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### Liberty And Justice For All - The Ultimate Test of the United States Constitution

J. Clay Smith Jr.

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SCHOOL OF LAW

HOWARD UNIVERSITY  
2900 VAN NESS STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008  
FOUNDED BY GENERAL O. O. HOWARD

September 17, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Howard University School of Law  
FROM: J. Clay Smith, Jr. *J. Clay Smith, Jr.*  
Dean  
RE: Liberty And Justice For All -- The Ultimate  
Test Of The United States Constitution

Two hundred years ago today, persons of some stature formed a more perfect Union, The United States of America, in the United States Constitution. It was formed for—"We The People." The word "We" was not used as an inclusive term in that document. Black Americans were not defined within its legal metaphysical meaning.

For two hundred years, and even before the Constitution was ratified as our instrument of rule, Black Americans have fought for their rightful place within the definition of legal existence. In 1869 The Howard University School of Law opened its doors and pointed students to the rule of law in order to assure that a more perfect union was formed with the inclusion of all people within the definition of the word "citizen." For nearly 120 years, the faculty, students and alumni of the School of Law, under the umbrella of Howard University have contributed mightedly to making the Constitution live up to its true meaning. Many of the contributions, indeed, sacrifices that our graduates have made to secure the liberties of Black citizens of this nation are unmeasured and untold. Why should America want to measure and tell the story of the role of the Black lawyer in its constitutional history? The reason is quite simple: So that the world will know that we did not sit down on our rights, betray our principles and that our students did not fall short of their educational objectives.

Today is a day for The Howard University School of Law to rededicate its historical foundation to the contribution of every teacher, every student, and to all staff personnel who have worked so diligently to develop, to sustain and to build the Law School. Their prodigious efforts to educate, to care for and to lead students toward excellence must be applauded and incorporated into our blueprint for the new century.

The celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the United States Constitution is a day of high reverence at the Howard University School of Law. It is also a day to reaffirm our pledge to never turn back to bondage. It is a day to pause and to reflect on who we are, and what we are compelled to do in order to secure liberty and justice for all.

JCSjr:cdm