

Robert DeWitt – DoDEA - 2011

Without a doubt in my mind, Washington Week was the best week of my life. After all, how many people can say that they met Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas let alone the President of the United States? However, although the week was filled with excursions to many exciting and prestigious places filled with our nation's top leaders, this was not what made the week for me. What made the week was the 103 other delegates whom I had the pleasure of spending the week with. They are what made this week incredible beyond belief!

They will be the leaders of tomorrow and to have had an opportunity to meet and form friendships with them during that week, can truly not be done anywhere else. I met many senators on the trip, and can say I met Senators such as John Kerry but what is cooler is my being able to say, I met future Senator _____. Although we came from all different backgrounds and walks of life, and each held our own political views as well, we were all able to meet, talk, and become friends. I hope we stay true to that promise amongst ourselves to stay in touch and stay cordial with one another throughout the rest of our lives, although we may be facing one another on opposite sides of the aisle. America needs civility in her politics, we must realize that though we all have views that range across the political spectrum, all of our views share one thing in common: we want what is best for America. In providing such an amazing insight on how Washington D.C. operates, The Hearst Foundation has forged an atmosphere in which tomorrow's leader can collaborate civilly and even friendly, such an investment will surely not only pay dividends for ourselves as individuals, but also for the nation we represent.

As amazing as everyone was, I could not live with myself if I did not mention how extraordinary meeting Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was. His candor and humor caught me completely unaware as well as his willingness, nay eagerness to answer our questions. Given that he granted more time to us, a group of high school students than the Supreme Court does in its trial hearings, spoke volumes on the emphasis he places in our future. As a future public servant myself, I look up greatly to those who selflessly serve our country, and doubt at times whether I will be able to fill in their shoes. His closing remarks put my soul to flight as he mentioned that when the time comes for him to hand the reigns over to us, he knows he will be in good hands. He also mentioned "Everything you're doing is preparing you for something." Although I do not know what that something is just quite yet, I know that I will look back and see that Washington Week was a huge step for me. Thank you to The Hearst Foundations, and thank you to the other 103 delegates, you all were amazing!