

# 2014 Michael Hakeem Memorial College Essay Contest

## FOR CURRENTLY ENROLLED COLLEGE STUDENTS UNDER AGE 25

First Place, Michael Hakeem Memorial Award — \$3,000

Second Place — \$2,000

Third Place — \$1,000

Fourth Place — \$750

Fifth Place — \$500

Sixth Place — \$400

Honorable Mention(s) — \$200

### “MY ATHEIST/UNBELIEVER 'COMING OUT' STORY”

**Eligibility:** Currently-enrolled college student under age 25, currently attending a North American college or university at least through spring or summer 2014. (Undergraduates over age 25: please enter the FFRF Graduate/Older Student Essay Competition. College-bound high school seniors enter FFRF High School Contest.)

**Topic:** Use a personal (first-person) approach about how and why you came out as a nonbeliever (freethinker, atheist, agnostic, skeptic). Include some intellectual analysis of why you reject religion. If you grew up without religion, you may wish to describe your experiences being open as an atheist or nonbeliever with religious classmates or society. If raised with religion, tell us how and why you thought your way out of religion. You may wish to include experiences with activism.

**Length:** 700 to 900 words. Include word count. Submit typed, double-spaced essay with standard margins.

**Other Requirements:** Choose your own title. Do not include a resume. Please staple. Place your name and essay title on each page. Include a separate paragraph identifying your age and birthdate, hometown, college or university, year in school or degree being earned, major and interests. Include your name, mailing address, contact phone number(s), and email address. Winners may be asked to send verification of student enrollment. Essay must be submitted both by mail and e-mail by deadline (see below). Dean & Dorea Schramm, FFRF members, are offering a \$100 bonus to any student winner who is a member of FFRF, a secular student club or the Secular Student Alliance, at the time the essay is submitted. Join SSA free online at: <https://www.secularstudents.org/civcrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=10>, under donate. To be eligible for the bonus, be sure to specify in your bio whether you belong to FFRF, a secular student club (please name) or have joined SSA online. By entering contest, students agree to have winning essays printed in full or in part in Freethought Today, FFRF's newspaper, and later posted online at FFRF's website. Winners agree to promptly provide a photograph suitable for reproduction with their essay. Winners will receive a school-year subscription to Freethought Today. All eligible non-winning students will be offered a subscription or a freethought book. Note: FFRF monitors for plagiarism.

**Deadline:** Postmarked no later than June 15, 2014. Winners will be announced in September.

**Mailing specifications:** Send both by email (see below) and mail. Email your essay no later than midnight, June 15, 2014, to: [collegeessay@ffrf.org](mailto:collegeessay@ffrf.org). Use the word “essay” and your first and last name in the subject heading. Example: Essay: (Your full name). Please include a copy of everything indicated in requirements. Also mail postmarked no later than June 15, 2014, to:

College Essay Competition

FFRF

PO Box 750

Madison WI 53701

*About Michael Hakeem: Prof. Hakeem, a sociologist, was an FFRF officer and active atheist known by generations of University of Wisconsin-Madison students for fine-tuning their reasoning abilities.*