

# A Special Issue

BY JOE FORWARD

I am extremely proud to share this month's edition of *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine, which recognizes the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The vision of outgoing State Bar President Dan Gartzke, this moment provides an opportunity to reflect on where we've been as a country, and where we want to go.

The cover feature, **USA@250: Perspectives on the Declaration of Independence on the Semiquincentennial**, does just that, with different perspectives from many Wisconsin lawyers. Thank you to all our contributors. In addition, more than 80 images highlight influential people, historical events, and important moments in our country's history.

Of course, these images represent only a small thread of our shared history and the people, places, and events that comprise the tapestry of our continued journey as a nation. Going through the process of selecting them was a history lesson unto itself.

But that's not all. We also have the honor of publishing the **Top 10 Reasons You Should Pay Attention to the Wisconsin Constitution**, coauthored by Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Dallet and Justice Brian Hagedorn, fitting with our theme.

Joseph Ranney, a lawyer and legal historian, adds **Wisconsin: The Path from Independence to Statehood, 1776-1848**, and our friend Dan Cotter, who received the 2026 Rule of Law Award from the National Conference of Bar Presidents and LexisNexis, shares **USA at 250: The Promise, the Practice, and the Lawyer's Role**.

Wisconsin Supreme Court Chief Justice Jill Karofsky closes the book on this issue with some words of wisdom in the "Final Thought" column, **The Declaration of Independence: A North Star for Every Generation**.

Thank you, Chief Justice Karofsky, and all our contributors. This publication exists as a forum for discussion among Wisconsin's legal community, and we cannot create the forum without the hardworking lawyers and judges who serve the people of Wisconsin every day.

A special issue, indeed. But I have one more special person to recognize. **Karlé Lester** has served as the editorial assistant, then associate editor, then managing editor of *Wisconsin Lawyer* for just shy of 40 years. If my math is correct, this is Karlé's 323rd issue.

It is also her last. Karlé is retiring on July 1. I could spill a lot of ink on Karlé's dedication and contributions to this publication, but my space is limited.

I will just say this: Karlé has left an indelible mark on *Wisconsin Lawyer*, as well as the hearts and minds of those who know her. She has worked tirelessly to help authors reach their most polished work and to ensure the publication is of the highest quality.

I know I speak for the Communications Committee, the State Bar Communications Department, the State Bar staff, and many others who have worked with Karlé Lester when I say: Thank you, Karlé, and enjoy your well-deserved retirement! **WL**



**Joe Forward**, Saint Louis Univ. School of Law 2010, is State Bar of Wisconsin director of communications and editor of *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine. Access the digital article at [www.wisbar.org/wl](http://www.wisbar.org/wl). [jforward@wisbar.org](mailto:jforward@wisbar.org)