3rd ANNUAL OLIVER HILL SCHOLARSHIP AND ESSAY COMPETITION

THE CONTEST IS OPEN TO ALL
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA UNDERGRADUATES & LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR & SENIOR STUDENTS

AWARDS:
$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP TO ONE UVA UNDERGRADUATE
$500 1ST PLACE (HIGH SCHOOL)
$350 1ST RUNNER UP (HIGH SCHOOL)
$150 2ND RUNNER UP (HIGH SCHOOL)

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2010

PLEASE SEE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FOR FURTHER DETAILS

QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO JEREE HARRIS AT JH2XD@VIRGINIA.EDU.
A Tribute to Oliver Hill

Civil Rights pioneer Oliver White Hill Sr. was one of the most influential civil rights attorneys of the 20th century. His strategic challenges to the “separate but equal” doctrine were instrumental in the landmark Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education. After Brown, state laws that intentionally segregated students were unconstitutional. In addition to providing a means to establish equal educational opportunities, Brown overturned several infamous racially discriminatory Supreme Court decisions including Plessy v. Ferguson. After the Brown decision, Hill tirelessly continued his fight in Virginia, helping to combat “massive resistance,” an established state-supported effort to avoid desegregation. Hill’s efforts catalyzed the Virginia Supreme Court ruling invalidating Virginia’s prohibition of integrated schools.

Hill earned a number of awards and citations for his outstanding accomplishments, including the 1959 "Lawyer of the Year Award" from the National Bar Association, the "Simple Justice Award" from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in 1986, and the American Bar Association’s "Justice Thurgood Marshall Award" in 1993. In 1999 President Bill Clinton awarded Hill the "Presidential
Medal of Freedom,” affirming the national importance of Hill’s contribution to the United States’ social framework. Locally, students at the University of Virginia honored Hill when they founded the Oliver W. Hill Black Pre-Law Association. After an illustrious 60-year career in civil rights, fighting for integration, equal pay for African American teachers, access to buses, and voting rights, Oliver Hill died August 5, 2007. Nonetheless, his legacy lives on as we strive to achieve equality in education.

As a tribute to Oliver Hill’s legacy, in 2008 the University of Virginia Black Law Students Association (BLSA) launched a scholarship essay contest. We are pleased to sponsor the scholarship again this year. In order to participate in this contest, students must respond to two essay questions focusing on the impact of Oliver Hill’s efforts on their lives. All entrants must answer question one in 500 words or less. For the second question, entrants may choose to answer either question two or question three (500 words or less for undergraduates, 250 words or less for high school students).
Question 1:  
How have you benefited from Oliver Hill's efforts to ensure diverse school environments?  

AND  

Question 2:  
How will you contribute or further the goals that Oliver Hill fought for in your future career?  

OR  

Question 3:  
What impact does the election of President Barack Obama have on the future of civil rights efforts in America?
Essay Rules

Eligibility:

The competition is bifurcated; high school students and undergraduate students are judged separately.

The scholarship competition is open to all currently enrolled University of Virginia undergraduate students. One winner will be awarded a $1000 scholarship. Question 1, should be answered in 500 words or less. Either Question 2 or 3 should be answered in 500 words or less.

The essay contest is open to all Charlottesville City and Albemarle County high school juniors and seniors. Question 1, should be answered in 500 words or less. Either Question 2 or 3 should be answered in 250 words or less. BLSA will award three prizes: the winning essayist will receive a $500 gift, the first runner up will be awarded a $350 gift, and the second runner up will receive a $150 gift.

Judging:

Essays will be judged on both style and content. Judges will look for writing that is clear, articulate, and logically organized. Winning essays must demonstrate an outstanding grasp of the historical significance of Oliver Hill’s contribution, and thoughtful consideration of the student’s individual role in continued activism. Students are encouraged to complete additional research regarding Oliver Hill’s life to enhance their essays.

Biographical Information:

To avoid disqualification, a stapled cover sheet MUST include: your full name, address, telephone number, e-mail address (if available), the name and address of your school, grade level, and an alternative contact person (if available). Be sure to identify the topic you have selected (#1, and #2 or #3).

Honor Code:

The substantive conceptual and written product in the essay must solely be the work of the entrant. However, essayist may seek limited help editing and grammatically refining their work. Entrants should be especially careful not to plagiarize ideas or written work
product as it will lead to automatic disqualification. Please include proper citations. Entrants must include, sign, and date, the following honor pledge on the cover page of their submission:

“The substantive ideas and written work included in this essay are the sole work of the essayist.”

Submission: Essays must be typewritten, double spaced, have one inch margins, and be completed in 12 pt. Times New Roman Font.

Essays must be postmarked no later than January 29, 2010.

Essays may be emailed to jh2xd@virginia.edu or mailed to:

Attn: Jeree Harris, UVA BLSA Community Service Chair

Oliver Hill Scholarship Committee

580 Massie Road

Charlottesville, VA 22903

Decisions of the judges are final.
All entries become the property of the University of Virginia Black Law Students Association and will not be returned.

Winners, finalists, semifinalists and all other participants will be notified via e-mail and/or by mail by February 5th. All winners must attend an award ceremony in February, date TBD. If you have any questions regarding the contest, please contact Jeree Harris at jh2xd@virginia.edu.

Thank you and Good Luck!