

EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Hector Quiñones, Chairman

The Education & Scholarship Committee had another successful year awarding the Department of New Jersey scholarships. This is my first year as the Chairman of this committee. I would like to thank my Co-Chair, DVC Joel Bloom, for his assistance. As the new Chairman, I wanted to make sure the program reached all our posts. With almost 280 posts in our Department, I wanted to ensure we reached the children and grandchildren of Legion members at all posts who would qualify for this program. I started a process of contacting all County Commanders, DEC's and DVC's and County Committee members asking them to discuss this program and provide handouts at both their post and county meetings. I also extended the deadline for submission so we could receive additional applications.

This year the committee awarded two \$3,000 education scholarships, four \$1,500 education scholarships and three \$1,000 education scholarships.

On Sunday March 22, the Sayreville American Legion Lenape Post 211 graciously hosted the judging of applications. As the event got underway, each application was carefully judged on personal character, Americanism, leadership, education achievements (GPA- SAT), and necessity of financial aid. Overall, the judging was made easier with a scoring sheet created by Will Kramer. This sheet allowed the judges to drill down into each student's activities. The judges were Chairman Hector Quinones (Ocean), Co-Chairman Joel Bloom (Middlesex), NEC Gene O'Grady (Ocean), William Kramer (Morris), and Larry Bishop (Middlesex).

Thank you to the committee for being so helpful with the arrangements and scheduling of this year's judging and for working so well together. Thank you to Department Adjutant John Baker and headquarters Program Secretary Tammie Abdrabou for screening the applications, verifying familial membership from the National Archives, and for aiding the committee.

Congratulations to all our applicants. We were privileged to have multiple students who are Legion descendants, and with past and future ties to The American Legion, along with a desire for higher learning. The judging was incredibly difficult this year due to all the outstanding applications. The committee is proud to announce this year's recipients of the Department scholarship awards: Rachel Brown (Post 232) and Andrew J. Resinger (Post 211) received the \$3,000 awards, Elizabeth Americo (Post 211), Victoria L. Valentic (Post 232), Zoe Wolke (Post 23), and Alexis Thiel (Post 26) all won the \$1,500 awards. Emma Rylie Fedorczyk (Post 232), Alison E. Hess (Post 294) and Annabell Jane Johnson (Post 243) received the \$1,000 awards. We also awarded the Thomas Ryan Memorial Scholarship of \$5,000 to Jayden Connors, (Post 79), a student at Burlington High School.

The committee closed the judging process, and we will be discussing ways to improve upon the current process, such as including the members who are in Post 1000. The committee is open to all suggestions that may improve our program in the future. Once again, thank you to all who shared their time and effort for a great cause that provides pride in the educational accomplishments of Legion Family students.