



## **The Court Presentation Bible An Explanation**

### **Why Donate Presentation Bibles to Courts?**

Justice John Marshall Harlan, I (1833-1911) gave a Bible to the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) in 1906. It has become known as the **“Harlan Bible”** and is maintained by the Court’s Curator. Since its presentation, the Harlan Bible’s flyleaf pages have been signed by every justice in succession shortly after taking the oath of office. Justice Samuel Alito has acknowledged what a “thrilling and awe-inspiring moment” it was when he signed his name alongside “all of the Justices for the past 100 years.” Retired Judges of America seeks to replicate this venerable tradition throughout America’s courts, with retired and former judges leading by example.

### **Why Does the Bible Dedication Bear the Date May 1st?**

Since 1958, May 1<sup>st</sup> has been “Law Day” – a special day of celebration by Americans to appreciate our liberties and reaffirm our loyalty to the United States. By statute (36 U.S.C. 113) it is set aside to cultivate respect for law.

### **Why This Particular Version of the Bible?**

Justice Harlan gave SCOTUS an *Oxford Sunday School Teachers Edition King James Version Bible* that is no longer published. Believing there is merit in fidelity to Harlan’s example, Retired Judges of America has undertaken a review of Bibles published today. The *Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible* has been characterized as “doctrinally objective” edition, and approximately four (4) million copies have been sold since its introduction in 1908. Moreover, the *Thompson Bible* contains far more blank flyleaf pages for signing than any other edition reviewed.

### **How May the Presentation Bible’s Flyleaf Pages be Signed by Judges?**

Retired and former judges of the Court – in order of seniority – might be given the first opportunity to sign the Presentation Bible’s flyleaf pages. Thereafter, the Bible could be presented to the Court for circulation among active judges. Two or more columns of signatures could be placed on each individual page, thus extending this tradition that should grow in value with the passage of time as a permanent historical keepsake maintained in the registry of the Court. For example, who today could place a value on the U.S. Supreme Court’s Harlan Bible?

### **What Significance is Associated With Signing the Presentation Bible?**

Any decision to participate by signing a Court Presentation Bible’s flyleaf page is voluntary and carries no automatic endorsement of the views of the Retired Judges of America, which is open to membership by retired and former judges who subscribe to the organization’s mission statement. Further specific questions can be addressed to Judge Darrell White (Retired).