

Fifteenth Annual Literary Arts & Video Competition for Middle School & High School Students

January 27, 2025, commemorates the anniversary of the Soviet Army's liberation of more than 7,000 prisoners at Auschwitz. In the months that followed, troops from the USSR, Western Europe and the U.S. would liberate many more camps, as the Nazis scrambled to destroy the evidence of their crimes. Though the persecution of Jews and others was no secret, **the liberation period was when many people were first forced to realize the extent of what the Nazi regime had been doing.**

When soldiers of the 4th Armored Division and the 89th Infantry of the Third US Army entered Ohrdruf Camp on April 4, 1945, they discovered piles of bodies, some covered with lime, and others partially incinerated on pyres. The ghastly nature of their discovery led General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, to visit the camp on April 12. After his visit, Eisenhower cabled General George C. Marshall, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, describing his experience:

I visited every nook and cranny of the camp because I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify at firsthand about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or the assumption that 'the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda.' . . . as soon as I returned to . . . headquarters that evening, I sent communications to both Washington and London, urging the two governments to send instantly to Germany a random group of newspaper editors and representative groups from the national legislatures. I felt that the evidence should be immediately placed before the American and British publics in a fashion to leave no room for cynical doubt."

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

A link to stream the 2004 Oscar-nominated documentary [*Sister Rose's Passion*](#) has been sent to every New Jersey public middle school and high school, private school and religious school. Teachers of students in grades **7–12** are asked to show the 30-minute film to their classes and announce the competition.

After they have watched the film, students will write an essay/poem or create a short video addressing this year's theme and answering one or more of the suggested questions below. The competition provides a great opportunity to provide education in keeping with the [**New Jersey Mandate for Genocide and Holocaust Education**](#).

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Theme: Liberating prejudice or bias to foster understanding, education, respect and good will

Through her words and actions, Sister Rose Thering fought against anti-Jewish prejudice, not merely to create understanding but to educate Catholics about the Jewish faith.

This year's literary and visual arts competition provides an opportunity for you to focus on a **liberator** of some sort (women's suffragists, abolitionists, civil rights activists, for example) to show how, through **personal experience, research** or **reading a work of literature about/by them**, you were freed from prejudice or bias.

- Describe the situation that drove this person to confront prejudice and attempt to lessen discrimination.
- What are several *specific* actions this person took that enlightened you and reduced/eliminated your prejudice.
- Of these actions, which one(s) are like those taken by Sister Rose to eliminate prejudice and reduce discrimination?
- How did this person deal with uncomfortable or dangerous reactions to his/her/their quest for liberation?
- Why were you drawn to this particular person?
- What lessons have you learned from this person that can be applied to your own life?

NOTE TO CLASSROOM TEACHER: If a student decides to write about a public figure past or present, he/she/they will need to conduct some research about that person to provide specific details to answer the preceding questions. In addition, teachers are asked to proofread students' written submissions—especially essays—for grammatical errors (spelling, punctuation, usage) in preparation of the winners' submissions for publication.

If you submit an **essay**, it should be no more than 500 words. If you submit a **poem**, it must be entirely original and should be a minimum of 20 lines and a maximum of 50 lines.

If you submit a **video**, it should be a Public Service Announcement (PSA) 90–120 seconds long addressing this year's theme and answering the questions listed above. Your charge is to create a short video to teach others how a morally courageous person can change the world.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Ten (10) submissions—**essays, poems**—per grade level per school, with a maximum of forty (40) submissions per high school and twenty (20) per middle school. If a school submits more than ten (10) submissions for a given grade level, the submissions from that school's grade level will be ineligible for consideration in the 2024 Essay Competition.
2. Five (5) **video** PSAs per grade level per school, for a maximum of 20 PSAs per high school and 10 per middle school. If a school submits more than five video PSAs for a given grade level, all video PSAs from that school's grade level will become ineligible for consideration in the 2024 Competition.
3. Only classroom teachers can submit essays/poems/videos. Individual student submissions will not be considered for judging.
4. There are three ways to submit **essays and poems**:
 - a. **Preferred method:** register and upload essays at

www.shu.edu/SRTFEssay

b. Via **e-mail** to srtf@shu.edu

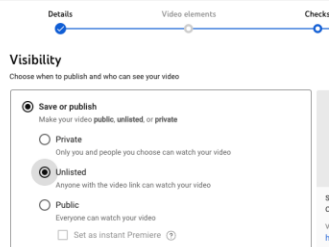
c. **Hardcopy** (must include essay, application and Student Release forms for each entry) mailed to

Sister Rose Thering Fund Literary Arts & Video Competition
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079

5. To submit your **video PSA**:

a. Upload your video PSA to YouTube.

b. When uploading, under "Visibility" set the video to "Unlisted"



c. If it is not possible for you to upload on YouTube, please contact srtf@shu.edu. We will do our best to accommodate you.

Include the link to your video on the online submission form at

www.shu.edu/SRTFVideo

d. Via e-mail to srtf@shu.edu

e. **Hardcopy** (must include video link, application and Student Release form for each entry) mailed to:

Sister Rose Thering Fund Literary & Visual Arts Competition
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079

6. All submissions are due by **Friday, January 31, 2025**. The application and release forms must accompany all submissions.

ESSAY FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

1. All **essay** submissions must be typed in MLA 8 format, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, with a header, listing the following:

Student's full name

Example: Joanne Anderson

Teacher's Name

Mrs. Hunter

High School Name

Northeast High School

Grade level (7, 8, 9,10,11 or 12)

Grade 9

2. Page number must be inserted 0.5 inches down from top of the page, on right, giving student's last name and page number; for example: Anderson 1

3. Give the essay an original title. Center the title two spaces below the header.

HEADER SAMPLE:

Joanne Anderson
Mrs. Hunter
Northeast High School
Grade 9

Anderson 1

4. The essay must mention Sister Rose.
5. The length of the essay **must not exceed** five hundred (500) words.

POETRY FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

1. Poem must be entirely original. If quoting words spoken by the person featured, use quotation marks to set them off from your own words.
2. Give your poem an original title.
3. The poem should be between 20–50 lines in length.
4. The poem must mention Sister Rose.

See Essay Format Requirements 1-3 above, except that poems should be typed single space.

VIDEO FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

1. Your PSA should be 90–120 seconds in length. Videos longer than 120 seconds will be disqualified.
2. Production teams should consist of one, two or three students only, listed in the credits at the end of the video and indicating the responsibility of each student (e.g., camera, editor, script, director, lighting, etc.)
3. May include up to three actors, also listed in the credits at the end of the video.
4. Credits should also include name of school, name of classroom teacher/production advisor.
5. The PSA title must be included at the opening of the video.
6. The video must mention Sister Rose.
7. The video must incorporate a call to action for viewers.

FORMS

1. For an **essay or poem**, complete the Student Literary Arts Competition Application (page 7-8)
2. Complete the Student Release Form (page 9)
3. For a **video**, complete the Student Video Competition Application (page 10-11).
4. Complete the Student Release Form (page 12-13).
5. Return video PSA link, application and release form to the classroom teacher by the school's requested deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Students

1. Originality
2. Relevance to theme and Sister Rose's message in the documentary
3. Grammar, spelling and punctuation

4. Must mention Sister Rose

JUDGING CRITERIA: Teachers

1. Please read the student essays and poems with a keen eye for proper punctuation, grammar and spelling.
2. Please do not make corrections yourself; encourage the student to revise and edit the essay according to appropriate grammatical guidelines.

Essays will be judged according to student's grade level.

WINNER SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

1. One (1) First Place winner will be selected in each category for each grade level. Video production teams will count as one winner in that grade.
2. One (1) Honorable Mention award will be made in each category for each grade level. Video production teams will count as one honorable mention in that grade.
3. Notification letters to winners will be sent out by **March 7, 2025**.
4. Winners are expected to attend the Celebration of Education Celebration, at Seton Hall University on **Sunday, March 30th, 2025**; the families and teachers of winners are also invited to attend. **All RSVPs should be sent in by February 15th.**

All essays and poems will be kept on file in the office of the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University and will not be returned to students. Seton Hall University reserves the right to distribute written works submitted for the contest via the University Website or other digital/interactive transmission.

The mission of the Sister Rose Thering Fund for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies is to advance the legacy of Sister Rose Thering by fostering understanding and cooperation among Jews, Christians and people of other religious traditions through advocacy and education.

Thank you for participating.
Best wishes to your school and students!

**SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT LITERARY ARTS & VIDEO
COMPETITION APPLICATION: ESSAY OR POEM**

DEADLINE: January 31, 2025

Student's Name _____
First Middle initial Last

Student's home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Student's phone number (_____) _____

Name of School _____

School address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

School phone number (_____) _____

Name of teacher _____

Teacher E-mail Address _____

Student's year in school (circle one):

6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

All essays and poems will be kept on file in the office of the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University and will not be returned to students. Seton Hall University reserves the right to distribute written works submitted for the contest via the University Website or other digital/interactive transmission.

**RELEASE FORM FOR
SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT LITERARY ARTS & VIDEO
COMPETITION: ESSAY OR POEM**

I/We give our permission for the essay/poem entitled

Write the title above.

submitted to the Sister Rose Thering Fund Student Essay Competition sponsored by the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University, South Orange New Jersey, to be used in any future publications of the Fund.

Student name (printed)

Student signature

Parent/Guardian name (printed)

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

All essays and poems will be kept on file in the office of the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University and will not be returned to students. Seton Hall University reserves the right to distribute written works submitted for the contest via the University Website or other digital/interactive transmission.

Thank you.

**SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT LITERARY ARTS & VIDEO
COMPETITION APPLICATION: VIDEO
DEADLINE: January 31, 2025**

Student's Name _____
First Middle initial Last

Student's home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Student's phone number (_____) _____

Name of School _____

School address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

School phone number (_____) _____

Name of teacher _____

Teacher E-mail Address _____

Student's year in school (circle one): 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th
11th 12th

All video submissions will be kept on file in the office of the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University and will not be returned to students. Seton Hall University reserves the right to distribute written works submitted for the contest via the University Website or other digital/interactive transmission.

**RELEASE FORM FOR
SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT LITERARY ARTS & VIDEO
COMPETITION: VIDEO**

DEADLINE: January 31, 2025

I hereby grant Seton Hall University permission to the rights of my video submission, image, likeness and sound of my voice in its publications as my contribution to the Event listed below. I understand that my contribution may be recorded on audio or video tape or other media, digitized, edited, copied, exhibited, broadcast, published and distributed and waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my likeness appears. I understand that examples of my work and/or these recordings of me will be used exclusively for non-commercial, educational purposes, which may include, but are not limited to, distribution by any method and in any media, whether now existing or later created (including by digital or interactive media transmission), within or outside of the State of New Jersey for the duration of the media.

I understand that there will be no financial or other remuneration for use of my work and/or recordings, either for initial or subsequent transmission or playback, and I hereby release Seton Hall University from any liability resulting from or connected with the publication of such work. Permission is granted for the duration of the media. I further understand that my permission or consent may be rescinded; however, in order for the revocation of permission/consent to be effective, it must be made in writing and said revocation will not affect the publication or work that has already been produced. Seton Hall University may use my name, likeness, work, and/or bibliographical identification for publicizing and promoting the use of these recordings.

I represent that all materials used in my contribution to this Event are my own or are materials for which I have obtained all necessary permissions. I also represent that my contribution will not infringe any copyrights or any rights of others and will contain nothing defamatory or libelous.

**SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT LITERARY ARTS & VIDEO
COMPETITION SUBMISSION RELEASE:**

I/We give our permission for the video entitled "_____"
submitted to the Sister Rose Thering Fund Student Essay Competition
sponsored by the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University, South
Orange New Jersey, to be used for non-commercial, educational purposes,

distributed by any method and in any media, whether now existing or later created (including by digital or interactive media transmission); within or outside of the State of New Jersey for the duration of the media.

Personal Info

Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Production Team Participants (Please identify roles, such as director, script, camera, lighting, etc.) and their parents must also sign this release:

Role in video production:

Participant Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (If Under 18): _____

Student's year in school (circle one): 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

All video PSAs entered for consideration will become property of the Sister Rose Thering Fund for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies and Seton Hall University. Entrants wishing to broadcast their work on any media platform must obtain written permission from the Sister Rose Thering Fund and Seton Hall University.

Thank you.