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SMDPA Elizabeth Tilley Howland Scholarship Essay

A few nights ago, I was listening to Bing Crosby on my turntable. A truly accomplished musician and actor, Crosby enjoyed a star-studded career, including winning the very first Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1963. While building a career as successful as Crosby's is difficult to accomplish, I am not surprised that he was able to do so. Why am I not surprised? Bing Crosby is a descendent of William Brewster, the senior elder and religious leader of the Plymouth Colony, the colony founded by the Mayflower Pilgrims in 1620. While simply being the descendant of an outstanding figure in history will not guarantee anything, it certainly endows you with the strength of that ancestor. Along with the strength of my ancestors William Brewster and Stephen Hopkins, their values helped to build me into who I am today and are guiding me towards what I hope to achieve.

Tenacity was not hard to come by on the Mayflower or in the Plymouth Colony. This is because of the outstanding character of the Pilgrims who were willing to leave their homes behind in the name of freedom. Sadly, over half of the colonists passed away over the first winter in the Plymouth Colony. Even in the midst of such a large loss of life, the remaining Pilgrims held out and survived, marking the beginning of what would be a landmark in the fight for religious freedom and renewal in the New World. The value the Pilgrims placed on persistence and tenacity is beyond remarkable, and is a true inspiration to me. As I move forward towards a

new way of life in college and adulthood, I am more than willing to accept adversity, knowing that it will only result in my self-improvement and bolstering of my character.

After working hard to survive the first difficult winter in Plymouth, the Pilgrims displayed yet another virtue that has been and will continue to be crucial in my life, and that is cooperation. With the help of the Natives Squanto, Samoset, and Massasoit, the Pilgrims became acquainted with the local natives. The results of these encounters proved invaluable, as the Natives educated the Pilgrims on how to properly prepare the meats from their new surroundings. Not only did they learn to prepare meat, but also to correctly plant and cultivate squash, beans, and corn, which were necessary for a colony that was suffering from malnutrition until that point. While these two communities were initially hesitant of each other, their cooperation planted the seed of our great nation, laying the foundation for a stronghold of freedom. Just as the Natives taught the Pilgrims essential skills, the Pilgrims taught me the value of cooperation. Without cooperation, I could not possibly be living the life I currently am. Using this valuable virtue that the Pilgrims taught me, I will be able receive the help of others while also helping them myself.

Freedom was perhaps the largest influence over the Pilgrims' decision to leave England for the New World. Unsatisfied with the Church of England, the Pilgrims wanted a place to worship freely as Separatists. While some of this freedom was found in the Netherlands, the Pilgrims were without a land in which to preserve their culture and heritage. This resulted in the planning of a voyage to North America on board the Mayflower to form what is now known as the Plymouth Colony. Despite the risks that accompanied the dangerous voyage, the Pilgrims

continued onward. Establishing a colony in this new land allowed the Pilgrims to exercise religious freedom and to worship as they pleased. The Pilgrims made it clear that freedom is indispensable and irreplaceable, which is a belief I share. Freedom has shaped my entire life, from choosing what classes to take in school to how I spend my free time. By promoting freedom in early American history, the Pilgrims made it possible for me to live my life as I see fit. With this freedom, I plan on working to preserve the environment of the outstanding nation and planet we luckily call home, all thanks to our ancestors, the Pilgrims.

As I move on from childhood to adulthood, I will continue to employ the virtues that the Pilgrims held so dearly. Like the Pilgrims, I must always remain tenacious. No matter how many plans I make and how hard I work towards them, they will not always proceed as intended. This is where tenacity and persistence allow me to make the best of my situation, learn from my hardships, and develop into a more well-rounded and prepared individual. Sometimes, those plans will take more strength than I can provide, and I will need to call on others for assistance. Being able to cooperate with others to problem solve in areas like school or the workplace is essential to success on an individual or community level. However, to begin the endeavors I will utilize these virtues in, I must have the freedom to choose my own path. Using the freedom I am guaranteed by the United States, I will work hard to better my community and improve the world for everyone's benefit. As I follow these values, I think back to the prosperity they led the Pilgrims to four hundred years ago and how they are still relevant today. The values of the Pilgrims have been and always will be instrumental aspects of my life.

Resources:

<https://www.billboard.com/music/awards/grammy-hall-of-fame-special-merit-awards-hiatus-exclusive-9632460/>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Brewster>

<https://www.history.com/topics/colonial-america/mayflower-compact>

<https://www.history.com/topics/colonial-america/mayflower#the-mayflower-journey>

<https://www.post-gazette.com/local/south/2010/11/24/Native-Americans-played-crucial-role-in-settlers-survival/stories/201011240253#:~:text=%22The%20Wampanoag%20who%20lived%20in%20Two%20Feather%22%20Tigri%2C%20a%20cultural>

<https://www.history.com/topics/colonial-america/plymouth>
