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For More Information:

Contact: Fran Czajka, Executive Director
Anne Arundel Bar Association
Phone: (410) 280-6950
E-mail: info@aabar.org

County bar foundation announces winners of high school essay contest

ANNAPOLIS, MD. (June 30, 2015) — The Anne Arundel Bar County Bar Foundation is pleased to announce the winners of its annual High School Essay Contest:

1st Place (\$500): Tatiana Wu, sophomore, South River High School
2nd Place (\$250): Alexander McGrath, sophomore, Severna Park High School
3rd Place (\$100): Elizabeth Bauckman, sophomore, South River High School

The contest was open to all public, private and home-schooled high school students, grades 9-12. More than 180 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 claimed the top prize for the fifth year in a row.

The three winners received their awards on June 19 during a special ceremony in the Historic Courtroom of the Circuit Court in Annapolis. The Honorable Timothy Meredith of the Court of Special Appeals presented the awards. Judge Meredith and his wife, attorney Kathleen Meredith, founded the contest and have sponsored it for the past 16 years. During that time, nearly 2,600 county students have participated in the competition.

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; Hon. Glenn Klavans, judge, Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County; and Bill Roessler, retired deputy state's attorney for Anne Arundel County.

For this year's essay contest, high school students were invited to express their opinions on the U.S. Supreme Court case *Walker v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans (Case No. 14-144)*. The students had to consider this question: Does a state have the right to deny a request for a specialty license plate bearing an image of the Confederate flag—or is the denial a violation of the First Amendment?

Two of the three winners argued that symbols and messages on specialty license plates represent private speech, rather than government speech, and therefore are protected under the First Amendment. Like these students, the Supreme Court justices were divided on this issue. In a 5-4 decision, which was issued just one day before the essay contest award ceremony, the Court ruled that the state of Texas was legally justified in refusing to issue a proposed specialty license plate for members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

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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