

The Deb Sheftz Memorial Scholarship*



This scholarship is established in the memory of Deb Sheftz who first taught history at Southern Middle School and then at Patuxent High School. Deb died on December 6, 2014, way too early, from complications of a brain aneurysm. Although Deb came to teaching in a non-traditional way, after first fighting to be the first female machine mechanic in a factory in Pennsylvania, going to a public interest law school, and then practicing law and defending persons accused of crimes, she found her passion in teaching. At Patuxent High Deb taught government, criminal law, and AP world history. She loved teaching world history because she believed that if one knew and understood the past and the long term effects those earlier events have on today, one could view the current issues that plagued the world community through that lens. She believed that only if one saw the present through the historical lens of the past could one hope to arrive at a workable solution to current problems. Deb also loved to travel the world and she brought her love of world cultures and history back to her classroom. She urged her students to challenge assumptions, not stand by silently when injustices occurred, to be open-hearted and open-minded to all, and to be culturally aware and tolerant. Above all, Deb believed each person had an obligation to be part of positive changes.

Throughout her life Deb was committed to identifying and addressing issues of inequality and social injustice rather than ignoring them. This was a commitment she imparted to her students. She also recognized that the “playing field” was not equal and that everyone had a moral obligation to right the wrongs of the past; whether the past was many years ago, a few days ago, or a mere minute ago. Deb looked for the best in all, whether it was her students, friends, or strangers and urged and

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encouraged everyone she met to strive to be their best-selves. She often did this with humor and empathy. She understood that many people had obstacles that stood in their way to becoming their best-selves, whether caused by outside forces or self-doubt, and she sought to nurture and help in any way she could. Her heart grieved when she witnessed a student who had such potential and who wanted to further his/her education but because of circumstances could not go to college. Therefore, this scholarship was created to help a Patuxent High School student, who wants to an instrument of positive change and fight against injustice, to attend college and be a positive influence on the world.

The scholarship is for a single year per student and will be awarded annually in the amount of \$2500. The scholarship will be awarded the end of May of each year and will be paid to the educational institution for first year college expenses.

Procedure:

1. Completed application (available at the guidance office).

2. An essay or other original work addressing one of the following questions:
 - a. Describe a difficult event in your life. What did you do in response to that challenge? What lessons did that event provide you?

 - b. What do you see as one of the great injustices? This could be an injustice on the local, national, or international level. How do you think this injustice should be addressed? What could one person do on an individual level to address this issue?

 - c. Each movement that arises to address an injustice has used more than one approach, e.g. the civil rights movement in the U.S. had, in addition to others, Reverend King and Malcolm X. Often different approaches are necessary for real change to occur. Talk about an injustice and what approaches were used. What approaches were successful, what approach was not and why, and did the movement need each to make a change occur?

3. A letter from a teacher that addresses not only your academics but your passions and interests.

Requirements:

1. PHS senior (or junior if graduating early).

2. Application and acceptance to college (prior to final award and payment of scholarship).

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3. Commitment to social justice and improving our world.

Applications due by the first Monday of April each year and should be turned into the guidance office.

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