

McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize

Introduction

The McKnight Opportunity Fund (“McKnight”) proposes to create an Annual Prize for current LA High students to encourage them to research and creatively engage with the school's history, legacy, and esteemed alumni. McKnight will award up to four prizes each year, in the amount of \$1000 for each prize.

Competition Prompt

- Identify a distinguished alumni of LA HS who has demonstrated leadership, resilience, and made a meaningful impact on our community. (Choose from the list attached).
- Explain what drew you to this alum by highlighting and defining accomplishments in their life and career.
- Describe the significant contributions they have made, and the impact of their work on others within their professional field.
- Reflect on how the alum’s journey, values, and leadership have personally inspired you and influenced your own aspirations.

Submission Format

Submissions may take a variety of formats. Students may choose to create a:

- Written essay
- Poem
- Theatrical narrative
- Screenplay
- Visual artwork: a painting, drawing, photograph, sweet dimensional sculpture, mixed media collage*
- Performance-based submission, such as choreography, dance, improvisation, and athletic interpretation, or a piece set to music or spoken word*

*If you choose a visual or performance format (for example, a drawing or a musical piece) you must also submit an accompanying written document that clearly addresses the questions outlined above.

Submission Deadline - April 15, 2026 by email: info@mcknightfund.org

Submission Criteria

All current LA HS students are eligible and encouraged to apply to the McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize irrespective of their grade level. All submissions must include the following:

1. Student’s Full Name and Grade
2. Prize submission (e.g. essay, poem, artwork, etc.)

Submissions must be digitized and emailed to the MOF by the competition deadline:

All submissions must be emailed to the McKnight Opportunity Fund Board (info@mcknightfund.org) and include the following in the subject line: McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize Competition Student's FIRST NAME and LAST NAME, Student's Grade Level.

Upload your submission as an email attachment:

- PDF for written submissions
- JPG files for visual arts submissions
- MP3, MP4 or YouTube link for audio or video files.
- Students who create visual works of art will need to photograph their submissions and include the photographs.
- Students who create performances will need to record their performances and send the recording or video link as their submission.

Competition Jury

The jury will consist of members of the McKnight Board, along with 1-3 invited guest jurors (e.g., L.A. High Alumni, members of LA High faculty or leadership, local experts). Guest Jurors can change each year, depending on the nature of the submissions and the areas of expertise or professional perspectives that might be needed in any given year.

Awards Assembly

All finalists for the student prize competition will be invited to present their submissions in a public assembly, for which the entire LA HS community will be encouraged to attend. Competition Awardees will also be celebrated on the McKnight website. Some winning submissions may be incorporated into future plaques for the McKnight Alumni Wall of Fame at LA HS.

Faculty and School Leadership Involvement

Critical to the success of the McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize Competition is faculty and school leadership involvement at all stages, from helping to identify and encourage students to submit, to providing logistical support for students to create and/or submit their applications, to serving as guest jurors and helping to facilitate the Awards Assembly.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. How often will this prize competition occur?

A1. The McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize is an annual prize competition offered once a year to current students at LA HS.

Q2. How many student awardees are there each year, during each prize competition?

A2. There may be up to four (4) student prizes awarded each year with a prize amount of \$1,000 per student awardee. All current students at LA HS are eligible to apply. McKnight may honor runners-up submissions with special mention at the Awards Assembly; however, no prizes will be given for runners-up.

Q3. What are the goals for the McKnight Alumni Tribute Prize Competition? Why did the McKnight Opportunity Fund create this prize competition?

A3. The primary goal for this competition is for current students at LA HS to be aware of and engage with the history and legacy of the school by learning about its esteemed alumni. The McKnight Opportunity Fund believes in the greatness of LA HS and aims for current students to learn from and be inspired by the professional achievements of LA HS alumni.

Q4. What makes a good submission? Is this an academic challenge? An artistic challenge?

A4. The McKnight Opportunity Fund believes that creativity and academic excellence come in many forms. Students are invited to submit their reflections of LA HS distinguished alumni in a variety of different formats including a written essay, poem, theatrical narrative, screenplay, visual artwork, or performance. All submissions will be judged on their quality of research, insight into the subject, opinions on the value of the alum's contribution, and clarity of expression. Strong submissions are those that clearly follow the competition prompts:

- Identify a distinguished alumni of LA HS who has demonstrated leadership, resilience, and made a meaningful impact on our community.
- Explain what drew you to this alum by highlighting and defining accomplishment of their life and career.
- Describe the significant contributions they have made, and the impact of their work on others within their professional field.
- Reflect on how the alum's journey, values, and leadership have personally inspired you and influenced your own aspirations.

Q5. What does the McKnight Opportunity Fund do with student submissions? Who holds copyright for submitted work?

A5. Students retain all copyright of their submitted work. As part of their submission, students give the McKnight Opportunity Fund permission to reproduce their submitted work in part or in whole on McKnight's website and in related promotional material regarding the organization and the prize competition.

For more information about the McKnight Opportunity Fund, please visit our website: www.mcknightfund.org