



The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program –
“A Constitutional Speech Contest”
Department of New York 2009 Contest Results

For the last three months high school students from all over New York State have been competing in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest”. The program is designed to instill a greater knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States in high school students. Other objectives include the development of leadership, the ability to think and speak clearly and the preparation for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the United States Constitution, giving emphasis to the duties and obligations of a citizen to his/her government. They must also speak on 1 of 4 topics, known as Assigned Topics, picked at random at each contest. Both parts of the contest must be memorized.

On March 14th at the Sand Creek Middle School in Albany, New York, the top five contestants competed for the top honors in the state of New York, and to be awarded the title of New York State American Legion Champion. The scholarships awarded to the five finalists are: 1st Place \$6,000; 2nd Place \$4,000; 3rd Place \$2,500; 4th and 5th Place \$2,000.

Our New York Champion will compete in the National Contest on April 18th and 19th at IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana. The scholarships awarded at the National Contest are: first round participation \$1,500; second round participation but not one of the three finalists another \$1500. The three National Finalists will be competing for scholarships of: 1st Place \$18,000; 2nd Place \$16,000; 3rd Place \$14,000.

The result of the New York State Contest is:

1st Place and the New York State Champion:

Kashyap Rajagopal, Stuyvesant High School, New York County

2nd Place:

Rachel Gellert, Taconic Hills High School, Columbia County

3rd Place:

Irina Denisenko, Staten Island Technical High School, Richmond County

4th & 5th Place:

Seamus Kirst, Corcoran High School, Onondaga County

Eric Hepler, Williamson Central High School, Wayne County

Each of these students should be commended on the content and delivery of their speeches. We encourage more students to become interested in this worthwhile program.