



Discussion Questions
Interview with J. Mason Davis, Jr.
Watch: <https://youtu.be/V8OZugu91-M>

The following questions are based on the content of the interview:

1. Davis graduated from law school in 1959. How did the law change over the course of his career?
2. According to Davis, why did owners of Birmingham's coal and iron mines try to maintain segregation?
3. When Davis represented college students who participated in the Huntsville sit-ins, he drove to and from Birmingham each day instead of spending the night in Huntsville. Why?
4. In your own words, explain what it means for the Constitution to be a "living document."
5. Davis mentions the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. How did it apply in the cases of the students in the Huntsville sit-ins?
6. Judge Frank Johnson grew up in Winston County, Alabama. Why does Davis think this played a role in shaping Judge Johnson's perspective?
7. Why was Davis unable to attend law school at the University of Alabama? What did he do instead? How did his relationship with the University of Alabama later change?
8. Based on what you learned from the interview, why was Davis was one of the first Black attorneys in the state?
9. How did Davis help people prepare to register to vote? Why was this necessary?
10. What are some jobs that people with a law degree can do besides practicing law?

11. Further research: The Constitution has shaped our nation. Find an example of an event from history when the Constitution played an important role in shaping events of the time.

Additional Questions for Reflection and Discussion¹

The following are questions about this year's Law Day theme developed by the American Bar Association.

1. In your view, what is needed to fulfill the promise of a “more perfect Union?”
2. Why is it important that our Constitution can be changed? In your opinion, when in our nation's history has constitutional change been most critical?
3. How can individual citizens use their voices to fulfill the promise of the Constitution?
4. Where does power reside within our constitutional democracy?
5. What does that phrase, “a more perfect Union,” mean to you? What do you think it has meant to our nation?
6. What do you think about when you hear “rule of law?”
7. Why is the rule of law valuable to our community? Why is it valuable to you?
8. What is a challenge facing the rule of law today?
9. Is there someone who you admire as an upholder of the rule of law?

¹ “Write or Talk About the Law Day Theme,” American Bar Association, <https://abateacherportal.org/have-a-conversation-about-the-law-day-theme/>, Accessed April 26, 2022.