



Educational Outreach

The First State Capitol • 1413 Eoff Street • Wheeling, WV 26003-3582

Barbara K. Knutsen, Executive Director

P: 304.232.2576 or 304.215.0522 • F: 304.232.8200

[www.walswheeling.com](http://www.walswheeling.com)

### Message from the Founders

When we started the WALs Foundation about a decade ago, my wife and I were distressed about the loss of respect for our civil and criminal justice system (in which I had labored approximately 30 years at that time), and the loss of faith in the principles of scientific education (of which she had taught for a similar period of years); concerned that pre-conceived notions and opinions seemed more important to many critics of our legal system and the “scientific method” than proven facts; and believed that when our legal system and scientific discourse operated as each should—as a careful, analytical search for truth, that they constituted two of the richest gifts bequeathed to us by our forebears, who were born and raised, created our country, our legal system, and our original scientific educational system during an “Age of Enlightenment.”

We are therefore gratified to have played a role, along with our volunteer Board of Directors and Executive Director, in bringing the American civil and criminal justice system to life for our elementary, middle school and high school students throughout the state of West Virginia with our Mock Trial program, and have used the “indirect but fun” learning method of a “mock trial” to teach students not only how our civil and criminal justice system operates, but also to have them reflect on some of the most pressing issues of our society, mostly, as in this program, the dangers and consequences of illegal drug use and prescription drug abuse.

In doing so, we have appreciated our partnership with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, and are so pleased to now pass on our entire program to the dedicated and excellent teachers of our state, to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude for accepting the great responsibility of educating our children and grandchildren to be the thoughtful citizens of tomorrow.

We do so with a grateful nod to all educators, with recognition of the important role they play in our and any society in keeping alive the knowledge and tradition of the “Enlightenment” so prized by our forebears, so instrumental in preserving the best of our society.

As we like to say,

*“If those who believe in the Justice System don’t educate the public, those who don’t will.”*

**Patrick S. Cassidy and Mary Ellen Cassidy,**  
Founders of The WALs Foundation, Wheeling, West Virginia