



UK Dow Jones Workshop 2009

Profile of Ashley Jones

By: Scott Hartsfield

Ashley Michelle Jones is a passionate and goal setting 12th grader from a city by the name of Reston, Va. outside of Washington, DC. With three younger brothers and one younger sister, she has to be a positive influence always in their lives.

She has no prior experience with journalism, but she joined this workshop so she could be an overall better writer and also a faster one.

After high school she plans on majoring in global studies plus she is fluent in Spanish so she also may go abroad. One of her big interests is to go into photojournalism, and she has a big advantage since her dad works for the Washington Post where he is a photojournalist and is able to travel around the entire world to do his job.

And one interesting plus strange event that has happened in her life was when she and another friend were doing interviews around their city for a school assignment, and with this particular assignment they had to interview homeless men. One of the men was very corrupt and wild and he tried to chase the girls, so you had two girls running from a homeless man.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

By: Ashley Jones

In the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights it endows American citizens the most essential freedoms; the freedom of religion, speech, press, etc. However, most significantly the freedom of speech. As American citizens we should not take these liberties for granted. These rights are for all citizens, including those in high school. Hence, why are teachers and administrators trying to ignore student rights by means of censorship on high school newspapers? School environments have been continuously placing restrictions on our rights. It's becoming more and more problematic to publish articles without being punished for it, solely for expressing ideas or stories that may be too "controversial."

Acts of censoring the youth should not be seen as acceptable, rather it should be seen as undemocratic and unjustified. The men of our country have fought long and hard for these rights. What would they say if they were to look back on this? Schools should not imitate the ideas of dictatorship, but instead model the democratic beliefs that they so very proudly depict. A student should not feel deprived of rights in a place where you're supposed to feel comfortable. How are we students supposed to feel comfortable in a situation such as this?

The biggest problem with censorship is that all rights in the constitution are not absolute. If a school district feels something is unsuitable, they have the accountability to protect the rights of those who are the majority prior to the rights of those who are minorities. High schools include a range of students between the ages of 14 to 18. The younger children are the ones who should be protected from the contentious topics. High school is supposed to be readying us for the real world, and the real world is contentious. Before long, teenagers will be subjected to this reality. In order for us to grow into experienced and scholarly adults we must be free ourselves.

This is not an argument for those who want to convey contentious topics just for the heck of it. And it's not just so students can publish vulgarities and declare that it's right because they're protected by the 1st Amendment, and they have the freedom to issue scandalous columns that contravene the privacy of other students. This is merely about protection of one's own opinion.

Teachers continuously advise us on how we should learn to form our own opinions and ideas. But when we express this we're put to a halt, just because it may affront or embarrass someone. Rather than implementing unreasonable censorship, teachers and administrators should promote the right to freely express one's self. This teaches students to acknowledge that there are others out there who will disagree with their opinions, but it's something they will have to accept. By reducing the rights of students it's executing more harm than benefit.

In high school government classes we are taught the First Amendment. So why not follow the example? Why is it that we have to desert our rights at school doors?