

Matt Daniels

Professor's Name

Course Number – Section

Current Date

An Argument against the Anna Todd Jennings Scholarship

Recently, a dispute has arisen over the “Caucasian-restricted” Anna Todd Jennings scholarship. Anna Jennings died in 1955, and her will established a trust that granted a scholarship of up to \$15,000 for a deserving student. Unfortunately, Jennings, who had certain racist views, limited her scholarship to “Caucasian students.” After much debate with family and friends, I, a white, well-qualified, and definitely deserving student, have decided not to apply for the scholarship. It is my view that despite arguments to the contrary, applying for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship furthers the racist ideas held by its founder.

Most people would agree that racism in any form is an evil that should be opposed. The Anna Todd Jennings scholarship is a subtle but nonetheless dangerous expression of racism. It explicitly discriminates against African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and others. By providing a scholarship for whites only, Anna Jennings frustrates the aspirations of groups who until recently had been virtually kept out of the educational mainstream. On this basis alone, students should refuse to apply and should actively work to encourage the school to challenge the racist provisions of Anna Todd Jennings's will. According to one expert, such challenges have been upheld by the courts: the striking down of a similar clause in the will of the eighteenth century financier Stephen Girard, which limited admission to white male orphans, is just one example.

The school itself must share some blame in this case. Students who applied for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship were unaware of its restrictions. The director of the financial aid office acknowledged that he knew about the racial restrictions of the scholarship but thought that students should have the right to apply anyway. The materials distributed by the financial aid office also gave no indication that the award was limited to Caucasians. Students were required to fill out forms, submit financial statements, and forward transcripts. In addition to this material, all students were told to attach a recent photograph to their application. Little did the applicants know that the sole purpose of this innocuous little picture was to distinguish whites from nonwhites. By keeping the secret the scholarship's restrictions, the school has put students in the position of unwittingly endorsing Anna Jennings's racism. Thus, both the school and the unsuspecting students have been in collusion with the administrators of the Anna Todd Jennings trust.

The question students face is this: What is the best way to deal with the generosity of a racist? A recent edition of the school paper contained several letters saying that students should accept Anna Jennings's scholarship money. One student said, "If we do not take that money and use our education to topple the barriers of prejudice, we are giving the money to those who will use the money in the opposite fashion." This argument, although attractive, is flawed. If an individual accepts a scholarship with racial restrictions, then he or she is actually endorsing the principles behind it. If a student does not want to appear to endorse racism, then he or she should reject the scholarship, even if this action causes hardship or gives adversaries a momentary advantage. To do otherwise is to further the cause of the individual who set up the scholarship. The best way to register a protest is to work to change the requirement for the scholarship and to encourage others not to apply as long as the racial restrictions exist.

Another letter to this newspaper made the point that a number of other restricted scholarships are available at the school and no one seems to question them. For example, one is for the children of veterans, another is for women, and yet another is earmarked for African Americans. Even though these scholarships have restrictions, to assume that all restrictions are the same is to make a hasty generalization. Women, African Americans, and the children of veterans are groups that many believe deserve special treatment. Both women and African Americans, and the children of veterans are groups that many believe deserve special treatment. Both women and African Americans have been discriminated against for years, and, as a result, educational opportunities have been denied them. Earmarking scholarships for them is simply a means of restoring some measure of equality. The children of veterans have been singled out because their parents have performed an extraordinary service for their country. Whites, however, do not fall into either of those categories. Special treatment for them is based solely on race and has nothing to do with any objective standard of need or merit.

I hope that by refusing to apply for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship, I have encouraged other students to think about the issues involved in their own decisions. All of us have a responsibility to ourselves and to society. If we truly believe that racism in all its forms is evil, then we have to make a choice between sacrifice and hypocrisy. Faced with these options, our decision should be clear: accept the loss of funds as an opportunity to explore your values and fight for your principles; if you do, this opportunity is worth far more than any scholarship.

Sentence Outline of Daniels' Argument Using the Classic Method

Thesis: It is my view that despite arguments to the contrary, applying for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship furthers the racist ideas held by its founder.

- I. **Deduction:** Most people would agree that racism in any form is an evil that should be opposed.
- II. **Induction:** The school itself must share some blame in this case.
- III. **Refutation:** The question students face is this: What is the best way to deal with the generosity of a racist? A recent edition of the school paper contained several letters saying that students should accept Anna Jennings's scholarship money.
 - a. One student said, "If we do not take that money and use our education to topple the barriers of prejudice, we are giving the money to those who will use the money in the opposite fashion."
 - b. Another letter to this newspaper made the point that a number of other restricted scholarships are available at the school and no one seems to question them.