

**From:** March, Joseph H.  
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**Subject:** News Release: Iva, S.C. juniors wins American Legion Oratorical Contest

Attachments:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***Iva, S.C. Junior Sweeps to Victory, Earns \$18K Scholarship in American Legion Oratorical Contest***

INDIANAPOLIS (April 11, 2010) - A high school junior from Iva, S.C., capped a busy weekend of competition in Indianapolis by earning an \$18,000 college scholarship and first place in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program - "A Constitutional Speech Contest." Her winning oration was titled "A Rising Sun."

Tori Beth Black, who is home-schooled, started the weekend as one of 53 state or territorial champions in the 73rd annual contest. She advanced to the championship through three rounds of intense competition.

Elizabeth Blessing, another home-schooled student from Auburn, Ala., earned a \$16,000 college scholarship with a second place finish, while Brooke Connor, of Bridport, Vt., earned a \$14,000 scholarship and finished third. The scholarships account for a small portion of the roughly \$3.5 million in post-secondary scholarships that The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization, awards annually.

In her speech, Black praised the Constitution as "the result of honor, freedom and integrity. She saluted the veterans who fought to defend it. "Because of the brave men that fought and died for these freedoms, we have a successful government and relevant Constitution that we follow to this day"

Black added that days of debate and discussion preceded the writing of the document. "If the Constitution was passed, then a Bill of Rights would immediately follow to ensure that the rights of the people were indeed protected. Thus, the very purpose of the Constitution was and is to protect the rights of the people while keeping the government in check and limited."

She concluded by reminding citizens that they have a duty to safeguard the Constitution. "As the citizens of the greatest nation in the world, we have seen the rays of this rising sun beam upon us. And in fulfilling our duty, upholding our rights, we have the opportunity to gaze upon this shining sun for years and years to come."

In each round of the weekend competition, orators delivered a rehearsed 8- to 10-minute address and a randomly assigned 3- to 5-minute oration on a constitutional topic, each without the benefit of notes and in front of a live audience, including the judges. The 2.5-million member American Legion developed the contest to encourage young people to improve their communications skills and to study the U.S. Constitution.

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