



## The George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest

The George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest was originally established and named in honor of President Calvin Coolidge, who won a local SAR essay contest while a student at Amherst. The contest was reestablished in 1988 by Compatriot McCarthy DeMere. In 1995, the contest was renamed the George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest in honor of their generous gift to the SAR to support this contest. The program is designed to give freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students an opportunity to explore events that shaped American history.

Conducted at the Chapter, State Society and National Society levels, the students must submit an original essay with topics based on original research and deal with an event, person, philosophy or ideal associated with the American Revolution, Declaration of Independence, or the framing of the United States Constitution.

## Knight Essay Contest Rules

### CONTEST RULES

#### 1. ELIGIBILITY, SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS and DEADLINES

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) invites all high school students (9th through 12th grades) interested in the American Revolution to participate in the George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest. The contest is open to all students attending home schools, public, parochial, or private high schools in that same grade range.

In Alaska the contest is conducted in two phases: the state-level society, and national phases. Alaska's State Chairman is Mr. Tom Rollman. All essays must be submitted to him by January 31, 2026, via email ([tomrollman@yahoo.com](mailto:tomrollman@yahoo.com)) in PDF format. Only one entry per student is permitted per contest year. The first place national winner is not eligible to participate in the contest again. A committee of SAR members from Alaska will select a 1<sup>st</sup>,

2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner. The 1<sup>st</sup> place winner's essay will be submitted to the National contest

State Chairmen must submit their winning essays and the national contest entry form to the National Chairman no later than February 15th.

The National Chairman will notify all state chairmen who submitted an essay whether their entry was among the finalists by early April. The national winners will be informed in order to be able to attend the Congress. The first-place national winner will read the winning essay at the Youth Awards Luncheon. The winning essay will be published in The SAR Magazine.

## **2. ESSAY SUBJECTS and RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS**

The topic of the essay shall deal with ***an event, person, philosophy, or ideal associated with the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, or the framing of the United States Constitution.*** The essay must be based upon no less than *five references*, at least *three of which must be published works*. References to an encyclopedia or Internet websites are acceptable, but will not satisfy the requirement that at least three references be published works. If there are no published references, the essay will be disqualified. Plagiarism will be grounds for immediate disqualification as well as use of AI tools.

## **3. ESSAY FORMAT REQUIREMENTS**

Contest entries must be submitted as PDF files attached to emails. The essay must have four parts: 1) title page, 2) essay pages, 3) bibliography or works cited, and 4) applicant's biography. The title page, bibliography, and applicant's biography **must be listed and e-mailed on separate pages** and no reference to the applicant's name or information can be part of the essay pages or bibliography. Please follow these rules exactly. Essays that do not conform to the rules may be immediately disqualified.

### **1) Title Page – The title page must include the following:**

- Title of the Essay • Applicant's name, grade, address, phone number & email
- Applicant's high school's name, address & phone number
- Statement on how applicant learned about the contest (if from the internet, include the URL of the website)

### **2) Essay Pages – The essay must:**

- Minimum of 800 and a maximum of 1,200 words (excluding title page, footnotes, bibliography, page and biography)
- First page must include the title
- No applicant information is on the essay pages
- 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced
- Use 8 ½" by 11" paper with 1" margins on all sides

- Essay pages are numbered sequentially, starting with “1”
- No graphics, special covers or bindings are allowed

**3) Bibliography pages – The bibliography must:**

- Citations in the essay and references in the bibliography must be in accordance with a widely used, publicly available citation system (Examples include the Chicago Manual of Style, the MLA Manual of Style, & the MHRA Style Guide)
- The bibliography must specify the system used
- No applicant information is in the bibliography
- Minimum of 5 references, 3 of which must be published works (encyclopedias or internet sources are acceptable but not considered part of the 3 published works)

**4) Biography page - The biography must:**

- Limited to one page.
- Includes academic awards and achievements, school activities, community activities and plans for college.

#### **4. JUDGING CRITERIA**

Essays which meet the criteria above will be accepted and judged equally on the following criteria:

- Historical accuracy
- Clarity of thought
- Organization and proven topic
- Grammar and spelling
- Documentation

#### **5. AWARDS**

The **State of Alaska Society Awards** are as follows:

- **First place:** \$750 and a medal with a recognition certificate
- **Second Place:** \$500 and a recognition certificate
- **Third Place:** \$250 and a recognition certificate

The National Society awards are as follows:

- **First place: \$6,000;** a medal and recognition certificate; eligible for \$1500 travel stipend for expenses incurred attending Congress.
- **Second Place: \$3,000** and a recognition certificate.
- **Third Place: \$2,000** and a recognition certificate.
- **Fourth and Fifth Place: \$500** and a recognition certificate.

## **6. AFFIDAVIT OF ORIGINAL SCHOLARSHIP AND HISTORICAL ACCURACY**

In addition to the essay submission, entrants must submit an Affidavit of Original Scholarship and Historical Accuracy (attached to this e-mail). This form must be signed by both the entrant and a trusted essay reviewer such as a teacher or counselor, attesting to the fact that the essay is factually accurate and the sole work of the writer. Also, that no AI tools were employed, such as ChatGPT and the like. This form shall be scanned and emailed along with the final essay submission.

## **7. PUBLICATION and ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS**

The winning essay of the national contest will be submitted for publication in the SAR Magazine. Participants in this contest agree that their essay may be published in the SAR Magazine and on the SAR Knight Essay Contest webpage. Winning essay participants, on all levels, may be required to supply a tax identification number in order to receive their award. By entering this contest, all participants agree that if their essay is chosen as the national winning essay, it will be the property of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). All participants further agree that the national winning essay may not be submitted to any other contest or used for any other purpose without the express permission of the national SAR Knight Essay Contest Chairman.

## **8. NSSAR DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW**

Applicants in the Knight Essay Contest agree that the interpretation of the rules and decisions of the National Chairman and its judges must govern without reservation and that decisions of the judges and/or the National Chairman are final and not subject to review.

Questions regarding specific rules may be directed to the National or State Chairman.

National Chairman:

Mr. Ernie Coggins  
coggins.sar@gmail.com

Alaska State Chairman:

Mr. Tom Rollman  
tomrollman@yahoo.com  
907-441-4341

# The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

## George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Application Form

Applicant's Name:		
Applicant's Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Telephone:	Email Address:	
School Name:	School Email Address:	
School Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Sponsoring SAR Chapter:		
Chapter President's Name:	Chapter President's Email Address:	
Chapter Essay Chairman's Name:	Chapter Essay Chairman's Email Address:	
Chapter Essay Chairman's Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Sponsoring State Society:		
Society President's Name:	Society President's Email Address:	
Society Essay Chairman's Name:	Society Essay Chairman's Email Address:	
Society Essay Chairman's Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:

I certify that this essay is my own work. I have not plagiarized or used artificial intelligence (AI) in the preparation of my essay.

\_\_\_\_\_  
signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

# **Affidavit of Original Scholarship and Historical Accuracy**

## **Essayist**

I hereby state that the essay I have submitted for consideration in the **George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest** is entirely my own original work product.

Specifically, it neither “borrows” from nor “leans on” the work of others by (1) incorporating the ideas, text, or phrasings of others, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) generators, without explicit identification of sources or (2) benefiting from the “crafting” or “shaping” efforts of anyone else beyond my accepting and independently applying bona fide editorial and grammatical suggestions from my chosen reviewers.

I also recognize that all historical facts presented must be readily verifiable and/or specifically referenced to the bibliographic sources I have provided. Further, I respect the fact that since any inaccuracy would both discredit and embarrass the Contest sponsor should it be identified after this essay receives an award, any historical inaccuracy identified during its review will merit automatic disqualification without notification or recourse; identification after an award will result in revocation.

***Residency Note:** I attest that I am claiming Alaska residency for purposes of entering this Contest based on either the location of my school and/or my personal legal residence and that this is the only essay I am submitting this Contest-year to the George S. and Stella M. Knight Contest in any state. I understand that making any submission to another State constitutes grounds for immediate disqualification in Alaska, including revocation of any award should this fact be discovered later.*

Essay Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Essay Reviewer (preferably a teacher familiar with the Essayist's scholarship)**

I attest that to the best of my knowledge, this essay submitted for the George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest is the sole, original work of this student and that it is consistent with and generally characteristic of the caliber of scholarship and self-expression this student has demonstrated in comparable assignments.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and/or Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact (mail, phone, or email): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scan a signed copy of  
this form along with  
your essay submission  
to:**

***Tom Rollman, Alaska Knight Essay Chairman, [tomrollman@yahoo.com](mailto:tomrollman@yahoo.com)***