AMERICAN JUROR

JURY RIGHTS DAY, 2008

STATE OF ALASKA

Executive Proclamation
by
Sarah Palin, Governor

WHEREAS, September 5, 2008, will mark the 338th anniversary of the day when the jury refused to convict William Penn of violating England’s Conventicle Acts, despite clear evidence that he acted illegally by preaching a Quaker sermon to his congregation.

WHEREAS, by refusing to apply what they determined was an unjust law, the Penn jury not only served justice, but provided a basis for the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment rights of freedom of speech, religion, and peaceable assembly.

WHEREAS, September 5, also marks the anniversary of the day when four of Penn’s jurors began nine weeks of incarceration for finding him not guilty. Their later release and exoneration established forever the English and American legal doctrine that it is the right and responsibility of the trial jury to decide on matters of law and fact.

WHEREAS, the Sixth and Seventh Amendments are included in the Bill of Rights to preserve the right to trial by jury, which in turn conveys upon the jury the responsibility to defend, with its verdict, all other individual rights enumerated or implied by the U.S. Constitution, including its amendments.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sarah Palin, Governor of the state of Alaska, do hereby proclaim September 5, 2008, as:

Jury Rights Day

in Alaska, in recognition of the integral role the jury, as an institution, plays in our legal system.

Dated: September 3, 2008