



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Congratulations to Stark Reading Contest Winners at Orangefield High School

(ORANGE, Texas) – Orangefield High School students Katy Swiere and Jeri Agee earned first place in Declamation and Interpretive Reading, respectively, at the school-level finals of the 112th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation, a scholarship program sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation.

On Thursday, February 25, 2016, Orangefield High School students competed in the local-level contest, which was coordinated by Ron Chevalier, Orangefield High School teacher and school director for the Stark Reading Contest. Katy Swiere won first place in Declamation with *A Left-Handed Commencement Speech* by Ursula K. Le Guin, while Agee won first place in Interpretive Reading with her presentation of an excerpt from *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. Second place in Declamation went to Sable Reynolds, with Scarlett Neely receiving second-place honors in Interpretive Reading.

Chase Slaughter, Orangefield High School's 2015 first place winner in Interpretive Reading, served as the emcee for the Orangefield competition. Ms. Deena VanPelt, Orangefield High School Assistant Principal, presented awards to the 2015-16 school-level contest winners.

Each second-place winner was awarded \$1,500 in scholarships from the Stark Foundation, while the two first-place winners were awarded \$2,000 in scholarships. The first-place winners from West Orange-Stark High School will go on to compete against the first-place winners from other participating Orange County public high schools at the County Final of the Stark Reading Contest, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 24, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at the Lutcher Theater.

The Stark Reading Contest is sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation as part of its continuing mission to enrich the quality of life in the Orange community and encourage education. The aim of the Contest is to enhance the literary and forensic quality and skills of Orange County public high school students. The Contest has continued annually since its inception in 1904, which makes the 2015-16 school year the 112th annual year of the Contest. In addition to offering educational opportunities and experiences for students at eligible Orange County public high schools, participating students may earn scholarship awards for continued education.

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The 2016 winners of the school-level competition held February 25, 2016 at Orangefield High School (Left to Right): Katy Swiere: 1st place, Declamation; Sable Reynolds: 2nd place, Declamation; Jeri Agee: 1st place, Interpretive Reading; Scarlett Neely: 2nd place, Interpretive Reading.

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

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, Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, The W.H. Stark House, and the Frances Ann Lutcher Theater for the Performing Arts, as well as through the Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation, a qualified scholarship program for public

high school students in Orange County, Texas. These venues, programs and activities provide the community and region with rich resources and opportunities for study and enjoyment of the arts, nature, history, and culture as well as literary endeavors.