

To the JOY judging panel:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation for Alice Scott, a senior at McCallum High School. To be honest, it's actually with a little hesitation. You see, Alice is one of the most gifted writers that I've ever had the pleasure to work with and meet. Honestly, she would probably do a much better job on this letter than I. But I will give it a shot.

Writer. Editor. Photojournalist. Videographer. Leader. Activist. Thespian. Honor student. Award winner. Her resume is a tad intimidating. Seriously, how does she find the time to do all of this? Alice is about as diverse as a journalist could be, and she gives 100 percent to everything she does — heart and brain. And what combination she has.

Most of my personal experience with Alice has been with her writing. This kid can write. Her voice is so distinct and so beautiful. When I was judging the TAJE feature writing write-off contest two years ago, I read Alice's feature, and instantly knew it was hers. There was no name on the paper, no identifying piece of information — except for her words. The way she crafts her story is so unique to her. She captivates you with her heart and then imparts these beautifully woven stories of human experience.

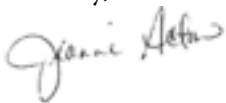
This year, I was lucky enough to see Alice's college essay. She wanted me to edit it and give her feedback. One word. Wow. That's the feedback I had. It was so raw, so powerful. I was in awe — not only of her writing, but also of her strength and love for others.

Alice cares passionately about journalism and wants to make a difference. She already has. From her piece on PBS to her stories in the McCallum newspaper, she is teaching us. Alice is not afraid to share her story, even the painful ones — and I think that's why people share their stories with her. She's authentic and real — we need a few more Alice's in our world.

I don't write many letters of recommendations for high school students, but it is a privilege to write this one. You will not find a better candidate for Journalist of the Year, not in Texas, not in the U.S. Alice has the talent, skills and drive — but most importantly, she has the heart.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions (512) 740.3463.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Acton".

Jeanne Acton
Former ILPC director/UIIL director of journalism