

THE MARTIN J. KELLY WRITING CONTEST 2024

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all students in grades 9 through 12 in the schools in Nassau County.

PROJECT: An essay in which the writer identifies him/herself through references to indicators or emblems of the writer's heritage or interests. A model of such an essay of identity, *The Meaning of Irishness* by George E. Ryan, is included with our contest materials.

Contest entrants will write an essay built upon references to the things which people accumulate from their heritages and interests. Our model essay has references to the books, music, art and other cultural elements of Mr. Ryan's Irish heritage. Entrants will write an entertaining essay which refers also to the indicators of heritage in their homes or to the signs in a room which show a person's passionate interests. Indicators of heritage include religious symbols, foods, celebrations, languages and so much more. Indicators of passionate interests include reading material, special clothing, posters and so much more. Heritage need not be of another country— America, too, has produced emblems of an American heritage.

USEFUL RESOURCES: The best material for this project will be found in the writer's own home or in the home of a relative. Interviews with relatives who are known in the family as being the bearers of family history are a wonderful resource. Most of all, keen observation of the writer's surroundings using all of the senses— including taste and smell— will uncover the best material for this essay of identity. See also our web site for "Helpful Hints": (www.irish-society.org).

CRITERIA: The judge will evaluate the essays on the colorfulness of the writing. Much of the color of the style will emerge from the details which the writer includes in the essay. Also adding to the excellence of the essay will be the clever use of language, both the English language and any language associated with the material. If the writer puts his/her own personality on display in the essay through humor, insight, or the communication of a passion, the judge will notice the writer's skill at sketching character. **Length: 300-500 words**

ENTRY FORMAT: Typed; writer's name
at end of essay; no school identification

DEADLINE: March 17, 2024

PRIZES: 1st \$200 (3), 2nd \$150 (3), 3rd \$125 (3) (three awards), Honorable Mention \$25 (20)

COVER SHEET: Writer's name, address, email, school, sponsoring teacher

(Sponsor: **H.W. Wilson Foundation**) A book will be donated to the school library of entrants

**Mail entries to: The Irish Cultural Society
Box 247
Garden City, NY 11530**