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County bar foundation announces winners of high school essay contest

ANNAPOLIS, MD. (June 19, 2014) — Are the contents of a person's cell phone protected from unreasonable searches and seizures? While the Supreme Court was still considering two cases concerning police searches of cell phones, hundreds of Anne Arundel County high school students issued their verdicts as participants in the annual Anne Arundel County Bar Foundation High School Essay Contest.

For this year's essay contest, high school students were invited to express their opinions on a current Supreme Court case (*United States vs. Wurie*, Case No. 13-212) regarding whether the Fourth Amendment permits the police, without obtaining a warrant, to review the call log of a cellphone found on a person who has been lawfully arrested.

The contest was open to all public and private high school students, grades 9-12, and home-schooled students corresponding to the same grade levels. More than 230 Anne Arundel County high school students submitted essays for this year's competition, presenting the contest judges with a difficult decision. As in past years, South River High School was well-represented in the pool of entries and ultimately claimed all three prizes. The winners were:

1st Place (\$500): Emma Gregory, sophomore, South River High School

2nd Place (\$250): Eric Hoffmann, sophomore, South River High School

3rd Place (\$100): Zach Thomas, senior, South River High School (attending University of Maryland this fall)

The three top students received their awards on June 19 at a special ceremony in the Historic Courtroom of the Circuit Court in Annapolis. The winners were accompanied by their parents as well as William Myers, principal of South River High School, and South River teachers Lesa Goodhue and Marie Livingston. Students from South River have taken home the top prize for the past four years in a row.

The Honorable Timothy Meredith of the Court of Special Appeals presented the awards. Judge Meredith and his wife Kathleen founded the contest and have sponsored it for the past 15 years. During that time, more than 2,400 county students have participated in the competition. "Our goal in sponsoring the annual essay contest is to encourage high school students to think about the law and how it may affect some issue of concern to them," said Judge Meredith.

In addition to Judge Meredith, several long-standing members of the Anne Arundel Bar Association served as contest judges: Chris Brown, Brown & Getka, PA; Nancy Faulkner, Director of Court Operations for the Anne Arundel Circuit Court; Bill Roessler, Deputy State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County; and Tim Sheridan, Circuit Court Administrator for Baltimore County.

In the end, all three winners argued that the contents of a person's cell phone are protected under the Fourth Amendment and that the search of the cell phone in the *Wurie* case was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court is expected to rule on *United States vs. Wurie* by July 1.

Established in 1990, the Anne Arundel County Bar Foundation is a charitable organization founded by the members of the Anne Arundel Bar Association (AABA) to foster and maintain the honor and integrity of the profession of law. The AABA is a nonprofit membership organization of more than 1,100 legal professionals. We provide legal services to the community and career development opportunities for legal professionals. Learn more about the AABA at www.aabar.org.

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