

Daniel Ashton

2009-2010 Cincinnati Area Mensa Scholarship Essay Contest

2nd Place Winner

Ever since I was young, I have wanted nothing more than to influence the world. Until last year, I had little direction as to how I was going to do that. I have always been gifted in mathematics, participating in and winning various contests; however, I did not believe that mathematics alone was the best way for me to help expand our knowledge of the world. When I was a junior, I realized that I could utilize my mathematical aptitude in another medium: the study of physics.

Until this point in my educational career, I had been unable to enroll in any physics courses. I decided to enroll in A.P. Physics: C at my high school as a junior. This class is reserved for seniors, so recommendations from previous teachers about my capabilities had to be obtained to allow me to take the class. I thrived in the class, attaining an A for the year and perfect marks on both associated Advanced Placement Examinations (Mechanics and Electricity & Magnetism).

My love of this class fostered my love of physics, and my goal is to earn a Ph.D. in physics later in my life. Based on how my academic growth was stunted until my junior year by an abusive parent, I know that I can overcome anything. I achieved a perfect ACT score after recognizing and adapting to this situation. My dedication to maintain stellar marks is also a testament to my determination, as are my perfect scores on the SAT Subject Tests in both Physics and Mathematics. Furthermore, I was able to participate on a JETS Engineering Competition team this past year, winning a Divisional National Championship. My achievements have certainly allowed for a high probability of completing my academic goals. However, I am nowhere near satisfied by simply recounting the laurels and accolades I have realized by age seventeen. I need to accomplish more.

The ideal place for advancement in the field of physics is Stanford University in Palo Alto. Stanford physicists are in a league of their own. Recently, four Stanford faculty in a row won the Nobel Prize in Physics (from 1995 to 1998). If Stanford were a country, then the nineteen Physics Laureates associated with Stanford would tie Stanford for ninth among countries in Nobel Prize count, if the other countries considered all five categories of Nobel Prizes. I was fortunate enough to be admitted to

the Stanford Undergraduate Class of 2014 as an Early Action applicant. Being a part of Stanford Physics will certainly help me attain my goals.

I will succeed in achieving a Ph.D. I have met every challenge that has been presented to me, often relying on my intellect and gritty determination. I have been very fortunate to have been granted gifts that are essential to my area of interest; I will continue to utilize them by engaging in the excellent Undergraduate Research Program at Stanford. My academic goals are now clear to me; I will not acquiesce until I have attained them.