



### Discussion Questions

*The following questions are based on remarks by Judge Myron Thompson and Judge Keith Watkins in the Johnson Institute's Law Day 2024 video.*

**Watch the video here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYESzrfVorU>

1. What is the significance of April 4, 1968?
2. As Judge Myron Thompson and Judge Keith Watkins speak, what is the one distinct architectural design in the courtroom they point out as a remnant of the 1960s?
3. Judge Thompson and Judge Watkins speak on their personal experience during the 1960s. What were some similarities and differences?
4. Who was considered the “most hated man” in the South during the 1960s? Why?
5. African Americans were heavily disadvantaged in the segregated South. Judge Thompson describes his view during the time by saying, “that sometimes, you accept things as the way they are when they really don’t have to be that way.” Give some examples on the disadvantages that Judge Thompson discusses. Furthermore, provide any additional examples that may have NOT been discussed.
6. What were Jim Crow laws? What were the role(s) of these laws in the South during the 1960s?
7. *Lee v. Macon Co. Board of Education* was a pivotal case during the civil rights movement. What was the objective of the case? Moreover, why can it be described as “not a happy one?”
8. As Judge Watkins speaks, he references the word “dogma.” What is dogma? How does dogma apply to you?
9. You may be the highest level in education, economics, and etc. However, Judge Thompson describes one factor that determines your success during the 1960s. What is the one factor? Moreover, why is it unfair?
10. Judge Thompson speaks on his fears during the 1960s. Specifically, the right to vote after the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. How does he describe his experience?
11. Judge Watkins uses the word “reverence” to describe someone. Who does he describe? Why?

12. Judge Thompson and Judge Watkins come from different backgrounds. However, both paths led them to where they stand today. Give one takeaway you have from watching “50 Miles and 50 Years.”

### **Need an Essay, Reflection, or Conversation Prompt?<sup>1</sup>**

The following are questions about this year’s Law Day theme developed by the American Bar Association.

1. In your view, what are the “cornerstones of American Democracy?” Are they, indeed, civics, civility, and collaboration?
2. Why is it important that our Constitution can be changed? In your opinion, when in our nation’s history has constitutional change been most critical?
3. How can individual citizens use their voices to fulfill the promise of the Constitution?
4. Where does power reside within our constitutional democracy?
5. What does that phrase, “a more perfect Union,” mean to you? What do you think it has meant to our nation?
6. What do you think about when you hear “rule of law?”
7. How have civics, civility, or collaboration shaped your community? How might they help shape your community in the future?
8. Is there someone who you admire as an upholder of the rule of law?
9. How does being a lawyer allow you to protect individual rights in your community?
10. What inspired you to pursue a legal career?

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<sup>1</sup>“Write or Talk About the Law Day Theme,” American Bar Association, <https://abateacherportal.org/have-a-conversation-about-the-law-day-theme/>, Accessed April 24, 2024.