

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congratulations to the 2016 Stark Reading Contest County Final Winners

ORANGE, Texas, April 8, 2015 – The Board of Directors and administrative staff of the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation congratulate the winners of the 2016 County Finals of the 112th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. On Sunday, April 24, 2016, 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.

Bridge City High School's Chelsea Savoy won 1st place in Declamation, while Connor Alexander 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, Savoy presented the speech *On Women's Right to Vote* by Susan B. Anthony. Alexander's reading was *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe.

Second place in Declamation went to Vincent Hale of Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School for his delivery of the *Commencement Address at Stanford University* by Steve Jobs. Vidor High School's Hannah Odom took 2nd place in Interpretive Reading with her reading from *The Glass Castle: A Memoir* by Jeannette Walls. Each second-place winner received a \$2,500 scholarship. Both first and second-place winners were also presented with plaques.

Clyde V. McKee III, Stark Foundation Executive Vice President and CFO, presented all County Final contestants with commemorative watches, which is a long-held tradition of the Stark Reading Contest.

More than 105 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 applaud the work and time of the school directors from the participating schools. The support of Dylan Bennett (West Orange-Stark H.S.), Ron Chevalier (Orangefield H.S.), Melanie Claybar (Little Cypress-Mauriceville H.S.), Adam Conrad (Vidor H.S.) and Kathie Dorman (Bridge City H.S.) is critical in making this program a success."

The aim of the Stark Reading Contest is to enhance the literary and forensic quality and skills of high school students who participate in the contest. The Contest has continued annually since its inception in 1904 and offers educational opportunities and experiences for students at each of the five Orange County public high schools. This year more than 75 students participated in the Stark Reading Contest at the five eligible public high schools of Bridge City, Little Cypress-Mauriceville, Orangefield, Vidor, and West Orange-Stark. Since 2001, nearly 1,800 students have competed in the Stark Reading Contest.

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 and assist education.



Chelsea Savoy (BCHS) and Connor Alexander (LCMHS) took first place at the County Finals of the 2016 Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. Each will receive a \$5,000 scholarship award for the County Finals placement, which is in addition to a prior scholarship award earned at their respective school level contests.



2016 Stark Reading Contest County Finals Winners. From L-R: Vincent Hale (2nd place, Declamation); Chelsea Savoy (1st place, Declamation); Connor Alexander (1st place, Interpretive Reading); and Hannah Odom (2nd place, Interpretive Reading). Each first-place winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship award for their County Finals win; second-place winners each receive a \$2,500 scholarship award.



Contestants in the County Finals of the 112th Miriam Lutcher Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation. From L-R: Nick Lewis (VHS), Katy Swiere (OHS), Avery Harris (BCHS), Jeri Agee (OHS), Tyffani Hinson (WOHS), Olivia Basinger (WOHS), Hannah Odom (VHS), Chelsea Savoy (BCHS), Connor Alexander (LCMHS) and Vincent Hale (LCMHS).

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; 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 provide the community and region with rich resources and opportunities for study and enjoyment of the arts, history and nature.

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Miriam Lutcher
Stark in *Contest*[®]
Reading and Declamation
— ESTABLISHED 1904 —