

To Students Interested in The American Legion Oratorical Contest:

I am currently a sophomore at Washington & Jefferson College, and the road to higher education was paved by my extra-curricular activities. Every student has a GPA and every student will more than likely have an SAT score, however, not every student has competed in a national competition with chances to win serious scholarship money.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest is an application divider that separates both young male and female high school students into a higher caliber of competitiveness. The contest will require students to speak in front of an audience for eight to ten minutes on a prepared aspect of the United States Constitution. After all the prepared orations are delivered, an impromptu speech will be given on one of the predetermined sections of the constitution that will be selected at random. Although students will have a few minutes to prepare for the impromptu speech, it still demonstrates an immense amount of courage and knowledge to stand up in front of a group of people and articulate constitutional thought.

The scholarship money that I received from The American Legion Oratorical Contest was nearly enough to cover my *entire* first-year expenses in college. The financial incentives aside, the contest benefited me in more ways than just scholarships. I left the doors of The American Legion as a far better-rounded, confident, and brave individual with an understanding of our constitution. I learned first hand how to conduct myself in front of an audience and how to maintain my composure while still articulating my thoughts. The most beneficial factor of The American Legion Oratorical Contest is the ability to speak with peers and co-workers on a more respected and confident level. The system is set up to embrace anywhere from the shyest and most inexperienced speakers to the bravest and most advanced young orators. For that reason alone, I recommend the contest to any and all high school students looking to better themselves and their chances of distinguishing a college application. Whether you intend to pursue a career in law or a career in marine biology, you will undoubtedly be required to speak with co-workers and articulate thought.

Sincerely,

Shane Rumbaugh
PA American Legion
2008 Oratorical Contest Winner

