



## The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition

May 2, 2017

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### CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TEEN COMPETES IN 34<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION IN NEW YORK CITY

*New York City:* With a performance of Sonnet 119 and the famous “Crispian Day” speech monologue from Shakespeare’s “Henry V”, **Nicholas Bowman** from Carlisle, PA, a student of Susan Biondo-Hench at Carlisle High School in Carlisle, competed as a semi-finalist in the 34<sup>th</sup> annual English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition in New York City. The Competition took place on May 1, 2017 on the stage of the Mitzi Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center with 54 semi-finalists from as many ESU Branch competitions nationwide. Nicholas was chosen to represent the ESU Central Pennsylvania Branch competition at the Central PA Regional Finals held at Lock Haven University in February 2017.

Nicholas and nine students from Central PA high schools were part of the group of more than 20,000 high school students nationwide participated in the 2017 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition at the school, local, and regional competitions. Nicholas’ trip to NYC to participate in the Shakespeare Competition was sponsored by the Departments of Fine Arts and Literature and Language at Saint Francis University, Loretto PA.

On May 1st, the 54 regional semifinalists took to stage of the Mitzi E. Newhouse theatre of Lincoln Center to present the 20 line monologue chosen from the Shakespeare Canon of 37 plays, and their choice of one of Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets. From these presentations, ten finalists were chosen to present their pieces, and a “cold” (unprepared) reading of a random Shakespeare text to a second set of judges.

The winner of the 34<sup>th</sup> English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition, **Ogechi Egonu**, representing the San Francisco Branch, received a full scholarship to attend the American Shakespeare Center Theatre Camp in Staunton, VA, this summer. Second place winner, **Brandon Burk**, from the Kentucky Branch, won a cash prize of \$1,000 from The English-Speaking Union, while the third place winner, **Trevon Wainwright**, representing the Kansas City Branch of the ESU, received an award of \$500 provided by The Shakespeare Society.

The ESU provided the semi-finalists with two days of educational and cultural activities in New York City, including an exclusive acting workshop by the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University faculty. Perhaps best of all for these teenagers was the opportunity to spend time with other students from across the country who share a love of the English language and, particularly, Shakespeare.

Citing its 34th season this year, the Honorable Bill De Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York, proclaimed May 1, 2017 as William Shakespeare Day in New York City. Laura Hickey the British Deputy Consul-General in New York, read the proclamation, and Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill CBE KSt.J, Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, awarded certificates to the competitors.

Cheering Nicholas from the audience were his parents, James and Meta Bowman, Drama Coach/Teacher Sue Biondo-Hench, her husband, Brad, Bonnie M. Resinski, Central PA Region Coordinator, and four of Nicholas' classmates from Carlisle High School. Ozlyn Smih, Hayley Cavanaugh, Alex Pinnell, and Rowan Young, who had been involved in Carlisle High's production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with Nicholas traveled to NYC to support him.

The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition is a school-based program designed to help students develop their speaking and critical thinking skills and their appreciation of literature as they explore the beauty of the language and timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. In three progressive competition levels, students memorize, interpret, and perform monologues and sonnets in their own schools, at ESU Branch-sponsored community competitions and at the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition.

Founded in 1920, the English-Speaking Union is a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization that promotes English as a shared language to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural opportunities for students and educators.

For information regarding the ESU Central PA Region Shakespeare Competition, contact: Bonnie M. Resinski [wscompetition2015@gmail.com](mailto:wscompetition2015@gmail.com)



**Nicholas Bowman**, semi-finalist, competing at Lincoln Center in New York City during the 2017 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition.



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The 54 semi-finalists at the 2017 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition in New York City.