

12th Grade – Second Place Prize

Diana – Whitney Young Magnet High School

The Birth of a New World

Discipline: an unwavering trait, confronting all obstacles with a determination to succeed.

Dedication: earnest devotion to anyone or anything, no matter the cause.

Individually, the two have little chance to withstand the punches of temptation and failure; they immediately crumble under pressure. But when placed together, they form a shield that can even withstand the worst kind of threat: submission. Discipline will ward off digression, and dedication will conquer failure. To achieve a world of equality and justice, dedication and discipline are a necessity. No one could have understood this more than Nelson Mandela.

“The hope of a secure and livable world...” Living in a world where the government enforces the apartheid policy of racial segregation, Nelson Mandela actively participated in politics and campaigned against apartheid. He employed both non-violent and violent tactics in the resistance, in addition to operating a law firm to provide free or low-cost legal counsel to numerous blacks who lacked attorney representations. His vision of a country without a discriminatory legislation became his goal. Subsequently, it would grow to be a “rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.”

“...lies with disciplined non-conformists...” Being a member of the African National Congress, Mandela obtained several leadership positions in the movement against apartheid. As Volunteer-in-Chief, he traveled the country to organize resistance. As commander-in-chief of the armed wing of the African national Congress, he coordinated sabotage campaigns against the military. When arrested, he stood up to the prosecutions and made public his political belief. At the time, he decided that, if given the death sentence, he would not appeal. However, the event that best demonstrated his discipline occurred during his imprisonment. Mandela repeatedly rejected offers made by his jailers for remission of sentence in exchange for accepting the Buntustan policy, which reserves an area for Black African occupation and provides limited self-government. He again denied an offer of release on condition that he renounces violence. Despite the threats, the consequences, Mandela stood his ground. His ability to reject a chance at freedom in order to stay true to his struggle clearly shows unfaltering discipline.

“...who are dedicated to justice, peace, and brotherhood.” On his journey to eliminate apartheid from South Africa, Nelson Mandela made sacrifice after sacrifice. Because of his political belief, he had been banned, arrested, and imprisoned. He had to separate himself from his family, constantly moving from place to place, and to adopt a number of disguises to avoid the government’s ubiquitous informer and spies. He spent almost three decades in prison, and when he was finally released he plunged wholeheartedly back into his work of an undivided country. He dedicated his entire life into his goal. His devotion to equality never wavered. This is dedication: Mandela’s persistence to move forward, to fulfill his goal despite the consequences, despite the mishaps, despite the walls that try to stop him.

The era of apartheid in South Africa came to an end on April 27, 1994 when he, along with many others, voted for the first time. On May 10, 1994, as Rolihlahla Nelson Dalibunga Mandela was inaugurated as President of a democratic South Africa, he said, “Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all... Let freedom reign.”

Justice is righteousness; peace is harmony; and brotherhood is fellowship. These are all required in a secure, livable world. To obtain that world, there must be at least one person—someone who persists, someone who devotes himself to the purpose of maintaining these three virtues—who is willingly to stand up for equality. But one person cannot do this alone. A secure world requires a society to cooperate. As Nelson Mandela once

said, "We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must therefore act together as a united people... for the birth of a new world."