

VFW Announces 2025 National Scholarship Winners

New Hampshire high school senior takes home top \$35,000 scholarship

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WASHINGTON – Tonight the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) proudly presented nearly \$175,000 in national scholarships and awards as it named the winners of its 2024-2025 Voice of Democracy® and Patriot's Pen® youth scholarship competitions.

This year's national winners were announced at the 2025 VFW Washington Conference in Washington, D.C., during the Parade of Winners ceremony, sponsored by [Twisted X](#).

VFW National Commander Al Lipphardt was joined by VFW Auxiliary President Brenda Bryant to announce this year's national first place Voice of Democracy winner, Tri Vu. His award-winning essay answered this year's thought-provoking theme, "Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?" A high school senior at Central High School from Manchester, New Hampshire, Vu was sponsored by Queen City Memorial VFW Post 8214 in Manchester. Following the announcement, Vu, who was unable to attend the ceremony, [accepted his award via video message](#). [Read his essay here](#).

Second place winner Caleb Smith, a junior at The Key School in Annapolis, Maryland, was sponsored by VFW Post 304 in Annapolis, and was awarded the \$21,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship. Della Phillips, a senior homeschool student in Fargo, North Dakota, who was sponsored by VFW Post 1874 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, was named the third place winner and awarded the \$15,000 VFW Scholarship. All other state winners were awarded a college scholarship worth at least \$1,000, with more than \$1.4 million being awarded this year. [See the complete list of 2025 Voice of Democracy national winners](#).

Also featured during tonight's awards ceremony was the 2025 Patriot's Pen first place winner, Evelyn Newbigging. Sponsored by VFW Post 12136 located in Indian Land, South Carolina, Newbigging was awarded the top Patriot's Pen award of \$5,000. Watch as she [delivered her winning essay](#) during tonight's ceremony, addressing the theme, "My Voice in

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America's Democracy." [Read her essay here.](#)

The Patriot's Pen second place winner, Laila Kamin, sponsored by VFW Post 1741 located in Auburn, Washington, will receive a \$4,000 award, while third place winner Canaan Ly, sponsored by VFW Post 758 located in Saint Albans, Vermont, will receive a \$3,500 award. See the complete list of 2025 Patriot's Pen national winners.

The 2025-2026 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen competitions will open soon. To learn more about the programs visit vfw.org/YouthScholarships.