



The English-Speaking Union
National Shakespeare Competition

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ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE
For teen from Friends Central School

New York City, April 27, 2015 -- With a performance of a sonnet and monologue from Shakespeare, **Evelyn Johnson**, a student of Tom McFarlane at Friends Central School in Wynnewood, PA, won second prize at the 32nd annual English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition. The Competition was held on April 27th at Lincoln Center Theater in New York City for 55 winners of ESU Branch competitions nationwide. Evelyn had previously won the ESU Philadelphia Branch regional competition.

For placing second at the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition, Evelyn won a full scholarship to the American Shakespeare Center's Theatre Camp in Staunton, Virginia. This year's winner of the ESU Hawaii regional competition, **Sarah Spalding** won first prize in the ESU National Shakespeare Competition, winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's *Young Actors Summer School* in London, England. Third place winner, **Elizabeth Mears**, representing the Boston Branch of the ESU, won \$500 from The Shakespeare Society.

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 National Shakespeare Competition. The program has engaged more than 250,000 young people since its inception. Citing its 32nd season this year, the Honorable Bill De Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York, proclaimed April 27th as William Shakespeare Day. Nick Astbury, the British Deputy Consul-General in New York, read the proclamation, and Josiah Bunting III, Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, awarded certificates to the competitors.

The ESU provided the Branch winners with two full days of educational and cultural activities in New York City, including an exclusive acting workshop at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and a performance of the *Something Rotten!* on Broadway. Perhaps best of all for these teenagers was the opportunity to spend a weekend in New York City with other students from across the country who share a love of theater, language and, particularly, Shakespeare.

The finals competition judges were distinguished actors and educators. **Matt Harrington**, a Broadway, television and film actor currently playing the role of Mr. Wormwood in *Matilda* the Musical on Broadway, was the first-place winner of the 1999 ESU National Shakespeare Competition. He received both his BFA and MFA from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. **Peter Francis James**, graduate and an Associate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, teaches at Yale School of Drama as well as the British American Drama Academy at Oxford. He was nominated for a Lortel award for his performance in Edward Albee's *The Lady From Dubuque* at the Signature Theater. **Dr. Peggy O'Brien**, Director of Education at the Folger Shakespeare Library has taught policy, theory, and practice in American K-12 education at Georgetown University and continues to consult on major national education programs. **Louis Scheeder**, Arts Professor and founder and Director of the Classical Studio, an advanced training program at the Tisch School of the Arts, also serves as Associate Dean of Faculty at the school. He was most recently awarded NYU's Distinguished

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Teaching Award. **Ralph Alan Cohen**, Founding Executive Director and Directory Mission at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA also has directed 35 productions by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

The English-Speaking Union of the United States is a non-profit, non-political educational organization whose mission is to celebrate English as a shared language to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural opportunities for students, educators and members. The ESU carries out its work through a network of 68 Branches, sponsoring a variety of language and international education programs.



Evelyn Johnson, Runner up in the 2015 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition at Lincoln Center in New York City.



The 3 winners of the 2015 English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition at Lincoln Center Theater in New York City.
(l to r - Third place winner, Elizabeth Mears, winner Sarah Spalding and Second place winner Evelyn Johnson)

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