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**CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF
TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL QUINTIN JOHNSTONE ESSAY CONTEST**

Hartford, CT (June 25, 2021) – The Connecticut Bar Foundation and James W. Cooper Fellows Program is pleased to announce the twenty-first annual Quintin Johnstone Essay Contest winners. The annual contest is open to all high school students statewide and invites entrants to prepare an essay on a timely topic in the law that is relevant to students.

The contest winner and two runners-up are awarded cash prizes of \$2,000 and \$1,000, respectively. This year's topic, "Imitation or Intimidation," asked entrants to consider whether a student art project that mirrored the basic imagery in another student's work to convey a very different message, involved the allowable use of imitation or a form of intimidation in violation of school district policy. The prompt required entrants to consider the bounds of free speech in the school setting and whether imagery that seems to celebrate our country's history of slavery is threatening to a group of students based on race and disruptive to the learning environment. Contest submissions are evaluated by panels of James W. Cooper Fellows, who are state and federal judges, law school professors, and practicing attorneys that volunteer their time to support Foundation programming.

The Essay Contest Award Ceremony is usually held at the Connecticut Supreme Court. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, special video tributes to the 2020-2021 winners were recorded by Justice Maria Kahn, Associate Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, the Honorable Juliett Crawford, James W. Cooper Fellows Chair, and Natalie Wagner, Executive Director of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. The videos and winning essays can be viewed online at <https://www.ctbarfdn.org/essaycontest/>.

Rachel Zhang, a sophomore at Simsbury High School, was the statewide winner of the 2020-2021 contest. The two runner-up prizes were awarded to Peter Hinkle, a junior at Fairfield Ludlowe High, and Ayushman Choudhury, a senior at Ellington High School. Natalie Wagner, Executive Director of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, noted that "each of the winners provided thoughtful, well-written essays in which they were required to consider difficult questions that students and schools are grappling with today."

Rachel Zhang of Simsbury, Connecticut, is a Captain of the Simsbury High School Debate Team and President of the Simsbury Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). She has served as a judge for the Connecticut Middle School Debate League and a Film Creator and Editor with the Simsbury Public Library. In addition to being this year's statewide winner, Rachel received a regional honorable mention in the 2021 Scholastic Arts & Writing Award, First Place in the 2020 FBLA State Leadership Conference: Introduction to Public Speaking, and First Place in the 2021 FBLA State Leadership Conference: Introduction to Business. She has participated in numerous Connecticut Debate Association tournaments as a member of the 5th place Varsity Team (2021) and 4th place Novice Team (2020), and was the 1st place Novice Speaker (November 2019). She is also a Simsbury Scholar and the creator of the Henry James Memorial School Mascot (2018).

Rachel is looking forward to gaining new experiences and broadening her perspective, both as a student and a young adult. Upon graduation from high school, she plans to attend a

four-year university with the hopes of studying Computer Science and continuing her journey in debate at the college level.

Peter Hinkle of Fairfield, Connecticut, is an Eagle Scout and participates in numerous extra-curricular activities both through school and in the community. He was awarded the Vigil Honor (2021) and Ralph Deer Memorial Service Award by the Owaneco Lodge, Order of the Arrow, and earned the Boy Scouts of America National Outdoor Award and World Conservation Award. In 2019 he was presented with the 2019 Citizenship Award by the Aquaculture School for outstanding citizenship in the classroom. In addition, Peter actively participated in the National Honor Society, the Math Honor Society, the Fairfield Equity Coalition, Model United Nations, Unified Sports, and Varsity Ultimate Frisbee, among other activities. Peter has volunteered with St. George's Community Supper at the Greenfield Hill Church, the Junior Women's Club, and participated for seven consecutive years as a "Knight of the Bald Table" for St. Baldrick's, raising over \$6,000 for pediatric cancer research. He plans to attend college in the Fall of 2022 with an interest in studying political science, law, history, or government.

Ayushman Choudhury of Ellington, Connecticut, is a member of the CT State Student Advisory Council on Education (2020-2021), a Student Representative to the Town of Ellington Board of Education (2020-2021), and served on the Principal's Advisory Council (2017-2019). He is a tutor at the Russian School of Mathematics and worked as a freelance Data Analyst (Summer 2020). He participated in the Solving Global Challenges track at the Yale Young Global Scholars Program at Yale University (Summer 2020), and in an unpaid internship with Junior Partner at Campus Insights, a Harvard startup (Summer 2019). Ayushman was a semifinalist in the US Presidential Scholars Program, a recipient of the Harvard Prize Book Award, the Bausch + Lomb Science Award, Rensselaer Medal Award, and the St. Michael's Book Award. He was awarded the DAR Good Citizen Award (December 2020), a CT VFW Voice of Democracy State Winner (2020), and a Grand Honoree of Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (2018). He has volunteered with the Town of Ellington, serving on the Ad-Hoc Committee of Diversity and Inclusion, helping to organize a virtual

math summer program for middle and high school students, and raised money to support the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. He also participated in numerous school activities, including Future Business Leaders of America, Tri-M (Music Honor Society), Mathematics Clubs, and student council. Ayushman will be continuing his education at Brown University, where he will study Applied Mathematics, Computer Science, and Music.

The Connecticut Bar Foundation is a philanthropic organization that develops and administers programs to enhance the understanding and improvement of the law and legal institutions. The CBF also administers grant programs that fund the delivery of legal services for Connecticut residents who cannot afford an attorney, and law school scholarships for students demonstrating financial need.