LAWDAY

1995 LAW DAY ADDRESS: ABA President-Elect Calls for Principled Lawyers

oberta Cooper Ramo, first female president-elect of the American Bar Association, challenged law schools in the 1995 UGA Law

Day Address to lead the way in creating a new educational paradigm for lawyers: teaching students not just to *think* as lawyers, but also to *behave* as lawyers.

"If you're not a principled lawyer and have no personal courage, then you don't deserve to be in the bar," Ramo said.

Ramo said legal professionals need to work to counter the negative image of law-yers promulgated through the media, some political campaigns and countless lawyer jokes by emphasizing the lawyer's role as the "ultimate volunteer in society" and the rewarding intellectual life of a legal career. And, she advised, citing the O.J. Simpson murder trial as an example, lawyers must strive to conduct themselves with decorum in the office and courtroom.

"When we ignore civility and collegiality, we make it possible for others to ignore the importance of law," Ramo said. "It's no wonder why the public has lost respect for lawyers when we behave in such a manner."

Ramo offered "building blocks" for what she called "the new American lawyer of the 21st century": intellectual ability and broad academic knowledge; creative problem-solving skills; technological understanding; elegant expression, both verbal and written; civility and collegiality among fellow bar members; thorough understanding of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights; knowledge of American history; appreciation for social differences and shared recognition of their value; and the establishment of loving family relationships.

"We are living in the most divisive society we have ever known," said Ramo. "Lawyers need to be the moral compass for the nation — to serve with an unwavering ethical core, a razor-sharp intelligence and a compassionate heart. When that happens, there will be no burn-out — only satisfied lawyers."



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-ROBERTA COOPER RAMO

Law Day UGA is held in conjunction with the national observance of Law Day, the purpose of which is to call attention to the principles and practice of American law and justice.

Ramo assumes the presidency of the ABA in August, and will serve a one-year term in the position. Her duties include being the chief spokesperson for the ABA and presiding over the Board of Governors, the body which oversees management and administration of the association.

Ramo's diverse legal career has taken her from small-firm and solo practice to partnership with New Mexico's largest law firm. She has been named one of the Best Lawyers in America in corporate law, and serves clients in the area of business law, real estate, health law, and related matters.

Ramo is active in national, state and local bar associations, and is a past president of the Albuquerque Bar Association and former chair of the ABA's Law Practice Management Section. She is a two-time recipient of the State Bar of New Mexico's Outstanding Contribution Award.

Ramo is also a dynamic community leader, having served as president of the University of New Mexico Board of Regents, president of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra Board and as a member of the executive committee of the Albuquerque Community Foundation. In 1993, she received the Governor's Distinguished Public Service Award for community service.

Ramo earned her law degree from the University of Chicago and her undergraduate degree *magna cum laude* from the University of Colorado.