



MONTGOMERY COUNTY AMERICAN LEGION POST 59

PO Box 5031

Christiansburg, Virginia 24068-5031

Dear School Counselor;

The American Legion Post 59 is again offering an opportunity for local high school students to enhance their financial resources for college tuition.

Each year the American Legion nationally awards more than \$140,000 in scholarship funds to local high schools students. Locally Post 59 will award \$250 to the first place winner, who will then proceed the state level then onto Nationals where the top three finalist can win \$25,000, \$22,500 and \$20,000 respectively in scholarships toward their college education.

The Oratorical Contest was developed in 1928 to primarily instill a better knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States in high school students. Other objectives include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and the preparation for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American Citizenship.

It works like this: Interested students obtain an application from their teacher or guidance counselor. In order to qualify the student must first be a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States. All contestants must be bona fide students, as described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest and be presently enrolled in high school (public, parochial, military, private or home schooled), or junior high school. The curriculum of the school must be commencing with grade nine and terminating at grade twelve. Eligible students must not be enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher education at the time of the department(state) finals contest.

Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attendant educational institution within the department (state) that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one department (state).

The three finalist of the National competition are ineligible for any further participation at any level.

Applications are sent by the school to Christiansburg's American Legion Post 59 where they are reviewed by the Oratorical Committee. The qualified selected applicants are then notified. The application deadline is December xx, 2021.

The local contest will take place Saturday Jan xx, 2022.

It will behoove the applicants to review the Oratorical videos of past National level contests to learn what the contest is like. These can be viewed at [www.Legion.org/oratorical](http://www.Legion.org/oratorical)

Here are the basics; each contestant will deliver an 8-10 minute speech on the US Constitution. This is delivered by rote, no notes, no podium, they are on their own on stage. This presentation is followed by a 3-5 minute speech on 1 of 4 possible topics that the contestant can prepare for but will only find out which topic to present on at the contest. Appropriate business attire is the expected dress code.

Who would make a good contestant? Well your class officers, the debate club, lawyer wannabes and your ROTC students to name a few. Any interested student should be encouraged to take part.

What happens at the contest?

The day of the contest; each contestant is secluded away from the presentation area each contestant presents their primary speech.

After all the primary speeches have been presented the contestants will then present their speech on the assigned topic.

Please see the included sheet with this year's assigned topic possibilities.

A great deal of preparation goes into these contests and much care is taken to see that all the rules are followed and the contest are judged fairly. A team of judges is selected from the community, based on their knowledge of the contest rules and regulations.

Post 59 Members encourage parents, school counselors, teachers and grandparents to get involved with their high school student(s) by speaking to them about this opportunity to further support their ongoing education.

For further information please contact Vice Commander Gene Malinowski @607.725.9613 or by email at [post59aml@gmail.com](mailto:post59aml@gmail.com).

As your schools guidance counselor we ask that you follow through with this opportunity for your students making sure that we at Post 59 have the applications in hand no later than December xx, 2021.

Thank you

The Post 59 Oratorical Committee;

Matthew Davis, Post 59 Commander

Gene Malinowski, Post 59 Oratorical Chairperson

Phillip Orndorff, Post 59 Oratorical Committee