

STEP 04:

Judge the Entries



Judging can be a tricky business. First select an odd number of people (three or five is good) to serve on the judging panel. It's good to have a mix - both men

and women, various ethnicities, different ages. The person in charge of the contest or the one who manages the entries should not be a judge; she or he will have a sense of who the entrants are, which could bias the judging.

All entries should be blinded - no name, age, or address - when they are presented to the judging panel. Both essays and videos should be reviewed and winnowed down to a manageable number - 10 to 15 in each category if you are going to have 5 finalists in each. Judges should work independently, but each judge should read/view all entries, scoring them (1 to 5) in quality. The entries with the highest combined points make it to the semi-finals. Judges can now work as a group, with independent scoring following a discussion of the merits of the entry. Because the finalists will be posted online for a public vote, it is important that their presentations are articulate.

Be sure to take another step *before* deciding on the final five in each category: Talk to them personally. A screening phone call is a very important step. You want to ensure that each person is okay with being a finalist; that each agrees to having his or her entry posted and voted on; and that each is willing to compete nationally and is able to travel to San Diego alone or with a companion in August 2012.

You can also use the screening phone call to assess how individuals might promote their selection as a finalist. Can they harness their friends and families to participate? Are they okay with any other promotion you have planned?

You can decide the number of finalists you select according to the results of this final step in the judging process. Better to have three articulate and enthusiastic finalists than to have four or five including a couple who are lukewarm about the possibility of winning.



Date: Wed, Apr 22, 2009 at 12:49 PM
Subject: A thank-you note!
To: Irene Wairwright

Dear Ms. Wairwright

March 21, 2010

Attn: Cheryl

Louisiana Division/City/ Archives
New Orleans Public Library
219 Loyola Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70112

RE: Obituary of [REDACTED]

Dear Cheryl,

Words cannot express my gratitude in the extra miles that you went in finding my grandfather's obituary. Now I can have the peace of mind knowing that the records will reflect his burial in the cemetery records with my grandmother. Because of your determination, I can know that all is well. I am ordering the monuments for the cemetery to acknowledge and celebrate the life of both my grandmother and grandfather.

I am deeply thankful for your kindness and hard work in finally finding the correct Micro Film transcript.

I enclose my check of \$2.00 for the research document, as well as a \$20.00 donation to the library fund for the Archives Department.

My best wishes to you and your career.

Sincerely,

decisions and people there.
enough place to want to
of references to the Kneel
issue (I have attached a
requested viewing of the
Retreat for the Inmate. The
document and so I didn't
need judged issue...and

searches. Never before
specimen, to finding of
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only were they full of
others as well) to provide
to a graduate who
to a sweat" finding the

experience? Hospitality

please.