

Dear Outstanding Young Citizen Award Committee,

This letter is written in enthusiastic support of Kendall Gomez. I had the pleasure of teaching Kendall in my Honors US History class at Oakland Catholic High School. Kendall's passion for learning and her mental toughness are unmatched by most of her peers. I highly recommend her for the Outstanding Young Citizen Award.

I am most proud of Kendall for the courage, self-awareness and ambition she showed in taking, and doing well in, Honors US History. All through freshman year, she struggled in Honors World History and barely managed to get a C. Thinking she was not, in her words, "honors material," Kendall decided to drop down to a lower level History course for sophomore year. Kendall did really well, but instead of being complacent, as many high achieving students in lower level classes can get, and simply using the class as a break from STEM classes perceived to be more important, she was determined to give Honors History a second try. I think her decision says a lot about who she is as a student. She is not afraid of hard work and is willing to push herself.

Kendall's work in Honors US History displayed qualities of perseverance and improvement that closely resembled her trajectory from freshman to junior year. While receiving a C in my class for the first nine weeks, Kendall was willing to acknowledge her mistakes and the areas where she needed to improve. And, instead of becoming discouraged, she worked tirelessly to do better. She got A's for both the 3rd and 4th quarters. Once she fully knew the expectations I had for the class, she was more than willing to reach them.

I should also note that her highest grades occurred while she was playing on the school's softball team, during the second semester. Since she had my class last period of the day, Kendall frequently had to miss for games. Nevertheless, she continued to turn in assignments on time, kept track of content she missed, and took assessments earlier in the day. Her dependability and time management skills were both signs of a level of personal responsibility well above most of my other students.

Much of the reason for the good grades Kendall received in my class can be attributed to the high degree with which she engaged in discussion and debate. She clearly realized that class participation is correlated with test grades. On a daily basis, I could count on her to make two to three quality comments. While being outspoken, Kendall was also an excellent listener. She never dominated the conversation or tried to talk over others. Her comments often built off of or responded to the contributions of her peers.

Please consider this account of Kendall Gomez as a true description of a young woman who has proven to be an outstanding addition to the academic integrity of Oakland Catholic and a positive force in her community. I am confident she would be a worthy recipient of the Outstanding Young Citizen Award. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Williams
Social Studies Teacher
Oakland Catholic High School