support that Decalogue has extended to its implementation.

*Sharon Eiseman serves on the Decalogue Board, the Womxn's Committee, the Tablets committee, and many more projects and committees of our Society.*

Decalogue members can sign up to be a mentor or mentee (young lawyers can be both) at <https://forms.gle/b7qiA1pJrgAtSwgAA>



**BOOZIN' & SHMOOZIN'  
IN THE SUKKAH**

**Student and Young Lawyer Social**  
**Thursday, October 9, 8:00-11:00pm**  
*(all members welcome)*

**Chicago Loop Synagogue**

*Decalogue membership is free for students and for  
new lawyers the first year out of law school.*

**So bring your friends and have them join!**

**Watch your email for registration information**

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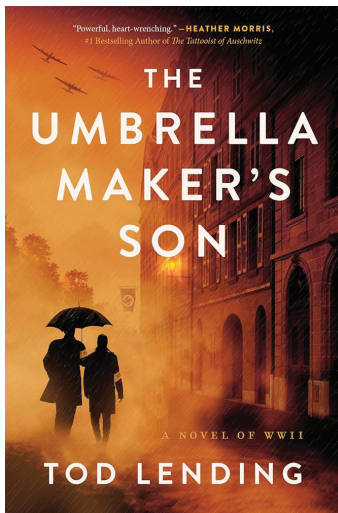
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# Book Review: *The Umbrella Maker's Son*

by Hon. Michael S. Jordan

*The Umbrella Maker's Son*, a novel, by Tod Lending, Harper Publishers, New York, 2025, 379 pages, ISBN: 978-0-06-341384-9 (pbk.)



Tod Lending is an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning producer, director, writer, and cinematographer. His work aired nationally on ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, and HBO, and has been screened theatrically and received awards at national and international festivals, including the Sundance Film Festival. He is president and founder of Nomadic Pictures, a documentary film production company based in Chicago. *The Umbrella Maker's Son* is his first novel.

Lending has a winner, scoring a touchdown/homerun combo in his rookie effort. He crafts a riveting account, masterfully developing multiple characters in this account of events shortly before and during the years after Hitler's forces attacked Poland. We follow two Jewish Polish families through those terrifying times, seeing many heroic acts of bravery in the face of sadistic acts of evil on the part of Nazis and their sympathizers. There is a constant battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil, the brave and the self-serving cowards. We meet characters who risk their own lives to hide, house, support, and save others; and we meet other characters willing to inform and support the monsters, stealing humanity at every turn. Every person experiences the challenges requiring vigilance, and that stress never disappears, but is merely masked by sadness with each loss of a family member or friend.

There are many unexpected twists and turns as the young boy, Reuven Berkovitz, who was raised in a middle-class family with his two sisters, Sara and Basha, is forced into a rushed manhood in order to survive. He and his sisters lived with their mother's mother, referred to as "Bubbe" (grandmother in Yiddish). His father, the umbrella maker, and their mother loved and protected all three children and dearly loved each other and all cared about Bubbe, who cared deeply for all of them. Reuven studied in religious school and helped his father at their shop. We come to know all of the employees of the umbrella shop and grow to love each, just as Reuven did.

Zelda Abramovitch and her two brothers, Eli and Joshua, lived nearby. For several years, Reuven knew he would marry Zelda, and considered her family his and his family hers. Zelda was constantly in Reuven's thoughts and dreams. She inspired his drive

to survive, as her parents were willing to sacrifice all, to have the couple survive the war and continue the family lines.

The plot evolves with every grotesque action of the Nazis. Zelda's family moves to the countryside, away from the big city of Krakow, and farther away from the oncoming German army. As Reuven's immediate family also relocates, within the city, each of the lovers lose each other. As the action unwinds, it is the mission of Reuven to find his Zelda and reunite with her.

As acknowledged by him at the end of the book, the author has clearly engaged in much research, by studying many books on the period, but also consulting several persons who were living in Poland during the war who survived to tell their stories. Lending discovered that his own great grandfather had an experience like that of his main character, and the author incorporated it into the book. The author read about a righteous gentile who had a business in the part of Krakow that became part of the ghetto and who helped save many Jews. Whether it is the geography, including the streets, the people, the brutality, or the religious differences between the religious and non-religious Jews, all were researched well. Only the names and characters are fictitious. The Nazis treated all Jews equally, whether ultra-orthodox, less religious, or non-observant. They were all brutalized, enslaved, and killed, as it suited those in power.

I read the last page of the book, hoping for more and wishing for a sequel so that the story could continue to unfold as the war ended and life returned to a less stressful time for Reuven and his "family." I also reflected upon the bigger picture, taking the perspective of the individuals affected when an authoritarian takes power and, by force or persuasion, he is surrounded by sycophants who enable him and his evil. The authoritarian forces never have enough, so they move, mile by mile, city by city, and country by country, and conquer all in their path, subduing, suppressing, tormenting, torturing and killing the resisters and anyone unlike them. In their path, the rule of law is first distorted and then ignored. Those in power disregard ethical rules, guardrails, and any regard for civil rights and liberties. Agents are put in place to make extra-judicial arrests. No respect is given to individual rights, life, or personal choice, as people are imprisoned, enslaved, and killed. One can easily lose faith and hope, especially if one knows history and realizes how many people are ignorant of such, or worse, aware of history, but ignore its lessons.

*Hon. Michael S. Jordan, Mediation & Arbitration Services, Glenview, Illinois (847-724-3502), served as a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County from 1974 to 1999 and then began a private mediation and arbitration practice from 1999 to the present. Jordan is the author of an autobiography: Becoming a Judge: An Inside Story, available from Amazon.com which includes his role in the rise of John Paul Stevens to the United States Supreme Court.*

# Book Review: *Smatteringings*

by *Hon. Michael S. Jordan*

*Smatteringings*, a series of short stories, by Jim Friedlander is available on Amazon; 231 pages. Jim Friedlander, born in 1942 and raised in Chicagoland, went to public schools and then to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he continued to excel academically, as well as in sports. During his senior year in college, he decided to join the newly created Peace Corps. At the urging of his father, he postponed beginning his public service until he completed law school at Harvard, and took and passed the Illinois bar exam and was admitted here as an attorney in December of 1966. Shortly thereafter, he began his Peace Corps service in Africa. He now resides in London, England.

*Smatteringings* is a well written series of stories about some of Friedlander's adventures, encounters, and service in various African states and his own diplomatic service for the country. He was first assigned to Malawi, after his volunteer service with the Peace Corps ended. He writes about dangerous encounters he had with more than one rhino, a wild buffalo, and a multitude of roaches.

Friedlander created for many African countries and companies a framework to negotiate treaties, agreements, and contracts. He engaged diplomats from many countries, CEOs from significant entities, and yet walked with the people on the street to get a flavor of the 100 countries he has lived in or visited. He found a way to converse with people in many languages other than English and he developed deep and lasting friendships.

His stories give us a vivid understanding of the geography, the types of government, and quirks of rulers in socialist, democratic, and autocratic regimes, as well as unique customs of various places. We learn of his difficulties obtaining work permits and visas to enter certain countries to fulfill his mission. His employment by the World Bank during his tenure gave him greater ease in entry, flying under the UN banner when he had to engage locals for bank investments. He went to remote places, including deep into a mining shaft to better understand a bank investment. A lot of help were some of his friendships with diplomats nurtured over time. In one instance, a tip or gratuity (a bribe), was necessary to enter a certain African country rife with corruption.

Friedlander tells how he and his wife, during her final months of pregnancy before the birth of their first child, traveled to: Malawi; Mauritius; Nairobi, Kenya; Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel; Tehran, Iran; Kabul, Afghanistan; Delhi, India; Kashmir; Bangkok, Thailand; Taiwan; Japan; to the US in Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago, New York, and Washington DC. Friedlander retells experiences in each place, giving us some sense of the political and civic climate then and now. Some of those places became war zones, but fortunately not when the Friedlanders were there.

We learn of business events taking Jim to many other countries to establish agreements for air travel, gold mine licenses, law firm expansion, trade agreements, as well as social engagement. The author takes us to fancy places like the Taj Mahal but also isolated and desolate areas. We have the chance to become world travelers with Jim in the safety of our own reading chairs and do not face the dangers to life and limb he experienced. My own conclusion in reading this fine book is that Jim's life takes courage, intelligence, patience, endurance, and openness to difference. He was an important face to change the image of "the ugly American" to the helpful, loving, open, smart, and friendly American.

*Smatteringings* is a book one can easily read through from start to finish in a relatively short time. Because each chapter is independent of the others, one can pick and choose which story to read in any order. I went from start to finish, moving in chronological order. I hope you order the book on Amazon and find as much enjoyment in reading this book as I did. John F. Kennedy's New Frontier brought new, fresh, honest, young people to places in the world in the 1960's, with great impact, where professional diplomats had not previously been as effective.

*Hon. Michael S. Jordan, Mediation & Arbitration Services, Glenview, Illinois (847-724-3502), served as a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County from 1974 to 1999 and then began a private mediation and arbitration practice from 1999 to the present. Jordan is the author of an autobiography: Becoming a Judge: An Inside Story, available from Amazon.com which includes his role in the rise of John Paul Stevens to the United States Supreme Court.*

## Rosh Hashanah Mitzvah Project Sunday, September 14, 9:00-10:00am



We will meet at 4640 N Sheridan on Chicago's north side to distribute food packages for Rosh Hashanah. Boxes will be delivered to the building so you do not need your own vehicle - just join us at the appointed time, grab some packages and help bring a Shanah Tovah to the needy of our community. Children of all ages can participate so this is a great opportunity to involve your family in our mitzvah project.

[VOLUNTEER HERE](#)



# CLEs - All on Zoom

Thursday, September 4, 12:00-1:00pm

## **Dreamers: The Status of DACA Today**

Speakers: Enrique Espinoza, Kent IIT College of Law, Maria D. Cabrales, Immigration Attorney

**Cosponsored with HLAI**

[Register Here](#)

Thursday, September 11, 12:15-1:15pm

## **Shareholder Agreements**

Speakers: Doug Murray & Alan Slutsky, Aronberg Goldgehn

[Register Here](#)

Wednesday, September 17, 7:00-8:00pm

## **The Criminalization of Mental Health**

Speakers: Marc Buslik, Commander (Retired), Chicago Police Department, Sergeant Jose Estrada, Chicago Police Department, Abby Rabinowitz, Hinda Institute Development and Program Coordinator; Facilitator: Attorney Mark Epstein

**Cosponsored with the HINDA Institute**

[Register Here](#)

Thursday, October 23, 12:15-1:15pm

## **10/23 The Legal Status of Hemp**

Speaker: Eric Berlin, Partner, Dentons

[Register Here](#)

Thursday, October 30, 12:15-1:15pm

## **Discovery in Family Law**

Michael Zaslavsky & Elizabeth Lazzar, Aronberg Goldgehn

[Register Here](#)

## **Registration Opening Soon**

Tuesday, November 18, 5:15-6:45pm

## **Religious Right to Abortion**

Speakers: Prof. Sheldon Nahmod and Attorney Natalie Lyons. Moderator: Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg

**Cosponsored with the Decalogue Foundation and the Decalogue Womxn's Committee**

Thursday, November 20, 12:15-1:15pm

## **Corporate Compliance Under the Trump Administration**

Speaker: Theodore Banks, Scharf, Banks & Marmor

Thursday, December 4, 12:15-1:15pm

## **Sexual Harrassment Prevention**

Speakers: Dina Ninfo and Rebecca Melzer, FLASH

## **Coming in 2026**

Compassion Fatigue: Sustaining the Professional Self, Dual Nationality, Expulsions of Trans People from the Military, Extradition to Foreign Prisons, Hot Topics in Family Law, Income Tax Update, Is Federal Targeting of Universities Increasing Antisemitism?, Juror #10 Video CLE, Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board v. Drummond, Professor Wendy Muchman Professional Responsibility Lecture Series, Real Estate Law: Eviction of Squatters, Rule of Law, Understanding the Registry

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## **Save the Dates!**

### **Judicial Reception**

Thursday, February 19, 2026

### **YLS Purim Party**

Thursday, March 5, 2026

### **Model Seder**

Monday, March 30, 2026

### **92nd Annual Installation & Awards Dinner**

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

*by Sharon Eiseman*

On April 25, **Judge Morton Denlow (ret.)** received the Harris A. Agnew Service to Community Award from Resolution Systems Institute, a not for profit which promotes access to justice through cost-effective, timely and fair conflict resolution.

**Judge Nancy Katz (ret.)** has begun a two-year stint as President of the Board of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, which is based in Evanston, Illinois.

**Gail Eisenberg** was awarded the Alta May Hulett Award by the Chicago Bar Association in March for her contributions in advancing “women in the legal profession or other areas.” She was also honored with the Champion Award at the Women Employed Working Lunch in May for her work advancing women’s rights in the workplace. And we must ask: Does she have any time to sleep?

Board member **Dani Levin** has been promoted to the position of 2nd Chair for the Cook County States Attorney’s Office. It may be of interest to note that this Office (CCSAO), as the second largest prosecutor’s office in the U.S., prosecutes criminal and regulatory violations across six bureaus and four units with a staff of over 1,200. Accordingly, if Dani falls asleep during any DSL meeting, we will surely understand why.

On January 31, 2025, **Jonathan Federman** and his wife, Bryce Lindon-Federman, welcomed their first child, son Reid Lindon Federman, into this world. Mazel Tov to them!

Board member **Judge Scott Tzinberg** has been appointed as the co-chair of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind Junior Board with longtime co-chair **Judge Megan Goldish**, on which several other board members serve. It seems that the Chicago Lighthouse has ‘hit the jackpot’!

Decalogue Treasurer **Howard Ankin** was elected as a Governor-at-Large of the American Association for Justice, The Association for Trial Lawyers. And Howard’s son graduated from high school.

Liam, the son of Board member and Tablets editor, **Rob Schwartz**, also graduated high school.

**Ben Usha** received recognition from the JUF as an honoree at its 12th Annual Double Chai for his role as a ‘talented, difference-making Jewish young adult’ in service with its Young Leadership Division-Chicago-the 36 under 36.

Board member **Charles ‘Chuck’ Krugel** was appointed a 2025 - 26 Vice Chair of the American Bar Association’s Employment Law Committee for the International Law Section. This honor was subsequent to his June presentation, for the same Committee, updating them on the U.S. president’s international impact on labor and employee relations.

*And that’s all there is for now! But it’s certainly a lot of meaningful engagement by many of our dsl members on projects that engage and enrich communities and support valuable work that makes a positive difference to its recipients. For that work, we, as an organization, express our sincere gratitude to said members and other members who are also delivering helpful support to communities as this paragraph is being written!!*

**3rd Annual All-Bar Salute  
to Veterans in the Legal Profession**  
*Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the end of the Nuremberg Trials*  
**Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 5:30-7:30pm**

**Tickets:**  
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**Speaker:**  
**John Geiringer**  
*Center for National Security and Human Rights Law  
Chicago-Kent College of Law*

**Register by November 7**  
<http://bit.ly/3UVUCju>



**Union League Club, 65 W Jackson, Chicago**

(The Decalogue Society of Lawyers is a 501(c)(6) organization. Donations are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes)

## Welcome New Members!

Wayne Addis  
Nick Albukerk  
Larry Berg  
Elizabeth Dibler  
Anthony Elman  
Garson Steven Fischer  
Naomi Sarah Fischhoff  
David Brian Franks  
A. Amos Fried  
Lucy Rose Friedman  
Maya Sophia Gabay

Jackie Taylor Holsten  
Rebecca Seva Kahn  
David H. Levitt  
Michael Lorge  
Alexis Mansfield  
Esther Morgenstern  
Julia Rose Morgenstern  
Scott Pollock  
Melissa Rogatz  
Hailee Zabrin

## Thank You to Our Members Who Gave Above and Beyond

### Life Members:

Howard H. Ankin, Adam E. Bossov, Charles P. Golbert,  
Jackie Taylor Holsten, David W. Lipschutz, David S. Olshansky

### Firm Members:

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Alexis Mansfield  
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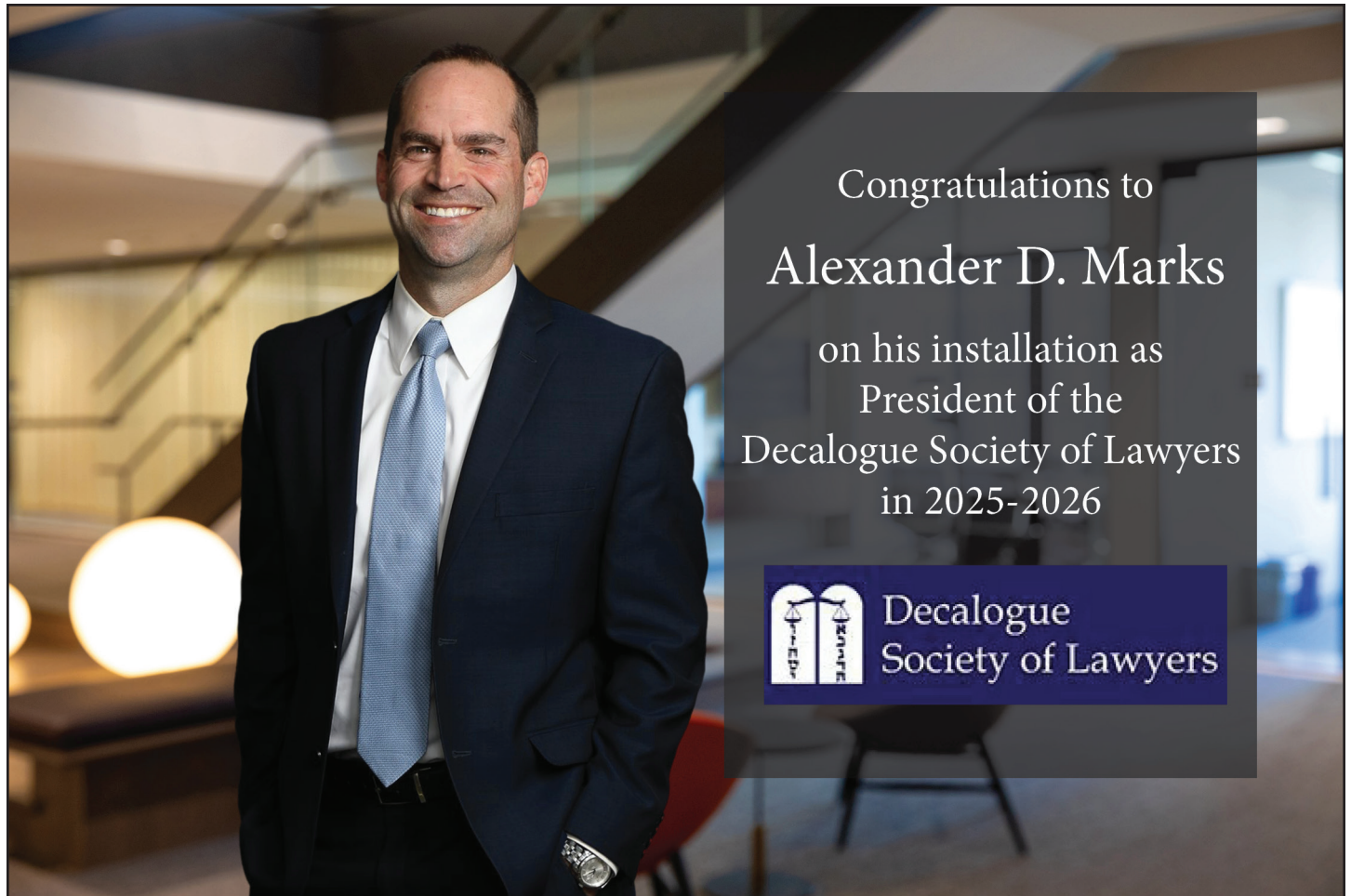
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Congratulations to  
**Alexander D. Marks**  
on his installation as  
President of the  
Decalogue Society of Lawyers  
in 2025-2026



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Congratulations to our Partner and incoming  
Decalogue President Alexander D. Marks, and to  
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We are honored to support the Society's work and salute outgoing President, Smith Gambrell Partner Joel Bruckman. We congratulate incoming President Alexander Marks, the incoming Board of Managers and the distinguished awardees.

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*Mazel Tov*

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OMFM, Ltd. proudly congratulates our partner, Ross Secler, on his appointment to the Board of Managers for the Decalogue Society of Lawyers!

We are honored to see Ross continue his commitment to service, leadership, and community through this new role. His appointment reflects not only his professional excellence but also his dedication to justice and advocacy in the legal field.

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