

# THE 2019 BERNICE L. FOX CLASSICS WRITING CONTEST

sponsored by The Department of Classics at Monmouth College



## Topic: A Classical “Black Panther”

2018's movie version of the long-running Marvel Comics series *Black Panther* presents a multi-faceted superhero story that is heavily engaged with issues of its day. Your task is to craft a story that has one or more figures from the classical world stepping outside of their comfortable home scenarios to use their particular skills to intervene in some situation in the contemporary world.

Here are some of the main features of the *Black Panther* movie plot. The setting for most of the movie is Wakanda, a technologically-advanced African nation that avoids colonial exploitation of its wealth and natural resources by hiding the true sophistication of its capital city behind a hologram. The movie's main character, T'Challa (who plays the role of Black Panther when



a superhero's intervention is necessary), becomes king of Wakanda when his father is killed in a terrorist explosion. T'Challa's love interest, Nakia, is reluctant to return to idyllic Wakanda because she sees a need for her work among

vulnerable people around the rest of Africa and the world. Much of the reason for Wakanda's advanced status is because of a culture of scientific and engineering innovation, embodied by Shuri, a princess and potential successor to the Black Panther role. Erik Killmonger challenges T'Challa for the kingship so that he can use Wakanda's wealth to aid military struggles against oppression by other African people, and people of African descent, around the world. And the movie ends with T'Challa relaxing Wakanda's isolationism and expressing commitment to share the country's resources and advances with the rest of the world.

Entries for this contest should do the following things:

- feature one or more figures from classical history, mythology, drama, or literature,
- set her/him/them recognizably in her/his/their own “advanced”

### Contest Guidelines

- Entries must be typed, double-spaced, and on 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper.
- Printing on both sides of a page is acceptable.
- No electronic submissions.
- The entry must fit the theme of this year's contest.
- No minimum or maximum length is required.
- The entrant's name and school must not appear on the entry.
- Contestants should place a personal identification code (a *randomly selected* nine-character series) on the top left-hand corner of every page of the entry and on a separate 8-1/2 x 11-inch sheet of paper, which also contains the following information:
  - author's name, date of birth, and personal identification code;
  - school name, address, and phone number; and
  - teacher's name.
- No more than ten entries will be accepted from any individual school, and only one entry per student will be accepted
- Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disqualification.
- All entries must be postmarked no later than March 15th, and mailed to the following address:

Dr. Robert Holschuh Simmons  
Monmouth College  
700 E. Broadway Ave.  
Monmouth, IL 61462.
- All entries become the property of Monmouth College.
- The winner will be announced on or close to April 15th on the contest website.
- Every entrant will receive a certificate of participation from Monmouth College.
- For further information, including a list of previous winners, please consult the contest website (<http://department.monm.edu/classics/Department/FoxContest/>).
- Send any questions to Dr. Simmons at [rsimmons@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:rsimmons@monmouthcollege.edu).

classical context, through frequent, specific, accurate, and appropriate references to events/portrayals from historical or other classical sources,

- and solve/ameliorate a recognizably explained contemporary situation by having her/him/them do one of the following things, or a combination of them:
  - step outside of the classical context to intervene in the contemporary situation in a way that shows her/his/their particular skills and/or her/his/their people's resources,
  - AND/OR stay within that context and work out ways that the "advancement" of the classical figures' skills/resources in their context could benefit the contemporary situation.

### **Contest Parameters and Judging**

Papers will be judged on accuracy to ancient sources, appropriate use of those sources, skillfulness in incorporating these classical scenarios (flavored by *Black Panther*) into the chosen contemporary context, originality, quality of material, thematic development, appropriateness, correctness of English style, and effectiveness of presentation.

This contest is open to any student enrolled full-time in high school (anywhere in the world) during the current school year. An award of **\$250.00** will be given to the author of the best entry written in English on the specified theme. The entry may be a short story, a play, a poem, or an original literary work of any other sort.

### **About Bernice L. Fox and the Contest**

Bernice L. Fox taught courses in English, Latin and Greek at Monmouth College from 1947 to 1981, and served as chair of the Department of Classics from 1970 until her retirement in 1981. Throughout her long and dynamic career, she worked tirelessly to promote the Classics in Illinois high schools and colleges. She is also the author of *Tela Charlottae*, the Latin translation of E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. In 1991, Monmouth College conferred on her the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. She died in 2003.

Dr. Tom Sienkewicz, a 34-year-member of Monmouth's Classics Department, in cooperation with other Monmouth College officials, established this contest in 1985 to honor Ms. Fox, to promote the study of Latin and the Classics in high schools, and to recognize the good work of high school students.