

Press Release
May 1, 2019

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Albemarle and Greene County School Students Took Home Honors at Virginia History Day Massive History Contest Hosted by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Richmond, VA — On Saturday, April 27, Virginia students from across the Commonwealth competed during Virginia History Day at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) for the chance to advance to the National History Day Contest at the University of Maryland, College Park, this June. In response to this year's theme, "Triumph and Tragedy in History," students as individuals or groups created historical research projects in the form of either a paper, documentary, performance, exhibit, or website. After months of research, preparation, and regional competitions, the results are now in.

Many Virginia students started their historical research last fall, selecting a topic related to the theme and gathering primary and secondary resources. While they could choose a topic from any time period or geographic region, many classroom teachers asked students to find one related to their coursework. Over 8,000 Virginia students in grades six through twelve participated in this year's History Day in their classrooms and some went on to compete in regional contests held at Emory & Henry College, Central Virginia Community College, Radford University, UVA Curry School of Education, Mount Vernon High School in Fairfax County, Virginia Wesleyan University, and John Tyler Community College. These district contests were judged by college professors, museum professionals, and other educators and provided students the chance to present their research to a new audience. First- and second-place winners at the district level advanced to compete at the state competition held at VMHC.

On [Virginia History Day](#), VMHC welcomed more than 700 students, teachers, and family members from every region of Virginia. With 169 projects submitted by 280 students, it was the largest state contest in years. More than seventy volunteer judges interviewed students about their research and historical interpretation. While the judges deliberated, contestants, teachers, and families explored the museum galleries with a scavenger hunt, created a mural mosaic, competed in a trivia contest, enjoyed lunch from food trucks, and viewed other students' projects. Virginia's Secretary of Education Atif Qarni gave a rousing keynote address at the awards ceremony, and VMHC President and CEO Jamie O. Bosket presented the awards. The Virginia History Day Cup award went to two schools that tied for the most History Day participation at the classroom level: Western Albemarle High School in Albemarle County and Blacksburg New School. To advance past the state level, students needed to place first or second in their project division and category (Senior Group Website, Junior Individual Exhibit, etc.). Every year, thirty-six projects make the cut.

Albemarle County and Greene County schools had a particularly successful day. On top of tying for the Virginia History Day Cup, Western Albemarle High School's teacher Elizabeth Mulcahy received the Brenton S. Halsey Teaching Excellence Award (a \$500 prize) and was nominated for the 2019 Hannah E. (Liz) MacGregor Teacher Award from National History Day, which carries a \$5,000 award and will be announced at the national contest in June. Her student, Isabelle Jordan, took first place for her Senior Individual Documentary, "Charlottesville: Democracy, Diversity and the Paradoxical Legacy of Thomas Jefferson." Ms. Jordan, an 11th grader, also received the Changemakers in Virginia History Award (a \$100 prize), sponsored by the 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, for the senior project that best highlighted a Virginian who changed the course of history for the better. Three other projects from Western Albemarle received second place awards for Senior Individual Website (Ineke La Fleur), Senior Group Website (Caroline Jones, Amber Parker, and Nina Perrone), and Senior Group Performance (Lexie Farris and Natalia Ferris). All these students will compete again at the National Contest in June as will Jamie Kwon, a 6th grader at Mortimer Y. Sutherland Middle School. She received second place for her Junior Individual Exhibit on Yu Gwan Sun in 1919. Four Sutherland eighth graders,

Sienna Collier, Evelyn Czirjak, Leah DeBerardinis, and Qiming Fu, also supported by Diana McCullough, received third place for their Junior Group Performance.

Greene County's Ashley Cortez, a 7th grader at William Monroe Middle School (WMMS), brought home first place for her Junior Individual Performance, "Separate, But Unequal: Barbara John's Fight for Equality." Ms. Cortez had also received first place at the regional contest as well as the Local History Award sponsored by the Charles Fund, Inc. On Saturday, her classmate, Helen Nitzsche, took second place in the same category with her performance on Marie Curie. Both young women are coached by WMMS's Stephanie Hammer, a veteran NHD teacher who also sponsored Vinton Bruton, a 9th grader at WMMS. Mr. Bruton's Senior Individual Documentary received a third place award for his project on the triumph and tragedy of nitroglycerin.

We wish all sixty-three Virginia History Day student winners good luck as they head to Maryland, June 9 through 13, to compete against more than 3,000 students from around the world.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard in Richmond's Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call 804.340.1800, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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