

2017 National Shrine Essay Contest Winners Announced

For Immediate Release – January 11, 2018

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Mrs. Katherine Bacalis, chair of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Essay Program, announced the results of the 13th annual event. This annual competition presents a choice of two topics for teenagers to research and write about. They were as follows: 1) There are many historic and sacred sites throughout the world. What makes St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine a historic and significant site for Greek Orthodox Christians? 2) Most Americans born in the United States can trace their family's history to an ancestor who came to America from a foreign country. Compare and contrast your family's immigrant history with the immigrant history of the New Smyrna Colonists of 1768.

Mrs. Bacalis reported that 11 teens, ages 13-19, responded to this competition with Apostolos-Christos E. Lianos, of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church in Wauwatosa, WI placing first; Ioannis Panagiotis Nikas of St. George Church in Chicago, IL placing second; and Odysseas Vassilios Nikas of St George Church in Chicago, IL placing third.

The committee will send signed certificates from His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, to all essayists including Helen Sofia Cadotte, Annunciation Cathedral, Detroit, MI; Reema Choueiri of St. Nektarios, Charlotte, NC; George Chudley of Kimisis Tis Theotokou of The Hamptons, NY; Panagiotis Kurtis of St. Andrew, South Bend, IN; Domenica Pusic of Holy Trinity, Raleigh, NC; Angelia Pouloupoulos of St Demetrios in Rocky River, OH; Cindy Samaan of St Demetrios, Daytona, FL; and Ellie Stamatogiannakis of St. John, Jacksonville, FL recognizing their efforts.

St. Photios Foundation First VP Archon Dr. Manuel N. Tissura offered special thanks to the estate of Mrs. Kathie D'Anna and the AHEPA Chapter #6 Socrates Chapter in Jacksonville, FL for providing the money needed for the infrastructure of this program and the prize monies totaling \$850.00. "The general operating budget is void of cost because of these steadfast benefactors. This allows us to help our young people learn about the Greek- American immigration story and its living memorial, The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine."

Mrs. Bacalis extended her thanks to Dr. Constantine Santas, Dr. Tony Tsitos, Mrs. Donna Bacon and Mrs. Rene Gahagan for their dedication in serving on the Essay Committee. Mrs. Bacalis said, "This year's essays showcased the work of eleven talented writers. The essays were interesting to read and were written well, conveying facts with opinions that captured the spirit and intent of the topics showing how they identified themselves as Orthodox Christians having a pride in their Greek heritage.. As an educator and "senior citizen", I am excited to know that our beautiful Orthodox faith lives on in our youth. God bless them!"