



VFW Announces 2009-2010 National Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen Essay Contest Winners

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. —The winners of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary sponsored Voice of Democracy (VOD) audio-essay competition and the Patriots Pen essay competition were announced late yesterday afternoon during the VFW National Legislative/Voice of Democracy/Senior Vice Commander Meeting Washington D.C.

The VOD program celebrated its 63rd year with this year's theme, "Does America Still Have Heroes?" The first place winner, Madison Mullen, sponsored by Post 3297 out of Delaware, Ohio, received an all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C., where she was presented with the T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship award in the amount of \$30,000. The 2nd place winner, Anthony Zendejas IV, sponsored by Post 239 out of Bremerton, Washington, received the \$16,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship Award. The 3rd place winner, Lena Savell, sponsored by Post 12057 out of San Juan, Puerto Rico, received the \$10,000 VFW Scholarship Award. All other state winners received at least a \$1,000 college scholarship. Just over 50,000 students participated in this year's competition.

[Read Madison Mullen's award winning essay](#)
[Watch Madison deliver her essay on-demand at vfw.org](#).
[See list of all winners.](#)

The Patriot's Pen program is designed to foster patriotism by allowing students the opportunity to express their opinions on democracy based on an annual theme, this year's being, "When is the Right Time to Honor Our Military Heroes?" The first place winner, Abigail Barnard, sponsored by Post 7385 out of Mesquite, Nevada, received an all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C., where she received a \$10,000 savings bond and trophy during a special luncheon. The 2nd place winner, Nora Faris, sponsored by Post 5649 out of Concordia, Missouri, will receive an \$8,000 savings bond and glass plaque. The 3rd place winner, Ariela Rivkin sponsored by Post 1429 out of Teaneck, New Jersey, will receive a \$7,000 savings bond and glass plaque. Wood plaques will be sent to all of the sponsoring Post's Department headquarters for presentation during their respective Department Convention or other appropriate ceremony. A total of 109,465 students participated in this

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

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