

Samantha Murata, 2019 GLA scholarship recipient
her autobiography, with permission:

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

My name is Samantha Chiye Murata, and I am eighteen years old, I was born on November 12, 2000 to Patrick Tetsuo Murata and Linda Yasue Murata. I am full Japanese American and have grown up in Gardena and Torrance all my life. I attended Hickory Elementary school and Madrona Middle School from Kindergarten to Eighth Grade. I have recently graduated from Torrance High School this past June and will be attending San Diego State University in the fall majoring in History/ European Studies. For years, I have been extremely interested in majoring in History and double minoring in Art and Spanish, and would love to become a professor at the University of Southern California one day. Ever since I was eligible, I have been part of many Japanese organizations and have proudly taken part of several Japanese festivities. For example, I have been part of the Japanese American Basketball Organization and played since I was five as a Sparkler, I was a player in the Sansei Basketball Organization, and have always loved going to Gardena Buddhist Church's Obon every year where majority of my family are members, including my great grandparents who were huge contributors: George and Hidemi Kamikawa. On my free time, I love to take pictures, playing basketball and golf with my friends and family, traveling or taking small road trips, trying new food places, spending quality time with my small but very close family, and I absolutely love to paint and try to practice art in any spare time I have. I have helped out the Japanese community and have volunteered as a coach and scorekeeper in the Double Dribble Youth Basketball Clinic and Lil Hoopsters Youth Basketball Clinic, and have volunteered at small events that Japanese organizations held throughout the years. I plan to continue any contributions I can as an adult just like some of my active family members do now. Although I am not majoring in Asian History, I love Japanese American history, primarily because so many of my ancestors have been part of making the United States a more diverse country, such as initially being immigrants and forced into World War II Internment Camps.

Throughout my life, I have been supported and encouraged immensely by my loving family and friends that have pushed me to pursue my dreams. As I start my next milestone in my life, I want to thank my parents Patrick and Linda, who have supported me and sacrificed endlessly for the last eighteen years and who have made me into the person I am today and my sister for being my best friend. And I owe huge thank you's to all my family, especially those who couldn't be there to see me graduate or be able to go to college for being people that I could always turn to when times were challenging or I needed someone to talk to.