SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – ESSEX VICINAGE

2022 LAW DAY

WRITING CONTEST RULES

Instructions:

Thank you for your interest in the 2022 Writing Contest.
Please register online at http://www.njcourts.gov/courts/vicinages/essex/lawday.html

Theme:

Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change

"The 2022 Law Day theme is "Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change" "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union…" are the opening words of the U.S. Constitution. At 4,400 words and signed in 1787, it is one of the shortest and oldest written constitutions in the world.

The Constitution is a dynamic document, as it not only outlines a blueprint for government, but also delegates power, articulates rights, and offers mechanisms for change. It is neither perfect, nor exhaustive, as our nation's history makes clear. Legislation, court rulings, amendments, lawyers, and "we the people" have built upon those original words across generations to attempt to make the "more perfect Union" more real. That effort continues today, as contemporary leaders and everyday citizens raise their voices as loud as ever to fulfill the promise of the Constitution. Defining and refining those words of the Constitution might be our oldest national tradition, and how each of us works—together—toward a more perfect Union."

The above information was retrieved from the American Bar Association website Law Day (americanbar.org) on 8/25/2021.

Resources:

Teachers, coordinators, or students may visit the following websites to obtain additional information regarding the 2022 Law Day theme as well as the United States' constitution. These resources and instructional guidance will aid students in gaining an understanding of how the constitution functions as a legal framework that anchors several amendments and provisions in view of evolving legal issues of governance in the modern world.

- www.lawday.org
- https://www.constitutionfacts.com/
- https://www.archives.gov/education/civic-education
- https://www.icivics.org/curriculum/constitution
- https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/teaching-the-constitution/

Content:

The writing contest is open to all **Essex County middle and high school students**. Students may submit essays or poems that incorporate the 2022 Law Day theme and discuss issues pertaining to the theme and the court in the students' own words. Essay content should incorporate thoughtful consideration of the following:

1) There are many U.S. citizens that have never read the U.S. Constitution, the document that established our national government and is still "the supreme law of the land." Do you believe that all U.S. citizens should be required to read this document? Why?

2) Choose two of the five basic freedoms found in the first amendment. Compose an essay describing these freedoms and the impact they have on your daily life. Use specific examples from your personal experiences.

3) The U.S. Constitution is often referred to as a "living document". Do you agree? Why or why not? Explain your interpretation of the document and provide examples.

4) The U.S. Constitution is the oldest national Constitution still in use. Since 1787, many other nations have written constitutions, only to see them fail. What are some of the strengths of the U.S. Constitution that has allowed it to survive the test of time?

Format: An essay of 250 to 300 words or a poem of 4 to 6 stanzas.

Judging: **ALL ENTRIES MUST BE TYPED** using Times New Roman or Arial fonts, formatted in MS Word or copy and pasted into the body of an email. Essay and poems will be judged on content and presentation. A teacher, group coordinator or a parent should review entries for spelling and grammatical edits prior to submission. Paraphrases and/or quotes must contain references. First place, second place, third place and honorable mention(s) will be selected. Winners will be acknowledged via email May 2022.

Identification: Include the following information for each submission:
(1) Title (if applicable)
(2) Student's name and mailing address
(3) Student's grade and age
(4) School or group name
(5) Teacher or group coordinator name (if applicable)
(6) Parent or guardian name, telephone number and email address.

Deadline: Submissions will be accepted **between March 15 to March 31, 2022.**

Disclaimer: All entries become the property of the Superior Court of New Jersey - Essex Vicinage. Students are encouraged to keep copies of their entries. Excerpts from submissions may be displayed in Judiciary publications and/or website. Entries will not be used for commercial purposes.

Submissions: ELECTRONICALLY
Essays and/or poems should be formatted as a **MS Word** document or copy and pasted into the body of an email then sent to EssexLawDay.mbox@njcourts.gov. Remember to include the information from the "Identification" section above to the body of the email for individual submissions.

Submissions may also be mailed to:
Superior Court of NJ – Essex
Veterans Courthouse
50 West Market Street, Room 132
Newark NJ 07102
Attn: Office of the Ombudsman – Law Day Contest

DROP OFF – During office hours Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. between **3/15/22-3/31/22**.

Questions or concerns:
Email the Essex Vicinage Office of the Ombudsman at EssexLawDay.mbox@njcourts.gov
Phone (973) 776-9300 ext. 56886