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DSDI Scholarship Essay

21 March 2025

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I am proud to be an American and specifically to be a descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. I am proud to love our country, and I am grateful that I was raised that way. When asked about their favorite holidays, most kids say Christmas or their birthday, but as long as I can remember the Fourth of July has been my favorite holiday. I feel the love and pride for our country and the values it was raised on, and when I close my eyes I can hear my Grandmother singing God Bless The U.S.A.. “I’m proud to be an American where at least I know I’m free, and I won’t forget the men who died who gave that right to me.” In my eyes, those lyrics embody DSDI, of which I am a proud member.

In July 2017, I had my first encounter with DSDI when my cousins and I went to Philadelphia to tap the liberty bell together for the Fourth of July. My Grandfather, who had recently finished serving as the President General, was thrilled that we were getting this opportunity, and every chance he got, he would tell all of us how lucky we were to partake in this tradition. I still remember the immense honor I felt as I stood next to the Liberty Bell surrounded by my family, celebrating the freedom that our ancestors fought for in the 1700’s. Following the bell tapping ceremony we attended a meeting in Freedom Hall. My Grandfather had the privilege of reading the Declaration of Independence during the meeting, and I sat attentively and watched him with adoration. That was a powerful moment for ten year old Fielding to witness, and even at my young age, I knew to respect and appreciate the words that he was reading.

Honoring the signers, the soldiers, and the supporters of the American Revolution is vital to maintaining the rights of the American people. At a time when the people of our country don't agree on much, our united goal should always be to preserve our freedoms to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These three principles give me and my fellow Americans opportunity and freedom, and those are the two most empowering things that a person can have in their lives. With that freedom, I have the opportunity to pursue a career of my choosing, to disagree and debate, to gain an education, and so many more things that we take for granted everyday.

William Hooper (my ancestor) and the fifty-five other signers knew how important those three principles would be to form a prosperous country. They risked their lives to create and put their names on the document that would be considered treason to the British Crown, but the bright future that they saw for Americans outweighed that risk. Specifically, William Hooper's plantation, Finian, was destroyed, reduced to ashes, and he was on the run from home to home until he was able to find safety in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

We are the country that we are today because of the people who fought for us back then, and we have all of them to thank for our freedoms. Their bravery, commitment, and selflessness is why we should honor them. If we can all lead with the same characteristics as they did in the 1700's, then we will be better for it. I aspire to exude their same bravery in the way that I defend and stay true to my beliefs, showcase the same commitment in working tirelessly to achieve excellence in everything that I choose to pursue, and exhibit the same selflessness through continuing to volunteer in my communities. We have inalienable rights, freedom of speech, expression, religion, assembly, and more because of the people who spoke out against tyranny. It is important to remember that nothing will happen or change unless you have the bravery to act, and that is something that this time period can teach us now. Those fifty-six men are exactly the

type of role models that we should look to in order to improve ourselves and our society as a whole, and that is why we should honor them and their impact on creating the America that we know fondly as “the land of the free”.

The impact that the Declaration of Independence has on Americans is immeasurable, but what it stands for can easily be forgotten in an evolving, changing world. Being a descendent, it is my responsibility to make sure that the spirit of the Revolution and of the Signers stays alive in modern day America. The Revolutionary Era was a time of rebirth for America, and in order to stay refreshed, we must look to our past so that we may have a brighter future. My role is to continue to talk about and lead with the revolutionary values in conversation, debate, and education. I will make sure that the ideals aren't drowned out by modern day issues and politics, but rather remain at the forefront of our nation. Being an educated young woman, I have the power to influence others around me, and I plan to use that opportunity to amplify the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The sacrifice that the soldiers, signers, and supporters made is far greater than I can imagine; however, I can honor that sacrifice by upholding the values which they fought for.

While I do not have nearly as much life experience as the signers, I can offer some ways in my life so far that I have been able to promote the revolutionary ideals and empower myself and others. For example, at my school, we take a class called Christian Ethics. We discussed current and past controversial topics through the lense of Christianity. Oftentimes, I would be the only person who disagreed with the majority, but I still participated in the friendly debates, not letting my beliefs be swayed by having to stand alone. As the semester went, I noticed more of my classmates were beginning to disagree with each other in class which led to more robust conversations. Also, in the fall, before the presidential election, I helped to plan a voting

registration drive at my school. We were able to register over thirty students and give them a flyer telling them where they could go to vote and what to bring with them. Voting is one of the blessings of being a citizen of a democratic republic, especially because under the rule of a king the colonists had no say. My final example is that children want to run around, play sports, climb on the playground; however, for some children they can't afford to have athletic shoes fit for such activities. So, I volunteered to clean and prepare donated shoes for underprivileged kids so that they could pursue whatever sport or activity they are passionate about that brings them joy.

The values that America is based on give me opportunity and inspire me everyday, so my goal is to inspire others. In daily conversation, I can instill the same pride in them that I feel to be an American simply by sharing my fondness of our vibrant, opportune country. One of my first memories is driving around with my Grandmother trying to spot American flags on peoples houses. When we would see one we would break out into the song that I still have memorized... "hooray hoorah hooray hoorah hoorah for American flags". Later in my life, I will pass down traditions like the American flag song to my children, and they will feel honor and pride of being an American. I will make sure that they are equipped with the knowledge to protect and appreciate the American ideals. Then, many more generations will follow and carry with them the spirit of the Revolution.