In November of 1945, American Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson delivered a speech to open the trial of defeated Nazi leaders at Nuremberg. The trial was the first of its kind and Jackson described the momentous occasion in his opening speech, stating:

“The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility. The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. . We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. . .”

Sitting before Jackson were Nazi leaders responsible for some of the most heinous crimes of World War II: waging aggressive war, the executions of civilians and prisoners of war, the millions of deaths in the Holocaust, and more. However, even when faced with the overwhelming evidence against the defeated Nazi defendants, Judge Jackson and his fellow prosecutors sought for justice to be done.

The Richard Ira Bong Veterans Historical Society for its 2019 student essay contest is asking middle school students to: Consider Judge Jackson’s quote and explain what you feel the “grave responsibility” of justice means and why it is important for today and for how “history will judge us tomorrow.”
Considering the quote from Judge Jackson, from your point of view as a young person coming of age in the twenty-first century. Why, in even the face of horrific events and actions, is seeking justice so vital? Do individuals, leaders, or whole nations have obligations to uphold justice? Alternately, are all guilty individuals, leaders, or whole nations subject to certain universal laws and restrictions? Is justice for certain crimes and actions even actually possible? With this in mind:

**Here is what you do:** Use events from American and WWII history as your starting point, but don’t stop in the past. Use specific examples from your own experiences and/or current events to support your ideas, beliefs, and convictions on what you feel is the meaning of justice. This is NOT a research paper, and the best essays will NOT be summaries of the past 75 years of American history or international legal precedents. Your essay will be judged foremost for its originality, clarity of expression, and adherence to contest theme, as well as its historical accuracy, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Museum staff will read and evaluate all entries and select the winning essays. Due date is Friday, December 13th 2019.

**Awards:**
The Center will select one winning essay from each grade (6-8). Winners will receive a **$50 prize**.

Three honorable mentions from each grade will receive consolation prizes.

Winning Essays will be posted on the Center’s website.

All placing entries will be forwarded to the National World War II Museum’s Middle School Student Essay Contest in New Orleans Louisiana.
Guidelines, Formatting Requirements and Submission Instructions

- Contest is open to all students in grades 6-8 residing in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.
- Your essay must be 500 words or less.
- Your Essay must be original- no plagiarism. Essays will be disqualified if largely copied from another source.
- Only one essay per student may be submitted.
- All essays should:
  - Be double spaced
  - Have a one-inch margin
  - Include page numbers
  - Include an essay title
  - Be typed in 12-point font
  - Be in Microsoft Word, Google doc or PDF format

*Essays may be emailed, along with the required student information, to the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center – Education Outreach Coordinator gidley@bvcenter.org

You may also mail them to or drop them off at:
The Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center
305 Harbor View Parkway
Student Information

Please complete the following student information and email, along with your essay, to:

John Gidley—Education Outreach Coordinator
Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center

gidley@bvcenter.org

The Deadline is Friday December 13th, 2019 at 5:00 PM

First Name:
Last Name:
Grade:
School name:
School Address:
City/Town of residence:
State:
Zip Code:
Teacher’s Name:
Teacher’s school email address:
Name of Parent or Guardian:
Parents email address: