



UK Dow Jones Workshop 2009

### **Profile of Jessica Borchers**

**By: Ja'Leesa Holman**

Jessica Michael Borchers is proudly entering her senior year at Holmes High School in Covington, Ky. Residing on Scott Street, Jessica lives with her parents and her younger sister, Savannah. In her down time she enjoys listening to music and playing tennis for her school. Jessica likes to challenge herself as she is in the International Baccalaureate program, which allows her to study on a more advanced level.

Upon entering high school, Jessica began to take an interest in journalism as she joined the Holmes High newspaper team. Although the paper only lasted two years, she was able to work her way up to editor-in -chief. "I enjoyed getting my opinion across," she stated about her position at her high school newspaper. She enjoyed being a leader to her peers.

This experience helped her to develop her interest in writing. Toward the end of her junior year, her sophomore English teacher gave her information about the 2009 Dow Jones Workshop. With the encouragement of her family, Jessica took steps toward becoming one of the fourteen participants in the workshop.

She is currently 17 years old and indecisive about her future plans, but she is sure that she would like to further her education and head toward college in the fall of 2010. Even though she has not made definite plans for her future, she knows that her future is promising. She continues to learn and grow as a writer and a person.

## The First Amendment--- Why It's Important, Why It Needs Protection, and How To Protect It?

By: Jessica Michael Borchers

As students in high school we are forced to learn about the government, including the amendments. Sitting in classrooms day after day, wishing the day went by a little quicker, thinking, "Why is this important to me? These are just a bunch of silly rules made by old men who had nothing better to do."

High school students, as a rule, are no better at understanding the importance of these amendments than a child.

That is why teachers stress the amendments so much. (Especially the First Amendment.) Students need to understand that without these amendments, America would not exist as it is today. We wouldn't have any of the freedoms that are expected as we grow up, such as voting or driving or choosing the careers we want.

The First Amendment alone protects five personal freedoms. However, most people only know of two, the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Most believe these are the most important freedoms granted by the amendment, because they protect a person's right to express their opinion without fear of prosecution, however without the rest of the freedoms given to us by this amendment our voices matter not.

Without our right to believe in any religion, or to petition the government, or to peacefully assemble, the rights to free speech or press mean nothing.

According to the University of Connecticut's (UConn) Center for Survey and Analysis, which carried out the research, while 74% strongly agree that Americans should be allowed to express unpopular opinions, only 26% approve of the right to express views in public that might be offensive to religious groups, while 36% strongly disagree. Only 18% strongly agree that it is acceptable to say in public what might be offensive to racial groups, while 46% strongly disagree. (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation)

It's kind of depressing to think that many people do not believe that people should have the right to express their views if it might offend racial or religious groups. However isn't that why the amendment was written...to tell the world your opinion whether or not they want to hear it?

Many high school students admit that they take or have taken the First Amendment for granted. "Kids sometimes don't work as hard because they don't appreciate (the First Amendment)," said Trevor Ivan, a senior newspaper journalism major and public affairs reporter for the Daily Kent Stater. "The First Amendment is a really important issue and it doesn't receive the recognition it deserves," Goodman said. "Democracy can only exist where free speech is protected." (Kent Newsnet.com, Feb. 23, 2007)

Sometimes the First Amendment is put on trial.... LITERALLY! One example of this happened in 1969, in the Tinker v. Des Moines School District case. A small group of students wore black armbands as a way silently to protest the Vietnam War. They were suspended because they refused to take them off. The Supreme Court ruled it a violation of their First Amendment Rights. (Kent Newsnet.com, Feb. 23, 2007)

Teachers are trying harder to inform their students about their rights as citizens of the United States. Some students are at a disadvantage with a little prior knowledge of the First Amendment.

Here's some advice for trying to keep the First Amendment a permanent part of the Bill of Rights. Take advantage of it. If there is an issue that you feel strongly about, voice your opinion. If there is an issue that has two different sides and you're on the pro-side or the against-side, explain why and petition it. Don't let the First Amendment be forsaken any longer...voice out your opinions, because you have the right to do so.