

State of Delaware
Delaware Division of the Arts
Mezzanine Gallery
820 North French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801
Web: artsdel.org

Contact: Roxanne Stanulis
Phone: (302) 577-8283
E-mail: Roxanne.stanulis@state.de.us

NEWS RELEASE

Alex Cummiskey Represents Delaware in National Finals of Poetry Out Loud



Alex Cummiskey, 1st place finalist
Photo credit: Kathleen Buckalew

(Wilmington, Delaware—March 1, 2010)— Competing among seventeen students from schools throughout Delaware, Alex Cummiskey from Middletown High School became the winner of the state Poetry Out Loud contest held at the Smyrna Opera House on February 24th. His recitation of *Chicago* by Carl Sandburg, *A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General* by Jonathan Swift, and *Immortal Sails* by Alfred Noyes earned him high marks with the judges. The second place winner was Castell Abner, III from Concord High School. JoAnn Balingit, Delaware's Poet Laureate who presented the awards commented on the evening, "Once again, the Poetry Out Loud student finalists delivered amazing performances! I had such fun listening to the poems they recited because this contest is about enjoying language and letting it take you

for a ride. After each poem, I could feel how moved the audience was; the electricity in that packed house—barely stifled. Some of the poems the students recited for this event were funny, others intense--but the performances conveyed poetry's power over and over again. They should all be proud. It was a wonderful show. "

For his winning presentation, Alex Cummiskey receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip with a chaperone to Washington to compete for the national championship April 26-27, 2010. Middletown High School receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The Poetry Foundation will be awarding up to \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends at the National Finals, with at least a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion. The second place finalist Castell Abner, III will receive \$100, with \$200 for Concord High School library.



Castell Abner III, 2nd place finalist
Photo credit: Kathleen Buckalew

The state Poetry Out Loud competition, sponsored by the Delaware Division of Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, is part of a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. The Division of the Arts congratulates each of the student participants in this year's competition:

- Castell Abner, III – 12th grade, Concord High School
- Chantalle Ashford – 12th grade, Dover High School
- Alex Cummiskey – 11th grade, Middletown High School
- Virginia DeWees – 10th grade, Wilmington Friends School
- Julianne Dominelli – 12th grade, St. Mark’s High School
- Allison Halt – 10th grade, Padua Academy
- Natasha Mabry – 11th grade, William Penn High School
- Stephanie Miller – 12th grade, Sussex Central High School
- Kati McLaughlin – 9th grade, Newark High School
- Daniel Newton – 12th grade, Caravel Academy
- Ian Paintsil – 11th grade, Red Lion Christian Academy
- Ashleigh Mae Pais – 12th grade, Delmar High School
- Marissa Phillips – 12th grade, St. Elizabeth’s High School
- Shelby Risinger – 11th grade, Lake Forest High School
- Jacob Sackett-Sanders – 11th grade, Cab Calloway School of the Arts
- Amy Schultz – 12th grade, Wilmington Christian School
- Matt Taylor – 10th grade, Seaford Senior High School

Photographs of the students are available upon request.

About the Delaware Division of the Arts

The Delaware Division of the Arts, a branch of the Delaware Department of State, is dedicated to promoting and developing the arts throughout the state. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life.