

## Sons of the American Revolution

# The Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Oration Contest

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution invites all high school students (9th through 12th grades) interested in the American Revolution to participate in the Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Oration Contest. The contest is open to all students attending public, parochial, private or home school students in that same grade range. The preliminary rounds of the contest begin at the local level, students may potentially advance to the state or national levels where scholarships and cash prizes are awarded.

### The Oration

The oration is to be five to six minutes in length and should be based on a compelling Revolutionary War subject that is directly related to current national issues and patriotism. Evidence of historical research and creative presentation are also important. The oration will be judged based upon its:

- Composition
- Delivery
- Significance
- Historical accuracy and relevance

The oration must be given from memory, without the use of notes or props. The subject of the oration shall deal with an event, a personality, or a document pertaining to the Revolutionary War. Successful candidates will clearly communicate the relevance of their subject to the present day.

### The National Society (NSSAR) Contest

The NSSAR contest is conducted in a room with seating arranged in a theater-style format. Access to the room is limited by doorkeepers. The master of ceremonies welcomes the audience and the contestants. He then explains the contest rules. Orations must be five to six minutes in length. The timekeeper will raise a paddle at five minutes. The timekeeper will stand at six minutes, at which point the contestant may finish only the current sentence without penalty. Orations that are short or over the six-minute limit will receive a penalty from the judges. Only the assigned prompter may prompt the contestant. The contestant requests a prompt by saying "prompt." Prompts will also receive a penalty from the judges. All cell phones are to be silenced. The audience is to remain silent throughout the competition. No applause may be offered until all orations are completed and the master of ceremonies indicates that applause is appropriate. The master of ceremonies will only refer to the contestants as contestant #1, #2, #3, #4 and so forth.

The master of ceremonies will offer three-minute historical vignettes between each of the orations to permit the judges time to mark their scoring cards. The judges will be incognito and placed randomly throughout the room. Once an oration session is complete, the head judge will receive the prompter's appended oration copies and the timekeeper's notes. The judges will

then leave the room to deliberate. While the judges are deliberating, the master of ceremonies will offer an extended historical vignette or other relevant information. Once the judges have reached a decision, they will present their results to the contest chairman. The contest chairman will then introduce the contestants, announce the results, and present the awards.

Contestants arrive the afternoon of the day before the National Society Contest. There is a welcoming reception in the early evening. Following the reception, each contestant will have a brief opportunity to experience the view from the oration stage during a sound check. On the contest day, there is a mandatory breakfast where the contestants draw their order for the preliminary competition. The preliminaries follow directly and conclude with the finalists being announced by their assigned numbers. Lots are then drawn for the presentation order for the final competition later that evening.

The NSSAR offers scholarships or cash awards for the top winners:

- The National First Place Winner receives \$5,000
- The 2nd Place Runner-up receives \$3,000
- The 3rd Place Runner-up receives \$2,000.
- Each also receives an Olympic-sized medal.
- All other finalists (4th through 6th Place runners-up) are awarded \$400 cash.
- All other national contestants receive \$200 cash.

The 1st Place national winner presents their winning oration the following day at the National SAR Youth Awards Luncheon.

The National Society Contest will be held during the 2019 SAR National Congress to be held in Costa Mesa, California from 5-10 July 2019.

#### Pennsylvania Society (PASSAR) Contest

The PASSAR contest will be run in a similar fashion to NSSAR, adjusting the scale to be appropriate for the number of contestants. There are 23 active SAR chapters in Pennsylvania, and there will be one contestant representing each participating chapter. The winner of the PASSAR contest will receive a silver medallion and a \$500 cash award. PASSAR will provide support for travel expenses to attend the national competition in Costa Mesa in the amount of \$3,000.

The PASSAR Contest will be held in the Harrisburg Area on Saturday, 27 April 2019.

#### Philadelphia Continental Chapter (PCC) Contest

Participants in the PCC contest will reside in one of the following counties:

- Chester
- Delaware
- Philadelphia
- Montgomery

The local PCC contest will be run like the NSSAR contest, adjusting as appropriate for the number of participants. The winner of the PCC contest will receive a bronze medallion and a \$500 cash award. Second and third place winners will receive \$200 and \$100 cash awards respectively.

The PCC contest will be held on Saturday, 30 March 2019 in the Philadelphia area.

All submissions are due on or before midnight on Saturday, 9 Mar 2019 (in-hand or postmark), and will include:

- Contestant Entry Form
- Biographical Sketch
- Copy of Contestant's Oration
- Photograph (a snapshot will work)
- Youth Contest Release Form

You can obtain these forms on the PCC website: <https://www.pccsar.org/rumbaugh-oration-contest>.

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For further information and assistance for applicants in the Philadelphia area, please contact:

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