

# SAT II—Korean

## King Sejong Award and Scholarship Owen Wagenhals

Selected for: The King Sejong Award and Scholarship  
Scholarship Status: Awarded

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Translation:

"My name is Owen. I attend Decatur High School where I am a junior. Decatur High School is in the city of Federal Way. Federal Way is a suburb of Seattle.

Federal Way is not an extremely large city, however, there is a significant amount of people. Seattle is located on the United States' West Coast; therefore, there are many Korean people and Americans

of Korean ancestry in this city. Federal Way's population is 20% Korean and Korean-American. This is why there are many Korean restaurants and Korean supermarkets in Federal Way. Before, I had never been to a Korean market, but then I went to Korea and I began liking Korean food. Now I go to Korean restaurants all the time.

My ancestors are German but I do not speak German. I would like to speak German. I decided to take Korean, however, and I like studying it very much. Also, I am studying Spanish (Yes! It's true. I speak Spanish) I like speaking Korean and Spanish very much. I have been to both Korea and Mexico to practice my languages. It was last year that I visited Korea. I spent time in Seoul, Busan and Daegu. The Korean people were very friendly to me. Also I appreciate very much Korean culture and food. I would like to some day work in Korea."

Growing up in suburban Seattle, I was fairly sheltered from the world. When I was younger, I had no idea of a difference between Asians. To me, they were all "Chinese." I remember asking my family: "Why are there so many Chinese people in Federal Way?"

I began to mature and realized that the world was larger than just Washington State. I entered Decatur High School and became very interested in foreign language. Already having excelled in Spanish, I decided to take Korean. I began late in the year; however, the language was so exciting to me that I studied hard and even stood out in this language just as I had in Spanish.

In my second year of Korean, I became the president of Decatur's Korean Club Program. Our club met after school occasionally and we discussed plans of going to Korea. I orchestrated, with the help of other students, fundraisers to help defray the cost of our pricey trip. Overall, the fundraisers helped us pay roughly \$600 of the trip. I was so thrilled about the trip; however, I had no idea how life-changing this trip would be.

On a warm April evening, our group landed in Daegu, Korea and we greeted our friends whom we had met earlier in the year. Throughout the week we had a blast exploring 한국 (Korea) from 대구 (Daegu) to 부산 (Busan) to 안동 (Andong) to 서울 (Seoul).

Every time I spoke with a Korean person, their eyes lit up and they were immediately enamored. The Koreans were so impressed that I had taken the time to learn part of their culture. The fact that Koreans enjoyed my skills makes me exceptionally proud. This is one of the reasons why I continue to learn about the Korean language and culture.

Often times I drive to the Olympia waterfront. The salt air and the waterfront remind me of the time I spent in Busan with my friends. I often reminisce of my experience and I desire to revisit Korea and see again my 한국인 친구들 (Korean friends). I plan to return to Korea in a few years. After graduating from college I plan to teach English in Korea. My dad says that I should go to the American Embassy in Seoul, but I want to try teaching first.

*I chose to write this essay in both Korean and English to illustrate my multi-cultural personality as well as to demonstrate my abilities in the Korean Language.*