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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chesterfield, Mo. High School Senior Sweeps to Victory,

Earns $18K Scholarship in American Legion Oratorical Contest

INDIANAPOLIS (April 17, 2011) – A high school senior from Chesterfield, 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 "One Parent: The Constitution."

Anisha Gururaj, who attends Parkway Central High School, started the weekend as one of 53 state or territorial champions in the 74th annual contest. She advanced to the championship through three rounds of intense competition.

Grace Marie Pyo, a high school senior from Powell, Ohio, earned a $16,000 college scholarship with a second place finish, while Anastasia Kaiser, of Orinda, Calif., 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 prepared oration, Gururaj compared the United States to a giant family, with the Constitution being the parent. "But a family cannot run simply on love and protection; a family needs every one of its units, every one of you, to stand up for it, take part in it, and win the physical and moral battles for its prosperity. And the parent of this home, the document which protects us and demands responsibility within us, is none other than the United States Constitution."

Gururaj mentioned 9-year-old Tucson shooting victim Christina Green as someone who died which performing a responsibility to this country. "Each of us in this room and throughout this land owe it to our Constitution, to our home, this country, to each other, and to the victims of this tragedy and many others, to not only feel our own rights are protected by the Constitution, but to responsibly protect the rights of others. For they are one and the same."

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. The American Legion has awarded more than $3 million

in scholarships over the history of the program.

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