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Leading in Times of Civil Crisis and Uncertainty

As we take stock of the year we have all endured which seemed replete with hatred, contempt, and insensitivity toward everyone not exactly like ourselves, I am reminded that there is a higher purpose and a greater good. I watch now as those in despair march in protest, I see their tears of frustration and pain, I feel sorrow for those who came here in search of prosperity but now feel the sting of intolerance, and I see hatred and bewilderment visible on the faces of those on both sides of the issues as they gaze into the uncertainty of the future. Both sides claim the higher moral ground and neither side is receptive to the feelings of those who see the world differently. As a result faith, love, and compassion are challenged once again as the only things that can overcome evil, intolerance, persecution, and tyranny. Let us hope that as a society we find the wisdom discovered in the lessons learned from the past and that we acquire the strength to refrain from making the same mistakes that our predecessors fell victim to as they searched for the right path toward kindness and tolerance.

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The Justice Academy serves as a national repository and portal for instructional programs and specialized training materials that are produced by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and the courts and makes these educational assets available to the general law enforcement community, at no charge.

JusticeAcademy.org also sponsors comprehensive research into a variety of issues relative to the law and justice professions, as well as authoring and advancing national strategic initiatives that deal with specific challenges. The intention of this service is to support professional development, personal advancement, and departmental competency of the law and justice community, as well as to serve as a mechanism for the proliferation of exemplary training resources nationwide.

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Leading in Times of Civil Crisis and Uncertainty

The temptation many of us fall victim to as leaders in the law and justice professions is to refrain from active involvement in social issues. Instead we assume our normal reactive posture of responding to civil unrest rather than preventing it. In fact, unrest is already happening and will likely just get worse if we fail to take steps to mitigate the hatred and self-righteousness that accompany times like these. Somehow we have been taught to believe that only elected political leaders have a role in calming and reassuring those who feel the uncertainty of such times, but I would argue just the opposite point of view.

As members of the criminal justice community I would put forth the proposition that no one understands the pain and suffering that has occurred, and which is likely to continue to intensify as a result of this divisive election, like we do. We know for certain that there are those who will use this circumstance to prey upon the weak, vulnerable, and exposed. We also know that there are throngs of people who look to us for strength, reassurance, and protection before they become victims. It is our role to balance the scales of justice after a crime has occurred but also to prevent tyranny and lawlessness. As leaders of the law and justice profession, we simply cannot allow this to happen. As opposed to a reactionary perspective about the impending

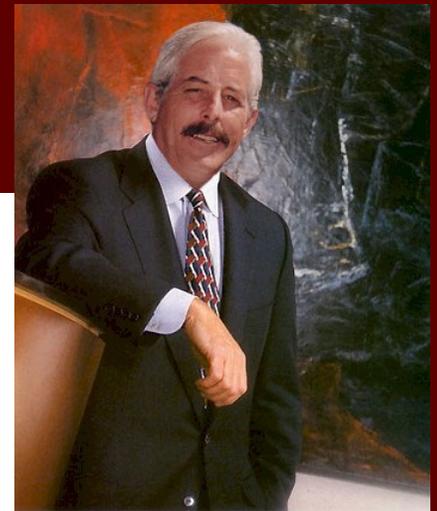
civil crisis, we need to look for ways to send a message of tolerance, civility, and respect to those on either side of the issues long before they use this situation to take out their pent up anger and frustration on the innocent. For those immune to reason and decency, we must send a clear message that using this situation as an excuse to relieve their anger will never be tolerated.

I am of the opinion that the intensity of the message that was aimed at numerous factions of our society by some who sought to galvanize voters in order to get themselves elected also demands our attention. Above all else, we serve the Constitution of the United States and although there are three distinct branches of government, only one of them has the authority to arrest, prosecute, and imprison those who violate the rights of all who live under its protections. It is important and essential that each of us send a clear and concise message to those elected that there are limits to power and there are consequences for decisions and actions which seek to victimize some for the favor of the majority.

Don't just wait for news of atrocity to cross your desk. Prevent it from happening. Send a message that everyone in your jurisdiction will be protected.

We all serve the Constitution.

About the Author:



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2010—2016

Hal Campbell currently serves as the Executive Director of JusticeAcademy.org. He also serves as a member of the teaching faculty for the University of Maryland concentrating in the areas of public policy strategy, criminal law, constitutional law, justice administration, empirical analyses, and higher education.

Judge Campbell recently concluded a term of service as a member of the judiciary in the State of Montana. His appointment to the bench was bestowed by the Montana Supreme Court, Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. Prior to this appointment to the bench, he served for over twenty-five years as a tenured professor and department chair with the California State University. His public policy and law enforcement experience includes a variety of senior management positions with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. From 1978 to 1989 he held positions in the department including Law Enforcement Planning Coordinator, Chief Analyst, and began his career as a Deputy Sheriff.



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