

Kerrington Land  
Essay Contest, Division of Elections  
Rivercrest Elementary School  
Bartlett, TN  
Grade: 4

“Winning is great, but if you are really going to do something in life, the secret is learning how to lose...if you can pick up after a crushing defeat and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday.” These words were spoken by native Tennessean Wilma Rudolph at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. Rudolph experienced several defeats throughout her life, but always went on to win again. Rudolph has three great qualities that a leader should possess: determination, dedication, and consideration for others. There have been many great leaders throughout our state’s history - Wilma Rudolph was one of them.

The first leadership quality one should possess is determination. Rudolph was extremely sick as a child and developed polio. Because of this, Rudolph had to wear a leg brace for 6 years. Rudolph exhibited determination by going from the girl who could not walk to becoming an Olympic gold medalist.

The second leadership quality one should possess is dedication. Rudolph exhibited dedication by practicing running every day until she achieved a winning streak at the 1960 Olympics. Apparently, all of her hard work paid off, and Rudolph won the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the 400-meter relay. Wilma Rudolph had become the fastest women on Earth.

The third leadership quality one should possess is consideration for others. Rudolph exhibited consideration for others by assisting kids who were poor. The Wilma Rudolph Foundation provided underprivileged children with a better education and transformed them into athletes as well. Wilma Rudolph not only wanted to be known as an athlete, but also by what she had done for many children.

A leader has to own these qualities, as well as many others. Wilma Rudolph faced adversity, yet she persevered and became the fastest woman in the world. These assets prove that Wilma Rudolph is not only a champion, but one of the greatest leaders in Tennessee's history as well.

## Bibliography

1. Conrad, David. *Stick to It! The Story of Wilma Rudolph*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Compass Point Books, 2003.
2. Parker, Pat. "The Fastest Woman in the World." Highlights for Children, Inc.: Columbus, Ohio, 2015. *CommonLit*, [https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/fastest-woman-in-the-world?search\\_id=7381889](https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/fastest-woman-in-the-world?search_id=7381889). Accessed November 2, 2018.
3. Schraff, Anne. *Wilma Rudolph: The Greatest Woman Sprinter in History*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2004.