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PRESS RELEASE

Cmr. George P. Bush Announces Winners of the Save Texas History Essay Contest

Texas students answer the question: What history in your community is worth saving?

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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced the fourth and seventh grade winners of the 2018 Save Texas History Essay Contest, sponsored by the Texas General Land Office's Save Texas History Program. The essay contest encourages students to answer the question, "What history in your community is worth saving?"

"As a former history teacher, I am proud to announce the recipients of the 2018 annual Save Texas History Essay Contest: fourth grader, Laila Prest and seventh grader Cooper Caswell," said Commissioner Bush. "It is especially rewarding to see students learn more about our state's rich history through their participation in the Save Texas History Essay Contest. Thank you to all the young Texans who submitted their essays as well as the parents and teachers who encouraged their participation. The submissions were impressive and full of inspiring examples of how future generations of Texans can appreciate the rich history in their local communities and around the state. Congratulations to our winners and to all those who participated."

The fourth- grade grand prize winner is Laila Prest, daughter of Amie Prest. Laila is a homeschooler in Menard. Her essay was titled Menard, Texas: Honoring the Past, Looking to the Future, and it discussed the importance of saving the overall history and culture of her community. Laila said, "We can save buildings, monuments, and historical sites, but saving a culture is a more difficult thing to do. When I look at paintings and photographs of my ancestors, I see seven generations of dedicated people working tirelessly to build a future for their families and community."

The seventh grade grand prize winner is Cooper Caswell, son of J.J. and Laura Caswell. Cooper is in Ms. Anna Fonville's class at Ira School in Ira, Texas. Cooper's essay was titled
Heritage Village of Scurry County
, and it discussed how "the village shows the rich history of development in our area through farming, ranching, transportation, oil field, and wind mills." Additionally, Cooper said, "If I win this contest the money would go forward to helping pay for these repairs." Each grand prize winner will receive a cash award of $500 courtesy of Chris Cantu of Edward Jones Investments and Bob Eskridge of Just in Time Staffing. The five finalists in each grade will receive $100 courtesy of the Rotary Club of Austin and the Sons of the Republic of Texas. All winners and finalists will receive a Texas flag that has flown over the northernmost point of the Republic of Texas (in present-day Wyoming) along with a certificate of authenticity; as well as Save Texas History backpacks and a reproduction of an historic map from the GLO Archives map collection, and a Certificate of Achievement signed by Commissioner Bush. The names of all finalists appear on the Save Texas History website at www.savetexashistory.org.

Fourth Grade Finalists:

Madilynn Cox
Centerville Elementary School
Parents: Robert and Patricia Cox, Centerville
Teacher: Ms. Henson
Topic: The Pix Theatre
Danica Faith Amante–Mitchell
Pflugerville Elementary School
Parent: Zillah Amante, Round Rock, TX
Teacher: Cynthia Hernandez
Topic: Pflugerville Colored Cemetery
Madelyn Cooner
Jefferson Elementary School
Parent: Jason Cooner, Avinger, TX
Teacher: Mr. Hoskins
Topic: The Jefferson Carnegie Library
Daniel Lanigan
Brandon Elementary School
Parent: Katherine Lanigan, Lufkin, TX
Teacher: Lorraine Dorman
Topic: Christmas Time in Lufkin
Celeste Bartelli
Doss Elementary School
Parent: Carolyn Bartelli, Austin
Teacher: Carole Wiley
Topic: Save Muny

Seventh Grade Finalists:

Clarissa M. Gonzalez
Del Rio Middle School
Parent: Bonita Gonzalez, Del Rio

Teacher: Mr. Munoz
Topic: San Felipe Springs
Jenna Liza Costilla
Trautmann Middle School
Parent: Veronica Vera, Laredo, TX
Teacher: Mr. Lopez
Topic: Forgotten Protector of Laredo
Timothy Lui
O. Henry Middle School
Parent: May Lui, Austin
Teacher: Amanda Moise
Topic: The Moonlight Towers in Austin
Addison Odam
Miller Middle School
Parent: C.J. Odam, San Marcos, TX
Teacher: Albert Villegas
Topic: Re-opening the Doors to the Old Church
Paisley Ploeger
Gonzales Junior High School
Parent: Bernadine Ploeger, Gonzales, TX
Teacher: Leigh Pirkle
Title: Terryville Lost in Time

All public, private and home-schooled students of appropriate age for the fourth grade or seventh grade were eligible to participate. Essays for the annual contest are judged on originality of idea, cohesiveness of thought and organization. Proper grammar, spelling and punctuation also counted.

The Texas General Land Office Save Texas History™ program is a statewide initiative to rally public support and private funding for the preservation and promotion of more than 35 million historic maps and documents. With the twin goals of preservation and education, the Save Texas History program seeks to conserve these documents for future generations and educate Texans about the rich heritage found in these vital records.

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