

Veronica Riley

LA MESA, CALIFORNIA

HONORABLE MENTION

Veronica Riley, 17, graduated in June from Foothills Christian High School. She plans to attend San Diego State University in the fall and may study to be a paralegal or pursue her passion for art.

THE FERTILE GROUND FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM

If you do not have the freedom to fail, you do not have the freedom to succeed. If it were not for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the American Dream could never become a reality. These documents set standards for all laws and impact decision made by those of the Judicial Branch of government. The American Dream is the liberty to work for a living or not to, to know your freedoms and to be able to defend them, to be in control of your own life; it is to cultivate the fertile ground freely. The American Dream means that I have the opportunity to use the fertile ground provided by the U.S. Constitution to shape my life into anything that I work towards, no matter what they may be.

The Bill of Rights, the personal aspect of the U.S. Constitution, is the basis for living and pursuing the American Dream. The laboratories of democracy, made possible by principles from the Bill of Rights, allow diversity of success throughout the nation by promoting differences between the states. The diverse nature of every individual's dream requires a nation of diverse possibilities, provided by constitutional standards that encourage mobility and individuality throughout the states.

Due to the multiplicity of American individual's dreams, there must be protectors of the rights that make these dreams possible. These protectors are a part of the Judicial Branch of government. The courts ensure that vital constitutional principles are carried on; they are agrarians of the fertile ground of success that is provided by the Constitution. The courts must follow standards set by the Constitution, which made the American Dream a possibility in the first place, so that the document will never lose its potency. These guardians protect the nation from tyranny by propagating constitutional principles to ensure that each and every citizen can live out their American Dream.

My own American Dream is to become a stay-at-home mother and to pursue my passion for art. My heart lies with raising children that will become the next generation of Americans. I want to care for them and show them love so that they can reach their full potential. To me, attaining this goal is the most desirable success. However, many women plant seeds of monetary and political success, as these goals are their vision of the American Dream. While these goals can be the definition of success to some, the U.S. Constitution lays a fertile ground to be cultivated by any

person with any dream, no matter if it is a dream of fame and grandeur or a conventional, yet impactful dream.

This ground, made fertile for a diverse seed by honorable cultivators, also allows for failure. The Constitution does not guarantee that every citizen can achieve their American Dream, but that every right will be given to them so that they have the opportunity to work for their dream. Thus, each person has the freedom to allow their seeds to waste away by neglecting the fertile ground. They also have the freedom to take advantage of their opportunity and work to achieve success, however they may define personal success. Though one person's dream may be drastically different from the next person's, there are no failures in any American Dream; the only failure is to disregard the great opportunity of the fertile ground of success together.

The American Dream is the hope for the future. It is the promise that I may have a family, that I may raise my children in a place where freedom reigns, and that I may effect and participate in the shaping of this great nation's future. I want to ensure that the liberties described in the Constitution continue to be protected for generations to come, and that the people of this country will never doubt their ability to pursue and attain their unique American Dream. The distinction of the American Dream, what makes it truly American, is that it is open to all. Anyone may work to accomplish their goals and to achieve success, however they may define that personally—that is the American Dream. No matter one's background or differences, each American has the fertile ground provided by the Constitution, so that they may reap the plentiful benefits that this great nation has to offer.