

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute announces the results of the 2024 Great Communicator Debate Series National Championship

(Simi Valley, CA.) The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute is proud to announce the results of the Great Communicator Debate Series National Championship held at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California. The topic “The United States should expand its military presence in space” brought about lively debate. Notably, Richie Colasonno, representing the affirmative side, stated, “If you fail to defend yourself as a nation by not expanding, you cease to exist as a nation,” underscoring the critical need for proactive measures in national defense. Conversely, Tyler Ly, arguing against the expansion, articulated a powerful sentiment: “Strong citizens make a strong nation,” emphasizing the importance of domestic strength and stability over military escalation. The on-site judges' results were tabulated along with the votes from viewers across America to decide who will be the next “Great Communicator.” On a three to two vote, Tyler Ly from Monte Vista High School in Danville, CA was named the National Champion.

Ly said, “The Reagan Great Communicator Debate Series (GCDS) National Championship was truly an experience of a lifetime. And the fact that I won a scholarship which will help me achieve my goals in the future made it even better. The starkest difference between other debate competitions and GCDS is really the community. I have never been to a tournament where the staff and judges were so genuinely interested in connecting with me. Nor a tournament where there is so much emphasis on connecting with fellow competitors.”

Congratulations to our 2024 recipients and their high schools. To see the final round of debate and the awards ceremony introducing each debater, view it on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/live/LwNbp13LB6k>.

\$10,000 Scholarship Recipient

Tyler Ly	Monte Vista High School	Danville, CA
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\$7,500 Scholarship Recipient

Richard Colasonno	Chaminade High School	Babylon, NY
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\$5,250 Scholarship Recipients

Peter Mandacina Rockhurst High School Kansas City, MO

Annie Jiang University High School Irvine, CA

\$2,500 Scholarship Recipients

Elyse Rogers Classical Christian Academy Springfield, MO

Solomon Naraine Rockhurst High School Kansas City, MO

Samhitha Kovi Lambert High School Suwanee, GA

August Kleiboeker Central High School Springfield, MO

\$1,500 Scholarship Recipients

Sophia Powell Apopka High School Apopka, FL

Tyler Szydlo Windermere High School Windermere, FL

Simone Valkov Cuthbertson High School Waxhaw, NC

Feifan Liu Bellaire High School Houston, TX

John Jensen	Heritage Christian School	Santee, CA
Mey Silvey	Stamford High School	Stamford, CT
Wes McGovern	Summit High School	Bend, OR
Alice Bowman	Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies	North Chesterfield, VA

Each of the 16 finalists received an all-expense paid trip to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA, where they competed for the top spot and a share of \$50,000 in scholarships.

The Great Communicator Debate Series (GCDS) is a national speech and debate tour with six in-person regional competitions and two online events, with the national tournament hosted in

Simi Valley, CA. “The Great Communicator Debate Series aims to highlight the critical thinking and rhetorical skills of high school students nationwide,” stated Richard Schroeder, Chief Education Programming Officer at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation. “By fostering an environment of civil discourse, where students are encouraged to explore and articulate multiple perspectives on various issues, we empower them to develop into informed and respectful citizens—reflecting the ideals exemplified by President Reagan.”

About the Great Communicator Debate Series

The Ronald Reagan Great Communicator Debate Series was founded in 2012 to develop engaged, informed, and conscientious citizen leaders by hosting a national series of high school debates for students enrolled in grades 9-12. The debates search for students who can effectively use logic, evidence, and personality to communicate their ideas. Engaging in civil discourse is a hallmark of American democracy, and this debate series encourages students to join the conversation on issues our country faces.

For information on the Great Communicator Debate Series, please visit our website at www.reaganfoundation.org/gcds.

About the Ronald Reagan Foundation & Institute

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute (RRPFI) is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with advancing his legacy and principles – limited government, individual liberty, economic opportunity, freedom and democracy, peace through strength, and national pride. RRPFI is a non-partisan organization which sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, CA, the Reagan Center for Public Affairs, the Presidential Learning Center, The Air Force One Pavilion, the award-winning Reagan Leadership Center, and the Reagan Institute, which carries out the Foundation’s mission in Washington, D.C. The Reagan Library houses over 55 million pages of Gubernatorial, Presidential and personal papers and over 60,000 gifts and artifacts chronicling the lives of Ronald and Nancy Reagan. It also serves as the final resting place of America’s 40th President and his First Lady. More information is available at www.reaganfoundation.org.

