

Proud to Be an American

By Bette-Jane Raphael

I will teach my children everything I believe in, so that I may instill in them a desire to safeguard the ideals—and the future—of America.

I will abide by our country's laws, including those I do not agree with, even as I work to change them.

I will judge each person on his own merits—regardless of his race, religion or cultural identity—understanding that a tolerance for others' differences is at the heart of what it means to be an American.

I will keep myself informed of current events, realizing that this is the best way I can prepare myself to tackle the issues that concern us as a nation.

I will stand up for the things I believe in, at the same time taking care not to trample on the rights of those who believe differently.

I will aid those in need—giving not only of my resources, but of myself—so that I can help strengthen in others the sense of hope that draws people from around the world to our nation's shores.

I will vote whenever I am eligible to do so, aware that by exercising my right to make myself heard I am implementing the most basic tenet of democracy.

I will respect and conserve our country's natural resources, keeping in mind that when I sap America's riches, I sap her strength as well.

I will be kind and courteous to my fellow citizens, convinced that courtesy is catching, and that when we are all courteous to one another, life is an infinitely more rewarding experience.

I will be fair and honest when dealing with others, in the belief that dishonesty tears at the fabric of our society and is an abuse of our cherished freedoms.