

4/1/2026

Dear Scholarship Committee,

I am honored to submit this scholarship application. My name Lillian Polikowsky and I am a student-athlete at Rosemount High School. I am excited to share my experiences in volleyball, academics and my passion for photography.

How Volleyball Impacted my Life

Since I first picked up volleyball at the age of ten, the sport became the lens through which I learned what it truly means to work for something. Season after season, from 9A to JV, I trained through grueling practices, summer camps, and strength conditioning with one singular dream of earning a spot on the high school varsity team. When the day finally came my senior year, I thought the hardest part was over. I was wrong.

When I made varsity, my coach placed me in a position I rarely ever played. This role was new to me so I had a lot to learn. There were games when I never touched the court. I sat on the bench, wondering if anyone noticed how hard I was working in practice. It would have been easy to quit. Instead, I made a decision: my contribution to this team would not be measured in playing time. I became the loudest voice cheering on my teammates and bringing energy when I couldn't bring the points.

Volleyball taught me that grit and resilience are not always glamorous. Grit does not always come with recognition or reward. Sometimes it looks like showing up for something that doesn't show up for you and choosing to stay anyway. That lesson has carried into every area of my life and will continue to carry me through the challenges of college and beyond.

My Education Goals

In the fall, I will begin my academic journey at the University of Kansas, a place I chose not only for its strong academic programs, but for its incredible campus culture and electric sports atmosphere. I plan to pursue a bachelor's degree in Marketing with a minor in Journalism, a combination that perfectly mirrors how I see the world and where I want to go.

Marketing excites me because it sits at the intersection of creativity and strategy which are two things I am deeply drawn to. The journalism minor will sharpen my storytelling instincts and strengthen my eye for what makes a moment worth sharing. Together, these disciplines will equip me to build a career rooted in authentic communication.

Beyond my course work, I have a specific and deeply personal goal. I want to photograph KU sports. Sports photography is where my love of athletics meets my passion for storytelling through images. There is nothing quite like being behind the lens as a game-changing moment unfolds: the raw emotion, the movement, and the story told in a single frame. I want to push my skills as a photographer throughout college and ultimately build my own photography business, using the marketing knowledge I gain at KU to grow and sustain it.

Why I am Deserving of this Scholarship

I believe that I deserve this scholarship because of my strong work ethic in academics and sports. I have shown up time and time again. I do not quit when things get hard. I have sat on a bench when I wanted to be on the court. I have stepped into roles that did not fit the version of myself I had imagined. In everyone of those moments, I chose to stay, to show up and give it everything I had.

I am a student who approaches life with a motto I have come to live by: Don't be afraid to take a different path. In photography, the most powerful images are rarely taken from the obvious angle. The same is true in life. I look for the perspective others overlook: in how I support a team, how to frame a photograph, and how I approach my future.

This scholarship would directly support my ability to pursue both my education at KU and my growth as a photographer. Quality camera equipment, professional editing software, and the tools needed to build a portfolio are real investments that carry real costs. Every contribution moves me closer to a future where I can use my education and my passion to do work that matters. I want to capture moments that people will hold onto forever.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my story and I am committed to honoring any investment made in my future with the same dedication I brought to every practice, every game, and every photograph. Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lillian Polikowsky