



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congratulations to the 2015 Stark Reading Contest County Final Winners

ORANGE, Texas, April 27, 2015 - The Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation congratulates the winners of the 2015 County Finals of the 111th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. On Sunday, April 26, 2015, students who had previously won first place at the various local level competitions held at each of the five Orange County public high schools competed in the categories of Declamation and Interpretive Reading at the County Finals held at the Lutcher Theater.

Vidor High School's Madison Marino won 1st place in Declamation, while Vincent Hale of Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School won 1st place in Interpretive Reading. Both students received a \$5,000 scholarship for their 1st place awards. For her Declamation, Marino presented the speech *UN Earth Summit* by Severn Suzuki. Hale's reading was *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe.

Second place in Declamation went to Emily Lawrence of Bridge City High School for her delivery of *Arrogance of Power* by Robert C. Byrd. West Orange-Stark High School's Claydra Rhodes took 2nd place in Interpretive Reading with her reading from *Rizpah* by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Each second-place winner received a \$2,500 scholarship. Both first and second-place winners were also presented with plaques.

Walter G. Riedel III, Stark Foundation President and CEO, presented all County Final contestants with commemorative watches, which is a long-held tradition of the Stark Reading Contest.

More than 75 students participated in the school levels of this year's Stark Reading Contest, which is sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation. "The contest was very competitive this year, and we congratulate the county winners, all local level winners, and all finalists for their outstanding accomplishments," said Stark Reading Contest Coordinator, Lindsey Fontenot. "We also thank all participants for their efforts and support. I also want to applaud the work and time of the school directors from the participating schools. The support of Evellyn Elliott (West Orange-Stark H.S.), Ron Chevalier (Orangefield H.S.), Melanie Claybar (Little Cypress-Mauriceville H.S.), Anne Lilyquist (Vidor H.S.) and Kathie Dorman (Bridge City H.S.) are critical in making this program a success."



Vincent Hale (LCMHS) and Madison Marino (VHS) took first place at the County Final of the 2015 Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. Each will receive \$5,000 in scholarship awards.



2015 Stark Reading Contest County Final Winners: Vincent Hale (1st place in Interpretive Reading), Claydra Rhodes (2nd place in Interpretive Reading), Madison Marino (1st place in Declamation) and Emily Lawrence (2nd place in Declamation). Each first-place winner will receive \$5,000 in scholarship awards; second-place winners each receive \$2,500 in scholarship awards.



Contestants in the County Final of the 111th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. From L-R: Chase Slaughter (OHS), Alana Jones (VHS), Ariel Scogin (BCHS), Claydra Rhodes (WOSHS), Vincent Hale (LCMHS), Madison Marino (VHS), Emily Lawrence (BCHS), Grant Anderson (WOSHS), Spencer Johns (LCMHS) and Thanh Tsan(OHS).

For larger or high-resolution images, contact Amanda Adams at aadams@starkfoundation.org.

The Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation is sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation as part of its continuing mission to enrich the community and encourage education. The aim of the Stark Reading Contest is to enhance the literary and forensic quality and skills of the students. The Contest has continued annually since its inception in 1904 and offers educational opportunities and experiences for students at Orange County public high schools.

About the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation The Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation is a private operating foundation established in 1961 to encourage and assist education and to improve and enrich the quality of life in Southeast Texas.

The Stark Foundation seeks to continue the legacy of its founders through the programs of the Stark Museum of Art; The W.H. Stark House; the Frances Ann Lutcher Theater for the Performing Arts; Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center; and the Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. These venues and programs provide the community and region with rich resources and opportunities for study and enjoyment of the art, nature, history and culture as well as for the advancement of education.

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