

Catholic high school sophomore to recite pledge at GOP convention

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Victoria Blackstone, 15, will briefly steal the spotlight during the first evening of the Republican National Convention Sept. 1. A sophomore at St. Agnes High School in St. Paul, she won the honor of leading convention attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance through a Twin Cities-area essay contest.

Her essay, “Pledging Myself to the Flag of the United States of America,” came from her heart, she said.

When she won the “Wave the Stars and Stripes” essay contest, she said she was excited, but wasn’t sure what to think. However, she said, “As I’m realizing exactly what this means, it’s really, really exciting.”

Victoria is too young to vote in the Nov. 4 election, but she’s proud to support Sen. John McCain of Arizona, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, through reciting the pledge, she said.

“Even though I’m too young to vote, I still have my voice, and it’s nice to be able to use it like I did with my essay,” she said.

She thinks her essay won because of its sincere patriotism, which was nurtured by her parents, she said.

“We have so much to be proud of as Americans,” she said.

A self-described “history nerd,” Victoria wrote an essay containing a litany of images from America’s past – the Founding Fathers signing the Declaration of Independence, African-American slaves’ struggle for freedom, and the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center. When she recites the pledge, she is part of each event, there with the original participants, she wrote.

“When I see our flag, I see every single man and woman who has dedicated their lives to our flag and the people, the ideas and the country it represents,” she wrote.

“With my morning recital of the Pledge of Allegiance, I take my place beside them.”

Victoria hopes to leave the convention with the knowledge of how important having a voice in politics is in her life.

“I’m really looking forward to how awe-inspiring it will be to have all those people looking at me,” she said.