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Congratulations to 2017 Stark Reading Contest Winners at Vidor High School

(ORANGE, Texas) February 17, 2017 – Vidor High School students Gillian Grant and Johnny Hall earned first place in Declamation and Interpretive Reading, respectively, at the school-level finals of the 113th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation, a scholarship program sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation.

On February 16, 2017, Vidor High School students competed in the local-level contest, which was coordinated by Adam Conrad, Vidor High School teacher and school director for the Stark Reading Contest. Grant won first place in Declamation with Al Gore’s *March to Conquer Cancer Rally* speech, while Hall won first place in Interpretive Reading with his presentation of an excerpt from Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Raven*. Second place in Declamation went to Kassie Daniels, with Haley Downs receiving second-place honors in Interpretive Reading.

Nick Lewis served as the emcee for the Vidor competition. Mr. Travis Maines, Vidor High School Principal, presented awards to the 2016-17 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 Vidor 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 23, 2017 at 2 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 2016-17 school year the 113th 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.



The 2017 winners of the school-level competition held February 16, 2017 at Vidor High School (Left to Right): Johnny Hall: 1st place, Interpretive Reading; Haley Downs: 2nd place, Interpretive Reading; Gillian Grant: 1st place, Declamation; Kassie Daniels: 2nd place, Declamation.

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.