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Mount Pleasant HS Junior Wins Civil Liberties Essay Prize

by R. Ben Stone, Executive Director
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(DES MOINES) — The ACLU of Iowa has awarded the Robert Mannheimer Civil Liberties Essay Prize to Anna Miller of Mount Pleasant. The prize, worth \$500, is awarded each year in honor of Des Moines attorney Robert Mannheimer, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 84.

Ms. Miller is the daughter of Bert and Laura Miller of Mount Pleasant and a junior at Mount Pleasant High School. Her essay was chosen from among those submitted from across the state of Iowa by high school students. The theme of this year's contest was: "Which constitutional amendment means the most to you?" Miller chose the Eighth Amendment, which forbids cruel and unusual punishment.

"Anna's essay is impressive because it reveals her deep understanding of how tolerance for torture can quickly erode democracy and ultimately lead to the creation of a dictatorial system," said Ben Stone, ACLU of Iowa Executive Director. "This is an especially important observation in America today," he added.

Ms. Miller, who has earned a 4.0 GPA, is a member of the National Honor Society, and has attended the Junior Scholars Academy and National Scholars Academy through the University of Iowa's Belin-Blank Center. Her musical talents have been displayed



Torture victimizes both the body and the spirit, and is therefore the most direct and enduring manner of stealing one's freedom.

through her participation in the Chamber and Show Choirs, the symphonic and marching bands, and the Southeast Iowa vocal and instrumental ensemble contest. She has been active as a volunteer for the Obama campaign, Rotary Youth, the Iowa Governor's Institute, Kids Against Hunger, Relay for Life and the local community theatre. She is also a lifeguard and has volunteered at Vacation Bible School.

In addition to the financial award, Ms. Miller will receive a one year membership in the ACLU, and her essay will be published in the next edition of the ACLU of Iowa's newsletter, The Defender, due out in June and available on the organization's website at www.aclu-ia.org.

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