

VFW Announces Top Youth Scholarship Winners

Angels Camp, Calif., student awarded top \$30,000 scholarship prize

Feb 28, 2017

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliary proudly announced the national winners of its annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen youth scholarship competitions, live during last night’s 2017 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.



Photo Caption: (Left) VFW National Commander Brian Duffy and VFW Auxiliary President Colette Bishop present Savannah Wittman with her \$30,000 award; (right) VFW National Commander Brian Duffy and VFW Auxiliary President Colette Bishop present Lindi Compton with her \$5,000 award.

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Enacted in 1947, the 2016-17 Voice of Democracy program's theme asked students to describe "My Responsibility to America." The first-place winner, Savannah Wittman, sponsored by VFW Post 12118 and its Auxiliary in Copperopolis, Calif., 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.

[Read Savannah's award-winning essay](#), or [watch her](#) deliver her essay on-demand. [See the complete list of 2017 winners](#).

Second-place Voice of Democracy winner Colton Ramsey, sponsored by VFW Post 10076 in Mount Airy, Md., received the \$16,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship award. The third-place winner, Katherine Fastabend, sponsored by VFW Post 63 and its Auxiliary in Boise, Idaho, received the \$10,000 VFW Scholarship award. All other state winners received at least a \$1,000 college scholarship. More than 38,000 students participate in the competition each year.

Enacted in 1995, the Patriot's Pen program is designed to foster patriotism by allowing students the opportunity to express their opinions on a patriotic theme, this year's being, "The America I Believe In." First-place winner Lindi Compton, sponsored by VFW Post 5813 and its Auxiliary in Greensburg, Ky., received an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., where she accepted a \$5,000 award.

[Read Lindi's award-winning essay](#), or [watch her](#) deliver her essay on-demand. [See the complete list of 2017 winners](#).

The second-place winner, Madilyn Gawrych-Turner, sponsored by VFW Post 3455 and its Auxiliary in Anna, Ill., received a \$4,000 award. Third-place winner Lauren Stemple, sponsored by VFW Post 7824 in Vancouver, Wash., received a \$3,500 award. Nearly 130,000 students participate in the competition annually.