

Rankin/Mon Valley/Pittsburgh Section National Council of Negro Women, INC.

“True Worth” Academic Scholarship Honoring V. Schnel Simmons

“The true worth of a race must be measured by the character of its womanhood.” - Mary McLeod Bethune

Historical/Biographical Context:

Born on a farm near Maysville, South Carolina in 1875, Mary McLeod Bethune, the 15th child of formerly enslaved parents, rose from humble beginnings to become a world-renowned educator, civil and human rights leader, champion for women and young people, and an advisor to five U.S. presidents.

Education was the first step in her remarkable journey. The young Mary McLeod worked in the fields alongside her parents and siblings, until she enrolled at the age of 10 in the one-room Trinity Presbyterian Mission School. There, she learned to read, and, as she later noted, “the whole world opened to me.” She went on to study at Scotia Seminary in North Carolina and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago with the goal of becoming a missionary. When no missionary openings were available, she became a teacher, first at the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia and then at the Kendall Institute in Sumpter, South Carolina, where she met and married Albertus Bethune. The dream of opening her own school took Mary McLeod Bethune to Florida first to Palatka and then to Daytona Beach, where she started the school that would become Bethune- Cookman University.

As she worked to build the school that she founded, she also became a national leader on issues related to civil rights, education, women and young people. As president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, she organized the group to fight against school segregation and inadequate healthcare for black children. She later served as president of the prestigious National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and founded the National Council of Negro Women. She was appointed to numerous national commissions including the Coolidge Administration Child Welfare Conference, the Hoover Administration's National Commission on Child Welfare and Commission on Home Building and Home Ownership. She eventually became an advisor on minority affairs in the Roosevelt Administration, organizing two national conferences on the problem of black Americans.

While she gave counsel to presidents and made connections with America's elite, Mary McLeod Bethune was readily accessible to average men and women and the college students that she mothered and mentored.

Her access to people of power and privilege was never something she used to benefit herself. It was always an opportunity to gain access for those shut out of opportunities in our society. She enlisted leaders of government and industry to support her vision and dreams for her school in Daytona Beach, for social justice and positive change for all.

Bio Source: <https://www.cookman.edu/history/our-founder.html>

Award Details:

- The Rankin/Mon Valley/Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Negro Women's Annual "True Worth" Scholarship is a tribute to the singular legacy of educational commitment and leadership excellence exhibited by our founder Mary McLeod Bethune. Its purpose is to provide financial assistance to a Black woman community leader seeking to further her education in college and beyond. V. Schnel Simmons was added to the name of our scholarship in memory of an outstanding woman who was an active member of our section.
- **One \$1,000 non-renewable scholarship is being offered.**
- **Award recipient will be notified on or by March 1, 2025, via both email and phone.**

Eligibility:

- Must identify as a woman of African descent
- Graduating High School Senior at the time of application submission (Graduating Spring 2025)
- Attending school in Rankin, Mon Valley, or the Greater Pittsburgh, PA area
(Affiliation with the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) is **not** necessary to apply)

Application Submission Requirements:

- Complete & attach application information form
- Submit a typed response to the essay topic on page four (4)
- Attach 1- page personal resume including a list of extracurricular activities
- Provide a transcript from the current school you are attending, which includes GPA
- Provide up to three letters of recommendation. Letters must come from adult individuals with whom the candidate has had legitimate education, organization or religious affiliations, i.e. people who can attest to the character of the scholarship candidate. The letters must include the name, position and contact information of the person writing the letter of recommendation; the office(s) held by the student; in the organization. Letters from relatives and/or personal friends will not be accepted.
- Provide a copy of the letter of acceptance on letterhead from the college, university, or trade school you plan to attend.
- Submit completed application via email (trueworthncnw@gmail.com) by **11:59 PM, Sunday, February 16, 2025**
- Email trueworthncnw@gmail.com with any questions and/or concerns

Application Information Form:

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Email Address _____ Phone (_____) _____

Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____ Gender: _____

Permanent Address (Street) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School Currently Attending: _____

Current GPA: _____ Expected Graduation Date: ____ / ____

Prospective College/University: _____

Expected College Major:

Essay Response Question:

Student is to respond to the following essay.

Involvement / Activities (350-500 Words) How do you see yourself getting involved in activities and organizations that will help the younger generation(s) develop good principles and policies?

- Identify an experience that was pivotal in the development of the principles and policies that guide your life. What principles were developed and how have these principles informed the legacy you intend to create and eventually bequeath to the world?

Essay Rubric below will be used by the RMVP NCNW Scholarship Review

Committee to measure the applicant’s response

Student’s name _____ Student’s total score _____

PART A - ESSAY

SCORE	- 4 -	- 3 -	- 2 -	- 1 -
MAIN IDEA	Clearly presents a main idea and supports it throughout the paper (4)	There is a main idea supported throughout MOST of the paper (3)	Vague sense of a main idea, weakly supported throughout the paper (2)	Strays from main idea outlined in instructions (1)
ORGANIZATION	Well-planned, well thought-out, well-organized writing (introduction, main idea, transitions, and conclusion) with strong evidence of proof reading (4)	Good overall organization , includes main organizational tools and some evidence of proof reading (3)	Some sense of organization used weakly in the writing/no evidence of proof reading (2)	Very poorly organized essay with no evidence of proof reading (1)
CONTENT	Ideas are well detailed and supported with specific examples and details (4)	Ideas are present in the writing, but lack some specific examples and details (3)	Ideas and examples are not particularly precise and stray from the essay topic (2)	Content is not sound and/or ideas are not clear (1)
WRITING STYLE	Sentences are clear and varied in pattern ranging from simple to compound and complex/excellent use of punctuation (4)	Sentences are clear but may lack some variation in pattern/a few punctuation errors (3)	Sentences are SOMEWHAT clear in content and there is little/no variation in sentence pattern/various punctuation errors (2)	Sentences are not clear/abundant punctuation errors (1)
VOCABULARY	Word choices are rich and varied and take reader deep into the world of the writer (4)	Word choices are somewhat rich and varied, and allows reader a small window into the world of the writer (3)	Word choices are weak and repetitive, but writer does attempt to bring in personal vocabulary (2)	Word choices are MOSTLY limited to vocabulary used in the essay question (1)
GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS	Excellent grammar, spelling and syntax	Very few errors in grammar, spelling and syntax	Essay is highly punctuated with grammar, spelling and syntax errors	Continuous errors in all areas

Possible essay score – 24

PART A – ESSAY

- Student’s score _____

PART B – RESUME (3 points)

- Well organized, succinct and with noteworthy information (3 points)
- Somewhat well organized, but with minimal factual information (2 points)
- Lacks indication that student understands the process of résumé writing (1point)

Student’s score _____

PART C – GPA SCORES

- 2.5-2.9 (2.5 points)
- 3.0-3.4 (3 points)
- 3.5-3.9 (3.5 points)
- 4.0 (4 points)

Student’s score _____

Part D – The scholarship committee will accept and review **up to three letters of recommendation**. These letters must come from adult individuals with whom the candidate has had legitimate affiliations, i.e. people who can attest to the character of the scholarship candidate. Letters from relatives and/or personal friends will not be accepted.

Letter # 1	Letter # 2	Letter # 3	Points (1-3)
Name and contact information for person writing letter of recommendation:	Name and contact information for person writing letter of recommendation:	Name and contact information for person writing letter of recommendation:	Points (1-3)
Office(s) held by student:	Office(s) held by student:	Office(s) held by student:	Points (1-3)
Number of years in organization:	Number of years in organization:	Number of years in organization:	Points (1-3)

Student’s score _____

Total student’s score _____