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For Immediate Release

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CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION NAMES
NINETEENTH ANNUAL STATEWIDE ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

The Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows program sponsored its Nineteenth Annual Quintin Johnstone Statewide High School Essay Contest this year. The contest, open to high school students at all public and private schools statewide, invited students to prepare an essay on the topic “Jumping the Gun – Preventing School Violence”. This year’s topic dealt with two student brothers, one a popular jock, and one a social outcast who are seen on a viral video at a shooting at gun range. The school gets word of the video and decides that the video shows that the social outcast brother is a threat and suspends him. The popular brother is not suspended, despite participating in the same activity. Entries were to be approximately 1000 words and were to support their position on this issue. Submissions were evaluated by panels that included Connecticut Supreme, Appellate, and Superior Court judges, Federal District Court judges, law school professors and practicing attorneys. Supreme Court Senior Justice Christine Vertefeuille presented awards to the three contest winners at a special ceremony, which was held at the Connecticut Supreme Court on June 4th, 2019.

Thomas Holtz, a senior at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, was awarded the statewide prize. The two runner-up prizes were awarded to Hannah Sroka, a senior at Portland High School,

and Rachel Coppinger, a sophomore at Simsbury High School. Andrea Barton Reeves, President of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, noted that the winning essays “reflect thoughtful, well written presentations of a controversial topic.” The Fellows presented a \$2,000 cash prize to Thomas Holtz and \$1,000 cash prize each to Hannah Sroka and Rachel Coppinger.

Thomas Holtz, son of Kevin and Jennifer Holtz from Fairfield, Connecticut, has received the following honors: National Merit Scholarship Corporation Sponsored Winner, Fairfield University and Sikorsky Book Award Winner, recipient of the National President’s Volunteer Service Award, a member of the Mensa National Honor Society, and is a published novelist. In addition, Thomas actively participated in the following at Fairfield Ludlowe High School: Jazz Ensemble, track team, football team, and is the Editor of the News & Features section of the school newspaper and Editor of Fairfield Ludlowe High School’s Literary Magazine. Thomas is also a member of seven Honors Societies, including the National Honor Society, music, and math. Thomas’ extracurricular activities outside of school include a significant amount of community service volunteering for several organizations that aid pediatric cancer patients, the Fairfield Public Library, and the Scholars and Athletes Serving Others Organization. He plans to attend Boston College next fall to major in neuroscience.

Hannah Sroka, daughter of Alison Sroka from Portland, Connecticut, is in the top 10% of her class, and has been recognized for achievement in music, French, and English. In addition, Hannah actively participated in the following at Portland High School: Greenhouse Club, International Diversity Club, Concert Band, Marching Band, and Jazz Band. Hannah’s

extracurricular activities outside of school include competitive dance. She plans to attend Miami University next fall to major in English and Writing.

Rachel Coppinger, daughter of Lori and Daniel Coppinger, of Simsbury, Connecticut, has received the following honors: 1st place winner of the DAR American History Essay Contest, 1st place in the VFW Patriot's Pen Contest, and 3rd place in the National Civics Essay Contest. In addition, Rachel actively participated in the following at Simsbury High School: JV Crew Team, and Robotics Team. Rachel's extracurricular activities outside of school include studying Tang Soo Do, a Korean Martial Art. She plans to continue her education after high school in the field of engineering.

The Connecticut Bar Foundation, established in 1952, is a non-profit organization that administers the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts and the Interest on Trust Accounts programs for the benefit of legal services agencies and for law school scholarships based on financial need. It also administers the Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid and the Court Fees Grants-in-Aid programs for legal services organizations. The Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows Program was established in 1994. The Fellows promote a better understanding of the legal profession through the sponsorship and production of a diverse array of programs and projects, which seek to improve the legal profession and the administration of justice in Connecticut. Quintin Johnstone was a professor at Yale Law School before his death in 2014. Professor Johnstone served as president of the Connecticut Bar Foundation from 1987-1991, participated in a variety of Fellows Projects for many years,

and was a longtime member of the Fellows Education and Program Committee, which helps to organize the annual Essay Contest.

Further information on the Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows Quintin Johnstone Essay Contest can be found on the Foundation's website, www.ctbarfdn.org. The deadline for entries for the 2019-2020 contest will be February 21st, 2020.

**THE CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION
JAMES W. COOPER FELLOWS
2018-2019 STATEWIDE ESSAY CONTEST WINNER PHOTO**

Press Photo (left to right):

- Natalie Wagner, Interim Executive Director, Connecticut Bar Foundation
- Daniel A. Schwartz, Chair, James W. Cooper Fellows
- Thomas Holtz, Fairfield Ludlowe High School (Graduated)
- Connecticut Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Christine S. Vertefeuille
- Rachel Coppinger, Simsbury High School
- Hannah Sroka, Portland High School (Graduated)
- Robert A. Harris, Chair, James W. Cooper Fellows Essay Contest