

## **SCHOLARSHIP PRIZES**

### **THREE \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO THE TOP THREE ESSAYS**

Each winner and two guests will be invited, at no charge, to attend WPTLA's Annual Judiciary Dinner on Friday, May 4, 2018 at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, where the three \$1,000.00 scholarships will be awarded. Winners will be able to purchase tickets for additional guests to attend the dinner, if they desire.

## **JUDGING**

The scholarships will be awarded at the discretion of the Scholarship Essay Committee.

The judging will be based on thoughtfulness, organization, interest, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Judges will look for writing that is clear, articulate and logically organized.

Decisions of the Scholarship Essay Committee are final.

## **RULES**

- Only one submission per school district. Home-schooled students must submit their essay through the school district in which they reside.
- Entrant must currently be in the twelfth grade.
- Each essay must bear no student identification. Instead each must have stapled to it a cover sheet identifying the author. A cover sheet must include your name and address, as well as the name of your high school. No essay should contain information identifying your race, religion, gender, geographic location or other such personal information as may create a possible bias for or against the writer.
- Essay must be type-written, double spaced, and must be no fewer than three pages and no more than five pages in length.
- Essay must be solely the work of the entrant.
- Essays must be postmarked no later than March 19, 2018.

Winners will be notified via their school's contact by April 13, 2018, others by mail dated no later than April 13, 2018.

## **TO ENTER**

Send your essay via first-class mail with stapled cover sheet on or before March 19, 2018 to:  
WPTLA 2018 Scholarship Essay Contest  
909 Mount Royal Boulevard, Suite 102  
Pittsburgh, PA 15223-1030

# 2018 WPTLA PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY CONTEST

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Kennedy v. Bremerton School District  
Ninth Circuit (August 23, 2017)

Plaintiff was employed as a football coach by the Defendant School District. Plaintiff is a practicing Christian. The school district is religiously diverse to include families practicing Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism.

Kennedy's religious beliefs require him to give thanks through prayer at the end of every game. Since he is giving thanks for the efforts made by his football team, his beliefs require him to give thanks on the football field where the competition took place. Thus after the game had concluded and the coaches and players had met at midfield and shaken hands, Plaintiff felt compelled to "take a knee" at the 50 yard line and offer a brief prayer of thanksgiving. This was done in full view of his players as well as players, coaches and fans of the opposing team. Eventually, these "silent prayers" developed into "short motivational speeches" given to the players. These messages contained religious content. During this time the Plaintiff was wearing clothing bearing the school colors and logo.

After learning of this, the School District warned against continuing this. The District offered Kennedy a series of accommodations which included allowing the Plaintiff to offer a short prayer at the 50-yard line after the stadium had emptied. After initially agreeing, Kennedy insisted on praying at midfield immediately following the game.

Warnings were followed by repeated violations. Kennedy was then placed on administrative leave. He filed suit against the School District seeking injunctive relief.

**TOPIC QUESTION:** WAS THE SCHOOL DISTRICT JUSTIFIED IN PLACING KENNEDY ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR EXERCISING WHAT HE CLAIMED WERE HIS SINCERE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?