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L-R: Justice William Bright Jr., CBF Executive Director Angela Schlingheyde, Runner-up Malena Noboa-Egas, Statewide Winner Meredith Sullivan, Runner-up Abigail Meyers, Judge Barry F. Armata and Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly (photo credit: Tricia Rose, Tricia Rose Photography)

**CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF
25th ANNUAL QUINTIN JOHNSTONE
STATEWIDE HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST**

Hartford, CT (June 12, 2025) – The Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF) and James W. Cooper Fellows are pleased to announce the winners of the **25th Annual Quintin Johnstone Statewide High School Essay Contest**. The statewide winner is **Meredith Sullivan**, from Wilton High School. The runners-up are **Malena Noboa-Egas**, from West Haven High School, and **Abigail Meyers**, from Greenwich High School. The contest winner and runners-up are awarded cash prizes of \$2,000 and \$1,000, respectively. This year, the contest generated over 100 submissions from schools across Connecticut. The James W. Cooper Fellows volunteered to evaluate all the essays to select the winners. These Fellows are nominated by their peers based on their outstanding service to the

profession and larger community and are elected by the CBF Board of Directors.

The contest is open to all high school students in Connecticut and invites entrants to prepare an essay on a legal topic that is relevant to students. This year's fact pattern, "[From Flags to Factions: Examining Student Expression and School Policy](#)," delved into the experiences of two high school students, who become vocal in class about their respective cultural and political causes, leading to growing tensions at their High School. As students begin displaying political symbols representing these causes, the administration intervenes by implementing a policy prohibiting political displays and speech. Essayists were asked to advise the Board of Education about the legality of the school's policy. The students performed research and analysis to draft a memorandum that addressed these issues.

Justice William H. Bright Jr., Justice Gregory T. D'Auria, and Justice Steven D. Ecker attended a special ceremony at the Connecticut Supreme Court on June 4th, 2025, to honor and present awards to the contest winners. In his remarks, Justice Bright noted that "[t]he winning students did an excellent job analyzing this challenging issue." The statewide winner and runners-up attended the ceremony to accept their awards along with family members and representatives from their high schools.

Meredith Sullivan, the statewide winner of the 2024-2025 Essay Contest, is a junior at Wilton High School. At school, Meredith is a high-honor roll student. She is co-president of her school's Mock Trial and Model United Nations Teams as well as her local National Honor Society chapter. Meredith is also an active member of her school's French Honor Society. Outside of school, Meredith loves playing the piano with her twin sister and hiking with her family. After high school, Meredith plans to major in history in college and continue pursuing her interests in the legal field.

The first runner-up, Malena Noboa-Egas, is a junior at West Haven High School. Over her high school career, she has been a part of the debate club, which is coached by the Urban Debate League at Yale. Furthermore, she has been tutoring for more than four years, two of those years with New Haven Reads. Last summer, she worked as a lab intern at the Taylor Lab at Yale. This year, she was selected as a College Prep Scholar and was awarded 90% tuition to go study abroad

with CIEE to Milan for the Summer. As for school, she is currently ranked 2/495 in her class. In the future, she would like to go into medicine to provide free healthcare to the rural parts of Ecuador and Latin America.

Abigail Meyers, the second runner-up, is a junior at Greenwich High School. She is deeply engaged in theater, environmental advocacy, and government studies. She participates in four to five dramatic and musical theater productions each year and is currently portraying Ophelia in Hamlet. As a student director of the school's theater program and a member of the Leadership Council of Open Arts Alliance, a nonprofit theater company, Abby plays an active role in the performing arts community. She is also a soloist with the Greenwich a cappella group Soundwaves, with whom she has performed at Radio City Music Hall. Abby is equally committed to environmental issues. As President of the GHS Environmental Action Club, she leads school composting initiatives and organizes an annual beach cleanup. Her interest in civic engagement led her to compete with the GHS We the People team, where she conducted in-depth research and engaged in debate on the Bill of Rights. This experience helped her earn an honorable mention in the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government essay contest. Abby hopes to pursue a career in law, with a focus on environmental or civil rights law.

The Connecticut Bar Foundation, established in 1952, is a philanthropic organization pursuing the mission of facilitating systemic change that advances civil justice for all, regardless of power or resources, to achieve a more just and equitable society. The James W. Cooper Fellows Program, now in its 30th year, helps further that mission by developing and sponsoring projects and programs, including this Essay Contest, to promote a better understanding of the legal profession, the judicial system, and the role of law in society. Quintin Johnstone, the Essay Contest's namesake, was a professor at Yale Law School before his death in 2014 and served as president of the CBF from 1987-1991. 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. More information about the CBF, the Fellows Program, and the Essay Contest can be found at www.ctbarfdn.org.

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