



NATIONAL
SHAKESPEARE
COMPETITION

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38th English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition hosts second ever virtual competition Naming San Diego student champion

April 26, 2020 — New York City: Adapting to the ever changing circumstances brought on by the global pandemic, the English-Speaking Union (ESU) hosted the 38th annual National Shakespeare Competition virtually for the second time ever.

This year's competition utilized Zoom, YouTube, text-to-vote, among other virtual technologies to bring the competition alive. The virtual platform enabled hundreds of students, schools, and spectators alike to tune in across the world.



Delilah Delgado of the ESU San Diego Branch won 1st Place with her quick witted and thorough renditions of Phoebe from *As You Like It*, and Sonnet 62. Due to Covid, her prize will be finalized at a later time.

Her teacher, Samantha Howard of the Bishop's School will receive the \$1000 Teacher Recognition Award, being the second such award recipient, since the award's founding last year.

Anna Sheehan of the ESU Boston Branch took 2nd Place with her captivating interpretations of Robin from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Sonnet 2. Due to Covid, Anna's prize will be finalized at a later time.

Her teacher, Barbara Whitlock of Montrose School will receive the \$500 Teacher Recognition Award.



Samuel Christian of the ESU Los Angeles Branch won 3rd place for his stirring rendition of Aaron from *Titus Andronicus* and Sonnet 23. Samuel will take home the third place prize of \$1000.

His teacher, Elizabeth Dennehy of Los Angeles County High School for the Arts will receive the \$250 Teacher Recognition Award.

For the second year, the People's Choice Award was integrated into the competition. Instituted to foster a sense of community in the absence of a physical competition during last year's first remote competition, the People's Choice Award has been a popular outlet for students to support each other.

The recipient of the \$1,000 prize, Spencer Morvillo of the Monmouth County Branch, student of Smita Ganatra at Glen Ridge High School received 487 votes. Over 6,000 people voted from around the world, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Ghana, and China, expanding the competition's community despite the pandemic.

Joining the winners in the final round of competition were Madeleine McKenney of the Cleveland Branch, Eli Carasso of Desert/Palm Springs Branch, Tyler Caro of the Hawaii Branch, Aliyah Pullin of the Kansas City Branch, Quinn Fitzgerald of the Kentucky Branch, Natalie Quintana of the Miami Branch, and Edme Guetschow of the Portland Branch.

Renowned members of the theater community judged the finalists' performances, including Dana Ivey, a 5 time Tony nominee and star of the Broadway stage and screen; Dakin Matthews, an award-winning playwright and star of Broadway's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Eunice Roberts, acclaimed performer, playwright and Dean of BADA; Sara Enloe, NEH Fellow, 2003 Teacher of the Year, and Director of Education at the American Shakespeare Center; and Katey Parker, New York City High School teacher, 2020 New York City ESU TLab Scholar and 2001 National Shakespeare Competition 1st Place Winner.

More than 16,000 high school students, 2,000 teachers and 39 ESU Branches competed at the school, regional and national levels by performing a monologue and sonnet to demonstrate their understanding and ability to convey the meaning of their selected texts. The competition has been recognized by the Globe Center, the Children's Theatre Foundation of America and the American Academy of Achievement.

For additional information regarding the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition, please visit www.shakespearecompetition.org. Founded in 1920 and headquartered in New York City, the English-Speaking Union (ESU) is a national organization with more than 55 branches and affiliated with a network of more than 50 ESUs around the world.

The ESU, a privately funded 501c-3 organization, also serves more than 60,000 teachers, students, volunteers and immigrants across the US with programs such as the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC) and English in Action Conversations. The ESU also sponsors educational programs such as the Luard Morse Scholarships for HBCU students, Middle School Debate Leagues, the Secondary School Exchange Program and the TLab: Teachers Learn Abroad Scholarship program.

For additional information about The English-Speaking Union, please visit www.esuus.org.