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Date: 4/21/2013 12:00:59 PM
Subject: Kansas City Youth Wins American Legion Oratorical Contest

The American Legion

For God and country

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kansas City Youth Sweeps to Victory, Earns \$18K Scholarship in American Legion Oratorical Contest

INDIANAPOLIS (April 21, 2013) – A senior from Oak Park High School in Kansas City, Mo., 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 “Let’s Talk About Pennsylvania.”

Agnes Rieger started the weekend as one of 53 state or territorial champions in the 76th annual contest. She advanced to the championship through three rounds of intense competition.

Elizabeth Scannell, a high school senior from Goose Creek, S.C., earned a \$16,000 college scholarship with a second place finish, while Rachel Schartz of Humboldt, S.D. earned a \$14,000 scholarship and finished third. The scholarships account for a small portion of post-secondary scholarships that The American Legion, the nation’s largest veterans organization, awards annually.

In her prepared oration, Rieger pointed out that Pennsylvania was misspelled above one of the signatures on our nation’s founding document but it’s the overall message of the Constitution rather than the alternate spelling of a state that is important. She cited studies that revealed, “62 percent of respondents failed to name the branches of our government” and “only 5 percent of the American population could correctly answer 10 simple questions about our Constitution – a pathetic cry for help.”

She implored Americans to study the Constitution so they could impact current issues. “The amount of laws that are currently being debated over for their constitutionality is high: bargaining laws, voter-ID laws, immigration bills, gun control and the Affordable Care Act, to name a few. We can’t be engaged in these important conversations if we don’t know our constitution. Instead, we leave our government in the hands of others, and we exclude ourselves from developing the future of our great nation.”

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 2.4-million member American Legion developed the contest to encourage young people to improve their communications skills and to study the U.S. Constitution. More than \$3 million in scholarships have been awarded over the history of the contest.

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