

The Jones College American Hero Essay Contest

Co-Sponsored by the Laurel-Leader Call and the Laurel-Jones County Library

This essay competition seeks to spark curiosity, interest, awareness, thinking, knowledge, and appreciation for Americans, great and small, past or present; who have made heroic individual contribution to the United States of America in government, exploration, military, science, law enforcement, emergency services, medicine, civil rights, education, industry, or business.

Submissions must be non-fiction, about a historical event and person(s) in a story format. The entry must be no more than 800 type-written words, double-spaced, and must include an explanation of the student's personal interest in their chosen hero. Submissions must include the author's specific reason for why the essay subject's action(s) reflect qualities of valor, selflessness, sacrifice, leadership, and/or physical, moral, or ethical commitment worthy of the word "hero." Submissions will be judged for historical accuracy, topic adherence, organization of materials, originality, and writing quality.

Judges will be Buck Torske, Kevan Lindsey (LLC), Willie Evans (former Laurel councilperson), George Bassi (director of LRMA), and Karyn Walsh (Director of the Laurel-Jones County Library)

3 Age Groups - Elementary (4-6), Middle School (7-8), High School (9-12) from the readership area of the LL-C

Submission deadline: May 15, 2026

\$1000 Scholarship*

Prizes for each age group:

\$500 - 1st place

\$250 - 2nd place

\$150 - 3rd place

Essays can be dropped off at the Laurel Leader-Call

or at the Laurel-Jones County Library

or emailed to murph@leader-call.com

First Place Winners will be published in the LifeStyles Section of LL-C on June 27

Presentation to Winners will be at L-JCL on June 24

* \$1,000 Scholarship to Jones College, presented exclusively to the 12th grade winner of the “Jones College American Hero Essay Contest” Scholarship Details & Conditions -

- Valid exclusively for enrollment at Jones College.
- Must be used within two (2) academic years from the award date.
- Non-transferable and not redeemable for cash.
- Subject to Jones College financial aid and scholarship policies.