

PRESS RELEASE

Jacksonville, Florida, August 10, 2020

For Immediate Release

The lawyers and judges of the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, and the members of the Jacksonville Chapter of the Federal Bar Association are pleased to announce:

THE 2020 HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

*COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSAGE OF THE
NINETEENTH AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION*

While the Bryan Simpson United States Courthouse in Jacksonville is limiting in person proceedings and events, the Court's community outreach continues with the third annual High School Essay Contest for students in grades 10 through 12 residing within the Jacksonville Division of the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida (Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Hamilton, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, and Union Counties).

Students attending public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to submit essays that respond to the following prompt:

Voting is the most basic right of a citizen and vital to a functioning democracy. Women, however, were not always extended this fundamental right. The Nineteenth Amendment, ratified one-hundred years ago, granted women the right to vote (suffrage). Identify and evaluate some of the methods proponents of the Nineteenth Amendment (suffragists) used to influence and change opinions about voting rights for women. Referencing a specific example, what method do you think was most effective and why?

Student essays must be submitted no later than Noon EST on Friday, October 2, 2020.

The essays will be judged by Jacksonville lawyers who will submit the top ten essays to the judges of the Jacksonville Division for selection of the First, Second, and Third Place Winners.

Cash prizes to the winners are made possible by the lawyers and judges of the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida through the Middle District Bench Bar Fund.

First Place: \$ 2,000

Second Place: \$1,000

Third Place: \$500

Honorable Mention

To Fourth through Tenth Place Winners: \$50 each

and a

Classroom grant for teachers of the top three winners: \$500

All winners and their teachers will be recognized at a ceremony in the Bryan Simpson United States Courthouse in Jacksonville on Friday, November 13, 2020. The top three winners will also be recognized at the Federal Bar Association's luncheon in Jacksonville on December 11, 2020. Of course, plans for the recognition events are subject to modification pending the evolving public health challenge. Regardless of the circumstances, all winners will be properly lauded.

This year, the judges of the Jacksonville Division hope to encourage even greater participation than in the last two years of the High School Essay Contest, which garnered entrants from 31 high schools and 7 of the 12 counties in the Jacksonville Division, with the top three winners from the 2018 and 2019 contests coming from Baker, Clay, Duval and Nassau Counties. District Judge Marcia Morales Howard says, "As we are all challenged to adapt during the pandemic, the High School Essay Contest offers educators and students an engaging opportunity to promote and practice critical thinking, analysis and writing, even if remotely."

"The High School Essay Contest has been an important part of the Court's community outreach over the last two years," said Judge Howard. "Our democracy demands knowledgeable and informed citizens. The Court's community outreach is committed to educating students and adults alike about the roles the federal judiciary and the rule of law play in safeguarding the ideals articulated in the United States Constitution."

For additional information about the Essay Contest and how to enter visit www.flmd.uscourts.gov.

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