

Baltimore County Teacher Has Two International Essay Winners

Press Release: May 28, 2005
Timonium Optimist Club

Mr. William Jones, an English teacher in the Baltimore County, Maryland public school system for 30 years, has taught his second Optimist International Essay Contest winner. In May, OI announced that his student Rae Borsetti, a senior at Towson High School and member of Bill's Gifted & Talented English class, won first place in the 2004–2005 competition. In 1986–1987, he had encouraged Allison Gillespie, a senior at Dulaney High School where he then taught, to enter. Allison also took top honors.

Both students submitted their entries to the local Timonium Optimist Club contest and went on to win for the Maryland-South Delaware District before competing successfully at the international level. Rae's outstanding essay on "The Power of One" won her a \$650 scholarship and a trip to Ocean City, Md. to present it at the Third Quarter District Conference in April. As the international winner, she and her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Borsetti of Owings Mill, Md., will receive an expenses-paid trip to New Orleans in July for Rae to read her essay at the OI convention and receive a plaque and \$5,000 scholarship award. Rae's principal, Dr. June Barranger, says that she and the entire school are very proud of Rae's accomplishments. Rae is also a National Merit Scholar and will attend American University in the fall.

Bill Jones has this to say about Rae Borsetti and the Optimist organization: "It's a great pleasure working with students such as Rae. Thanks to the Optimists for making such writing opportunities available. You're doing a great service for youth."

Bill became acquainted with the Optimists as a youth in 1963-64, when he participated in the Frederick, Maryland Optimist Club's Oratorical Contest. He even remembers the theme: Optimism—Spirit of Youth. Now head of the English Department at Towson High School, he encourages his students to participate in the OI Essay Contest each year. He is the only teacher ever to have had two students, from different schools, win this writing competition that OI began in 1984. More than 1,000 clubs participate in the contest, which is open to students under the age of 19 from the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.