



Michael J. Kotzan Creative Writing Scholarship Award



Michael Kotzan was a proud 2005 graduate of Notre Dame Prep. After attending the James Madison College at MSU, he studied law at the University of Miami Law School, Florida, and became a member of the Illinois Bar in 2012. While practicing law in Chicago, Michael was inspired to expand his writing skills to the creative side. In 2018, he decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue his dream of becoming a Hollywood screenwriter. On June 1, 2021, Michael died suddenly with his dream still in place. This scholarship award is intended to inspire the future creative writers enrolled at NDP.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE MICHAEL J. KOTZAN CREATIVE WRITING SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

- Apply the second semester of your freshman year.
- Application must include a short explanation of the individual's passion for creative writing
- Recommendation from the student's freshman English teacher.
- The creative writing piece along with a signed document stating its originality. The piece will be put through the Turn It In App to verify authenticity.
- The actual work submitted via Google Forms, to Ms. Anderson by June 12.

Prompt for 2026:

History is shaped not only by major events, but by the individuals who lived through them. Choose a real historical event that occurred before the year 1975 (ex. Ancient Egypt, the Civil War, World War II, or the 1960s). Write a historical fiction narrative from the perspective of a fictional or lesser-known individual who experiences this event firsthand. Your story should blend accurate historical details (clothing, technology, food, social rules, major events, etc.) with creative storytelling to show how the event affected daily life, personal choices and the character's future.

In your narrative, be sure to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical context
- Develop a compelling character voice
- Reflect on how the event's impact connects to themes such as courage, resilience, justice or change

CRITERIA:

Creative thought will be THE most important aspect of the entries. Well-developed, interesting characters and a cohesive, engaging plot should be important aspects of your piece. Grammar and spelling also will be taken into consideration, but creativity will be weighed more heavily. A suggested 1,500 minimum to 3,000 maximum words in length.

GUIDELINES/AWARDS:

The student whose entry is awarded the initial \$5,000 for the sophomore year must keep a GPA of B-/80% to be eligible to renew junior and senior years. Students will be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship junior and senior year with a confirmation submission of their best creative piece of work created in their current school year. This piece should show the student's love and growth in creative writing and will be reviewed by the selection committee.

Submit your piece by June 12 for consideration.



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