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Statewide 2023 Vermont Poetry Out Loud Winner Announced

BURLINGTON, VT — Greer Kennedy, a student at St. Johnsbury Academy, took top honors at the 2023 Poetry Out Loud State Finals held in Flynn Space at the Flynn on March 16. Anne Hauze, a student at Woodstock Union High School, was the runner up, and the third-place finalist was Grace Bruley, a student at Bellows Free Academy, St. Albans. Kennedy heads to Washington, DC, in May to represent Vermont in the Poetry Out Loud National Competition.

Ten students recited their chosen poems in three rounds during the state final competition, which was emceed by Jolivette Anderson-Douning. The top three finalists with the highest cumulative scores after the first two rounds continued to round three, reciting their last poem. Kennedy recited *by Victoria Chang*, *by Charlotte Bronte*, and *by Jimmy Santiago Baca*. Hauze recited *by William Shakespeare*, *by Adelaide Crapsey*, and *by Charles Wright*. Bruley recited *by Kara Jackson*, *by Jimmy Santiago Baca*, and *by Ella Higginson*.

The other finalists were Mary Bosco, Thetford Academy; Melissa Hall, Bellows Free Academy Fairfax; Lily Hutcheson, Burr and Burton Academy; Moorea Lambert, Rice Memorial High School; Brenna Lee, Williamstown High School; Mira Novak, Champlain Valley Union High School; and Andi Marie Tisdell, Peoples Academy,

21 schools across Vermont registered to bring the national Poetry Out Loud program to their classrooms in 2023, reaching more than 2,500 students with about 90 teachers participating. 19 students were selected by their teachers as school champions and advanced to participate in the statewide semi-finals competition, which was held on March 9 at the Barre Opera House and emceed by Geof Hewitt.

Poetry recitations were evaluated by the judges, using these criteria: physical presence, voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, dramatic appropriateness, accuracy, and overall performance. The 2023 judges were author Sarah Audsley, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Executive Director Susan Evans McClure, actor Morgan Irons, Outright Vermont Executive Director Dana Kaplan, and artist Shanta Lee.

State champion Greer Kennedy receives \$200 and advances to the national finals where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends are distributed. The state champion's school receives \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. First runner-up Hauze receives \$100, with \$200 for her school.

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