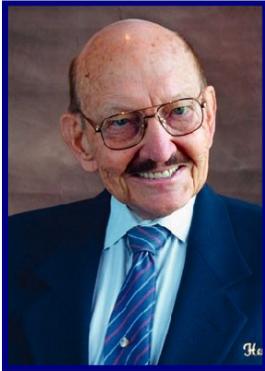


Rotary International District 5300

# George R. Hensel Essay Contest

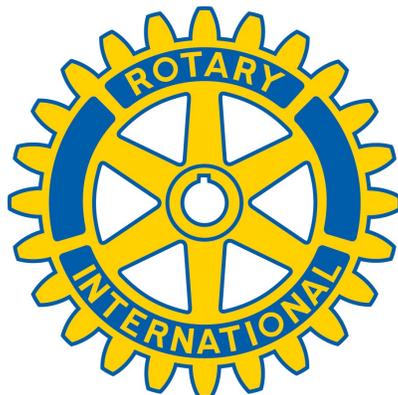


## Ethics

*That branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions*

George R. Hensel Ethics  
Essay Contest Winner:  
Kaiyah Florence

May 19, 2018



I am open minded. I am amicable. I am cooperative. But, do not be fooled. I am opinionated. I am thoughtful. I am aware. I am a listener, and consequently I have acquired a wide range of knowledge on many aspects of society. I am confident in my beliefs, which have been formed on a strong foundation of thorough research. I am fearless when it comes to standing by the things in which I believe. I am an activist.

*Activist: A Person Who Campaigns To Bring About Political Or Social Change*

Being the president of the Black Student Union at Lancaster High School, it is very important for me to remain aware of my environment. Our goal as an organization is to not only provide a platform for discussion of relevant events, but also to dispel societal fallacies, and to promote professionalism within the young community. My role within this association demands that I form my beliefs, thoughtfully, factually, and without any prior sense of obligation.

However, when Colin Kaepernick kneeled during the national anthem, a conflict arose.

*Conflict: An Incompatibility Between Two Or More Opinions, Principles, Or Interests:*

Colin Kaepernick announced that the overall national demeanor toward people of color had stimulated him to make a statement, representing those who he believed were not being heard. Subsequently, I witnessed first-hand, the ferocity in which the Black community supported him. Others swiftly joined his protest, and communities across America replicated the movement, even on scales as low as high school football games. And when conversations of replicating such at Lancaster High School arose, I maintained a predetermined decision: I would not kneel.

*Decision: A Conclusion Or Resolution Reached After Consideration*

Frankly, I did briefly consider kneeling despite my beliefs, and remaining in solidarity with my community. I tried to persuade myself by thinking that even though I did not believe in the method, I believed in the message, and I believed in the people who were promoting it. I contemplated the ramifications of compromising my opinion, just this one time, just to avoid the judgment that would follow my contentious behavior. But with my prime loyalty being to my integrity, I consulted the ethical conduct that I pride myself in upholding.

*Ethics: ...*

*Definitions May Vary*

I believe ethics is a personal sense of moral responsibility, that develops along with the mind of which it governs. As we gain experience, we also gain a better sense of the world that we live in; and we are able to differentiate right and wrong accordingly.

I recognize social injustice, and there are many aspects of political and social conditions that I fight to change. Nonetheless, this simply was not a method that I felt passionate enough to reproduce, and I had a moral responsibility to remain true to my passion. Being Black American is my identity, I love my

community, and as a result I am often expected to support any corresponding movement with the same ferocity as my fellow activists. I in no way meant to condemn the movement, however I also could not let others' expectations of my beliefs influence their founding.

I do recognize that what I saw to be an ethical obligation may not be agreed upon by others. However, if I am going to define ethics as the conscience act of differentiating right from wrong and acting accordingly; and if I'm going to define ethics as beliefs that must ring true to oneself, I must remain consistent. I must remain a woman of my word, and I must reveal that my greatest ethical dilemma has been due to the manner in which my definition of ethics tends to clash with the definitions of others.

I stand for our national anthem. I stand because I believe that is what I am supposed to do, and I have a responsibility to act in correspondence with my beliefs.