

Applicant's Name: D'Arcy Steiner

Applicant's SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last 4 Digits)

### ESSAY PAGE

#### My Dad / Mom...My Hero

My Dad... My Hero,

I'm my father's only daughter. My Mom is one of my best friends but my Dad is special to me in a different way. Some might say that he has had a hard life, but he has never complained about it. If anything, his life experiences have made him a better and stronger person. He grew up on a very poor farm in Massachusetts and was physically very small for his age all the way through high school. He got picked on a lot as a kid, but that never got him down. In fact, it probably made him much tougher. In spite of having no context of the bigger world, his natural intellect and his innate curiosity seemed to be his natural protection against many of his life's travails. He was a first generation German-American who saw his father, my grandfather, treated very poorly after World War II, because he was a German immigrant. My father could have become very bitter as his father did after decades of discrimination. But he did not.

Instead, he outgrew rural Massachusetts and went to college in Tennessee. He was a notably poor student but, nonetheless, graduated from college thus becoming the first in his family to not only graduate high school but also college! Then, faced with being drafted in 1968 during Vietnam, he had a series of choices to make. He chose to serve his country in the best way that he could. He became a Navy pilot and volunteered to serve in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He finished his Navy service and left active duty but elected to stay in the Navy Reserves, even when the United States was very anti-military. He went to graduate school and became the first in his family to finish a Master's degree. At that point, he probably could have gone into business and made a bunch of money. But he chose a higher calling.

He joined the Federal Service as a civilian and served his country again for a full career. He also stayed in the Navy Reserves for an entire career and continued to do a lot of flying. I think that he made a difference for our

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country and his example of selfless service has made a difference to me. By example and encouragement, he taught me to be fearless, and by doing so, he opened the door to my passion.

As a young teenager, his parents gave him a colt. He trained that horse and rode him for many years. He passed on his love of horses and horseback riding to me, so that today, I am an accomplished horsewoman and seriously considering a career as a veterinarian or equine science researcher. I believe that the challenges that my father has faced throughout his life have made him into a compassionate, erudite and highly respected man. I'm proud that he is my father, even with his totally embarrassing streak of absurd and irreverent humor!