

RONALD REAGAN Debate Series

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute Announces the Results of the 2026 Ronald Reagan Debate Series Championship

(Simi Valley, CA.) The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute is proud to announce the results of the Ronald Reagan Debate Series Championship held at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California. The topic, “*Preserving monuments and memorials is essential to understanding America’s past,*” sparked a spirited and engaging debate. On a two-to-one vote, Annabelle Fernandez from Pembroke Hill School in Missouri was named the Champion.

“I’m incredibly honored to receive this recognition. I’m grateful to everyone who challenged and encouraged me along the way, and it’s a privilege to be part of a competition that celebrates the power of thoughtful communication,” said Fernandez after the final round.

Each of the 16 finalists received an all-expenses-paid trip, sponsored by the Guenther Family Foundation, to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum in Simi Valley, California, where they competed for the top spot and a share of \$50,000 in scholarships endowed by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

The Ronald Reagan Debate Series is a premier national speech and debate tour, featuring a blend of in-person regional competitions and online events, culminating in a prestigious national tournament held in Simi Valley, CA.

The final rounds featured a distinguished judging panel representing leaders in education, philanthropy, and business: Joe Schmidt, Executive Director of K–12 Education at Colonial Williamsburg, and Sonia Moldovan, Vice President of Strategy and Programs at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, joined by an audience vote from attendees.

“Bringing the nation’s most talented young communicators to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is one of the highlights of our year,” said Dr. Richard Schroeder, Chief Education Programming Officer at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. “These students have distinguished themselves through thoughtful analysis, respectful dialogue, and exceptional communication skills. As they debate in a place dedicated to the legacy of President Reagan, we hope they leave not only as stronger competitors, but as leaders who understand the importance of listening, engaging differing viewpoints, and leading with conviction and civility.”

Congratulations to our 2026 finalists and their high schools. Learn more about the Ronald Reagan Debate Series at www.reaganfoundation.org/debate.

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/kk6Q1qcxWzg?si=ZL4lk5t2_upaj_aP.

\$15,000 Scholarship Recipient

Annabelle Fernandez	Pembroke Hill School	Kansas City, MO
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\$10,000 Scholarship Recipient

Harrison Shirey	Strawberry Crest High School	Tampa, Florida
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\$8,000 Scholarship Recipient

Jake Apelt	Collegiate School	Richmond, VA
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\$5,000 Scholarship Recipient

Rohan Radharaj	West Ranch High School	Steel Ranch, CA
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\$3,125 Scholarship Recipients

Pat Buck	Homeschool	Eagle, WI
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Genevieve Caruso	Arcata High School	Bayside, CA
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Jonathan Paul	Aristos Academy	Greenville, NC
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Matthew Stevenson	Rockhill High School	McKinney, TX
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Additional Finalists

Jeremy Ashton	Salem Hills High School	Elk Ridge, UT
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Sol Bosio	Sylvania Northview High School	Sylvania, OH
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Allen Chen	Northwood High School	Irvine, CA
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Joshua Davis	Davis Homeschool	Prosper, TX
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Megan Ing	Punahou School	Honolulu, HI
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Seamus McDonald	McDonald Homeschool	Mashpee, MA
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Gavyn Purvis	Ponce de Leon High School	Westville, FL
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Angelina Ruggeroli	Palo Verde High School	Las Vegas, NV
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About the Reagan Foundation and 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 – individual liberty, economic opportunity, freedom and democracy, peace through strength, and national pride.

A globally recognized nonpartisan organization based in Simi Valley, CA, with a leading policy institute in Washington, DC, RRPFI delivers impactful public affairs programming, policy convenings and projects of national and international significance, scholarly initiatives, and distinctive educational programs shaping the perspectives of middle, high school, and college students.

In addition, RRPFI sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, the largest and most visited presidential library. A leading cultural institution, RRPFI houses a remarkable 125,000 square foot museum with unique historical pieces that tell the story of Ronald Reagan's life, presidency, and enduring impact, and hosts world-class special exhibitions.