



INVICTUS

STUDENT WRITING AWARD

**IN THE SPRING, A
GRADUATING LAPEER
HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR
WILL BE AWARDED
THE INVICTUS STUDENT
WRITING AWARD**

**JUDGING WILL BE BASED
ON A CREATIVE ESSAY
THAT SPEAKS TO
OVERCOMING ADVERSITY
AND GROWING IN
CHARACTER**

**The Invictus Student Writing Award
honors local author Wendy
Byard's late father
Mark Stevens**





MARK STEVENS

INVICTUS

STUDENT WRITING AWARD



The Invictus Student Writing Award was established by local author Wendy Byard to focus on reliance in the face of life's challenges, to celebrate student character and writing, and to honor her late father Mark Stevens. He was her first role model for storytelling and an inspiration in her life. Mark Stevens grew up in challenging circumstances in Flint, Michigan, but developed confidence as his life progressed. He ultimately achieved personal and professional contentment and happiness.

His favorite poem was "Invictus." Invictus is a Latin word that translates to "unconquerable" or "undefeated." It is often used to describe a strong, resilient spirit that perseveres through adversity. The term gained significant recognition through William Ernest Henley's poem of the same name, which explores themes of willpower and resilience in the face of suffering.

The final line of "Invictus" reads: "I am the captain of my fate. I am the master of my soul." The Invictus Student Writing Award logo is the compass, rooted in navigation, which symbolizes finding one's way and staying true to the path, even when faced with challenges. It has added significance as Mark Stevens served in the US Navy as a radioman and participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis. He received military honors upon his death. Wendy Byard learned the poem in middle school at her father's urging. She still remembers it and appreciates its message of fortitude and self reliance - understanding the impact it had on her father's life and also her own.

The Invictus Student Writing Award will be presented to a graduating high school senior who has written an exceptional essay on facing adversity and growing in strength and character. The award celebrates a meaningful, original, and in-depth essay that focuses on a particular time/event in the student's life, how it impacted them, and how they were able to develop their character as a result of struggle. The essay should provide insight and the characteristics of effective creative writing and storytelling.

CONTEST CRITERIA

In the spirit of the poem “Invictus,” which is Latin for unconquered or undefeated, participating students should write a narrative/memoir essay that focuses on a challenging time in their life and how they responded to the adversity. The essay is meant to be inspirational, providing readers with a real-life account of personal challenge and the means to confront that challenge. It should be written as creative storytelling.

Participants should be Lapeer High School graduating seniors in good standing academically and in the community.

The essay must not be created with the assistance of AI or any other artificial intelligence. It cannot be plagiarized or written by anyone else but the participant.

The essay must not have been published previously.

Each student may only submit one entry.

The essay should be three pages long, in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, and created as a Word document. It should include an original and compelling title along with the student’s name and contact information.

The deadline for essay submission is Friday, April 17, 2026, by 3 PM. Students should submit their essays to the LHS Counseling Office. Students should also make a copy of the essay for their own files.

The winning essay will be published in some manner, and the winning author will receive \$500.

Please visit lhs.lapeerschools.org/o/lhs/page/scholarships to apply.

