



2015-2016
The American Legion Department of South Carolina
H. W. Dare Maness
High School Oratorical Scholarship Program



“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

Department Commander
Joe Lysaght

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Oratorical Contest Sub-Committee
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General Information

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Department Scholarships-

All Department Scholarships must be used within five years of graduation from high school

- 1) Quadrant award – Certificate to each winner
- 2) 4th Place award - \$500.00 at \$125.00 per year
- 3) 3rd Place award - \$500.00 at \$125.00 per year
- 4) 2nd Place award - \$1,000.00 at \$250.00 per year
- 5) 1st Place award - \$2,000.00 at \$500.00 per year

National Contest-

Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a **\$1,500 scholarship**. Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional **\$1,500 scholarship** to pursue education at any college or university in the United States.

Scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the final round of the national contest as follows: **1st place - \$18,000; 2nd place - \$16,000; 3rd place - \$14,000.**

A contestant must give both their prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse in order to receive the scholarship.

Rule 1: Eligibility

Eligible participants in the contest shall be **citizens of or lawful permanent residents** of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the national contest (April 15-17, 2016) and who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school) in which the curriculum of said school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program.

High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one post, quadrant and department.

For each contest in which a contestant participates, an entrance/certification blank supplied by the post commander of the local American Legion post and a second portion of such blank to be signed by the high school principal attesting to the fact that the student is a regularly

enrolled member of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades of that particular school will be submitted to the contest chairman. The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

Rule 2: The Prepared Oration

The prepared oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. It must be delivered in the English language.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration, until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

In the prepared oration, as well as in the assigned top discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. The singing of a song(s) is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant. The contestant may, however, quote a verse (s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.

The penalty for plagiarism will be disqualification.

Rule 3: Assigned Topic

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States, selected from Articles and Sections as listed under assigned topics for the current year's contest in this brochure.

All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It is to be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in the English language.

Rule 4: Assigned Topics for 2015-2016

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Amendment 8: Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment 26: Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Article 1 Section 9 Paragraph 2: The privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

Article 1 Section 6 Clause 1: The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

Rule 5: Dress

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is to be worn by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.

Rule 6: Travel

Expenses of entrants must be borne by the sponsoring American Legion post in the quadrant and state contests. The national organization of The American Legion will pay travel costs of the department winner and their chaperone to the national competition. The department winner must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age.

Rule 7: TV and Radio

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as KINESCOPES, FILMING OR OTHER TYPES OF MEDIA FOR LATER SHOWING, provided:

1. The American Legion is in no way obligated financially.
2. Satisfactory arrangements are made in advance with the contest official.
3. The lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants.
4. The filming or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the pre-announced scheduled time of contest.
5. The normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium.

Rule 8: Contest Regulations

As the program is of an educational nature, participating posts are urged to open the contest to the general public without admission charges and without the conducting of any sales offer or fund raising program in connection with such contest. The name of the contestants may be released to the press for publicity purposes in advance of the contest, but the release of photographs or interviews in advance of the contest is not permitted.

All contestants must be prepared to deliver their written oration in duplicate to the chairman or judges upon call. These will be returned except in the case of winners. Substitutions for disqualified contestants or contestants unable to compete for any reason are not permissible.

A drawing shall be held by the official in charge of the contest to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's prepared oration immediately after introducing him/her as contestant No. 1, contestant No. 2, etc. The chairman will request the audience to refrain from applause until the judges have made their decision.

It is assumed that all contests will be conducted in auditoriums having a stage or platform from which contestants will speak; however, the use of notes, amplification, lectern, or speaker's stand is NOT permitted. Props are NOT permitted. **Prompting in any manner will disqualify the contestant in the state finals. Prompting can be permitted in contests below the state level.** The use of any type of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment in any form by contestants or members of the audience is prohibited.

Contestants shall speak in order of drawing. For the prepared oration, each contestant shall speak for at least eight (8) minutes, but not more than ten (10) minutes and for the assigned topic discourse, not less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes.

In post contests, judges shall render their decision after the delivery of prepared orations. In all other contests, after the delivery of prepared orations, the following shall govern:

Immediately prior to the delivery of the last contestant's prepared oration, a card upon which will be written the actual words of the topic upon which all contestants will base the assigned topic discourse, will be drawn by some individual designated by the chairman, but will not be made known at this time to the contestants or audience members.

Contestants are required to remain in a private room where the discourse of the other speakers cannot be heard until it is their turn to speak (contestants will be under the supervision of an individual appointed by the chairman). As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they must return to a soundproof waiting room. As each speaker concludes his/her assigned topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement and must be escorted to a private holding area.

Approximately five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant number one will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic discourse and shall be permitted to retire to privacy, under the direction of an individual appointed by the chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text matter or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order in which he/she previously appeared. He/she shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the assigned topic discourse and shall then be escorted to privacy in the manner as provided for contestant number one.

The chairman will be expected to introduce each contestant by name after the judges have surrendered their score cards and before the winner is announced. Public announcement of the first place winner only shall be made in the post contest. The winner and first runner-up will be announced at the quadrant contests and at the state contest.

No deviation is allowed in rules and regulations without consent of the state chairman.

Rule 9: Judges

The judges are a very integral part of the oratorical Contest. Their qualifications are considered carefully as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the program which results in the selection of a national champion. Good judgment will be exercised to select a well rounded group of judges and the chairman should provide such judges with a copy of the rules well in advance.

Arrangements for judges will be made by the chairman of each contest. Post contests shall require the services of not fewer than three (3) or more than five (5) judges. Quadrant and department contests shall require the services of five (5) judges. Judges' names should not be made public until the conclusion of the contest. During the contest, the judges shall be seated in different locations in the auditorium, and each judge shall render their final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person.

Judges will be advised that a lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse on the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of ten (10) points for failure to speak on the Constitution.

Following the last assigned topic discourse the judges, timekeeper, tabulators and the contest chairman may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation. **THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL.**

Rule 10: Tabulators

The contest chairman will appoint no less than two (2) tabulators at the post contest and three (3) tabulators for the quadrant and department contests. It will be their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before they are submitted for final tabulations.

Chairperson, judges, tabulators, commanders and other contest officials are not permitted to divulge judges' to anyone at the site of the contest. The judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion, Department of South Carolina Headquarters.

Rule 11: Timing

An official timer shall be named by the chairman whose duty it shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant, and he shall be located on the main floor in full view of the contestants. The timekeeper shall begin timing each contestant at the start of the prepared oration. The timer should be equipped with a stop watch and time cards carrying the figures 8, 9 and 10. These cards should be large enough so as to be easily seen by the contestants and when eight minutes have been used, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be held up followed by 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing the figures 3, 4, and 5 during the assigned topic discourse in the quadrant and state contests. The contest chairman shall announce the time consumed by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse immediately after each contestant speaks for the benefit of the judges.

The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point will be deducted for each minute or fraction thereof – over or under the allotted time – shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

Rule 12: Judging Criteria:

Official score cards will be furnished by the chairman and will be used in all contests. A division will be made on the score card for the maximum number of points each contestant may score for the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse. The manner of scoring and selecting the winner in all contests shall conform to the point schedule shown on the score card. In post contests it will not be possible to score a breakdown between prepared and assigned topic orations. In this case, the total points will be used as a basis for perfection of the prepared oration alone. Prior to the contest, each judge should have the opportunity to study carefully the criteria for scoring the presentation of the prepared oration and assigned topic discourse by each contestant, the content of oration, and speaking skills. The following items should be considered (see listing of point values on the furnished official score card).

A. CONTENT

1. Originality, freshness, directness, application of knowledge to topic (16 pts)
Original fresh approach to topic.
Relevancy to subject.
Information flow to audience.
Speaker stays on topic.
Originality of "assigned topic" speech
2. Skill in selecting examples, description, analogies, specific data (16 pts)
Examples applicable, relevant
Illustrations related to subject
Adequate information on examples
Proper credit to quotations or borrowed subject matter
Utilization of specific data
3. Logic (correctness of inference) (16 pts)
4. Comprehensiveness of knowledge of subject matter (22 pts)
Plagiarism?
Speaker's grasp of subject
Unity of thought or thoughts
Topic significance
Overall impression compared to component parts
Discussion value of "assigned topic" speech
Informational and educational to audience

B. SPEAKING SKILLS

1. Voice and diction. (10 pts)
Utilization of proper inflection

Is speaker easily understood?
Proper voice volume for physical conditions
Articulation
Enunciation
Pronunciation

2. Style: language use, word arrangement, transition, word selection. (10 pts)
Appropriate language use
Succinct sentences
Ease of interpretation. Grammar
Extraneous clauses or phrases?
Smooth, continuous transition of sentences, paragraphs
Speech structure: introduction, main body, summary or conclusion
3. Body action: poise, eye contact, posture, gestures (10 pts)
Is speaker at ease while speaking?
Establish eye contact.
Alert nature of posture.
Is speaker too dramatic?

Rule 13: Post and Quadrant Contests

POST CONTESTS must be concluded by January 23, 2016. Participants in post contests may be drawn from one or more high schools in the post area. This contest will be under the direction and supervision of the post commander or representative. Each contestant in post contests shall present a prepared oration of not less than 8 or more than 10 minutes and such oration must be without the aid of notes, and the original effort of each contestant. Immediately upon conclusion of the post contest, the post commander shall certify the winner to their district commander. District commanders will forward results to the respective vice commander.

All QUADRANT CONTESTS will be held FEBRUARY 20, 2016. NO exceptions will be allowed (unless there is inclement weather).

All post winners will participate in their respective quadrants. In quadrant contests and the state finals, each contestant shall present the prepared oration and in addition will be required to speak on one of the assigned topics drawn, for not less than 3 or more than 5 minutes. This contest will be under the direction and supervision of the Vice commanders, who will coordinate and plan the quadrant contest with the assistance of the District Commanders and the Department Oratorical Contest Committee.

Quadrant winners must be reported to Department Headquarters immediately following the Quadrant contest.

Rule 14: State Contest

The state contest will be held on March 12, 2016 10:00 a.m., The American Legion Department of South Carolina, 103 Legion Plaza Road, Columbia, SC 29210. If using mapquest or GPS, please enter 3512 Bush River Road, Columbia, SC 29210 which was our former address. (The committee reserves the right to change the date and place).

Rule 15: National Contest

Quarter-final and semi-final contests will be held Saturday, April 16, 2016. The championship contest will be held Sunday, April 17, 2016.

If further information is needed, contact the following:

CHAIRMAN:
Roberta Poulos
843-645-4141 or
630-632-2688
rcpoulos@msn.com

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS
The American Legion Department of South Carolina
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dept.programs@sc.twcbc.com

PREVIOUS WINNERS

* National Winner

** National Runner-Up

1939*	Fletcher Padgett, Jr.	Saluda	1978	Francis J. Rivers	Rock Hill
1940	Wade Weatherford	Florence	1979	John J. Hearn	Rock Hill
1941	Carolyn Collier	Spartanburg	1980	John P. Roddey	Rock Hill
1942	James L. Walker	Johnston	1981	Richard S. Lackland	West Columbia
1943	Allen Watson	Ware Shoals	1982	Emmette J. Saleeby	Dillon
1944	Freddie Bolonkin	Greenville	1983	Sally Boatwright	Columbia
1945	James Gowen	Greenville	1984	Jeffrey S. Singleton	Florence
1946	Tom Kay	Anderson	1985	Wanda McGuirt	Columbia
1947	John D. Long, III	Union	1986	David W. Garrison	Orangeburg
1948	Jane Gerard	Charleston	1987	David W. Garrison	Orangeburg
1949	Richard Garland	Mt. Pleasant	1988	Elizabeth Overcamp	Seneca
1950	Eugene Brantley	Chester	1989	Danielle P. Williams	Summerville
1951	Herma Hill	Lancaster	1990	Melanie Page	Seneca
1952	Charles King	Easley	1991**	Melanie Page	Seneca
1953	Tedi Hoke	Blacksburg	1992	Melissa Suarez	Seneca
1954	Norman F. McLeod	Dalzell	1993	Warren Bazemore	Irmo
1955	Nathan Saint-Armand	Gaffney	1994	Warren Bazemore	Irmo
1956	Broxie Nelson	Chester	1995**	Whitney Jackson	Seneca
1957	Michael Sheheen	Camden	1996	Julia Brackett	Fort Mill
1958	Mike Stein	Greenville	1997	Katherine Overcamp	Seneca
1959	Mike Stein	Greenville	1998**	Amanda Jill Bryant	Anderson
1960	John P. Callahan	Lexington	1999	Julie Moore	Anderson
1961	Jeanette N. Wall	Moncks Corner	2000	Jamie D. Frazier	Moncks Corner
1962	Arthur B. Hartzog	Blackville	2001	Jamie D. Frazier	Moncks Corner
1963	Frank G. Dunn	Conway	2002	Jamie D. Frazier	Moncks Corner
1964	Richard Allen Poole	Lexington	2003	Irene Smith	Summerville
1965	Richard E. Johnson	Nesmith	2004	Jared T. O. Gorham	York
1966	Violet Harrington	Florence	2005	Andrew C. Cooper	Beaufort
1967	Johnathan S. Crowe	Rock Hill	2006	Sarah H. Newman	Camden
1968	Leon Dale Gilbert	Rock Hill	2007	Andrew McCumber	Anderson
1969	Edward H. Smith	Lancaster	2008	Anna Lynn Doster	Camden
1970	George M. Hearn, Jr.	Rock Hill	2009	Lauren Kumler	Greenville
1971	Gerald Caskey	Lancaster	2010*	Victoria Beth Black	Iva
1972*	Thomas W. Joiner	Rock Hill	2011	Joshua Arnold	Seneca
1973	Michael P. Flanagan	York	2012	no contest held	
1974	William E. Spears, III	Beaufort	2013	Elizabeth Scannell	Goose Creek
1975	William E. Spears, III	Beaufort	2014	Sarah Jean Foster	Goose Creek
1976	Virginia Inman	Greenville	2015	Victoria Nwankudu	Florence
1977	Francis J. Rivers	Rock Hill			

