



## *The Joseph S. Rumbaugh High School Historical Oration Contest*

*New Jersey State Society entry deadline is January 31<sup>st</sup>*

The Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Oration Contest is open to all students attending 9th through 12th grades in public, parochial or private schools; or home-school students studying at the same grade levels. The preliminary rounds of the contest begin at your [local New Jersey Society SAR Chapter](#) level; students have the opportunity to advance to the state or national levels, where scholarships and cash prizes are awarded. We intend that the contest will continue to expand on all levels and bring the voices of our young citizens to greater light across our nation.

Participants must write an original oration of not less than five minutes or more than six minutes. The oration must be delivered from memory and without the use of notes or any kind of props. The subject of the oration shall deal with an event, a personality, or a document about the Revolutionary War with a mention of our nation's 250th-anniversary celebration. Each oration must explain its relevance to America today. Evidence of historical research and creative presentation is also important. The oration will be judged based on its composition, delivery, significance, historical accuracy, and pertinence to our 250th anniversary.

The NJSSAR winner of the Joseph S. Rumbaugh HS Historical Oration Contest will receive a \$600 cash prize and a certificate. NJSSAR winners will also be submitted to the National Committee to compete for one of three cash/scholarship awards. The National First Place Winner receives \$8,000; the 2nd Place Runner-up receives \$5,000; and the 3rd Place Runner-up receives \$3,000 cash prize. Each also receives an Olympic-sized medal. Three non-placing National finalists are each awarded \$500 cash. All other non-finalist national contestants are awarded \$200 cash.

For 45 years, the National SAR Oration Contest was named the Douglass G. High Oration Contest after the Ohio Society compatriot who developed the contest. In 1993, the name of the contest was changed in perpetuity to honor a major benefactor, Joseph S. Rumbaugh.

### **The Contest**

The contest is conducted in a room arranged in theater style. Access to the room is limited by doorkeepers. The master of ceremonies welcomes the audience and the contestants. He then explains the contest rules. Orations must be five to six minutes in length. The timekeeper will raise a paddle at five minutes and if necessary, will stand at six minutes. If the timekeeper stands at six minutes, the contestant may finish the current sentence without penalty. Orations that are short or over the five to six-minute limit will receive a penalty from the judges. Only the assigned prompter may prompt the contestant. The contestant requests a prompt by saying "prompt." Prompts will also receive a penalty from the judges.

All cell phones are to be silenced. The audience is to remain silent throughout the competition. No applause may be offered until all orations are completed and the master of ceremonies indicates that applause is appropriate. The master of ceremonies will only refer to the contestants as contestant #1, #2, #3, #4 and so forth.

The master of ceremonies will offer three-minute historical vignettes between each of the orations to permit the judges time to mark their scoring cards. The judges will be incognito and placed randomly throughout the room. Once an oration session is complete, the head judge will receive the prompter's appended oration copies and the timekeeper's notes. The judges will then leave the room to deliberate. While the judges are deliberating, the master of ceremonies will offer an extended historical vignette or other relevant information. Once the judges have decided, they will present their results to the contest chairman. The contest chairman will introduce the contestants, announce the results, and present the awards.

Due to health or travel restrictions, state and local contests may opt for competitions to be conducted virtually.

## **Chapter Contests**

1. The contests usually begin at the local New Jersey SAR chapter level, found at [www.njssar.org/njssar-chapters](http://www.njssar.org/njssar-chapters).
2. The winner of each contest advances to compete at their state society contest. The state society selects a winner. That oration is then submitted to the National Society Oration Chairman.
3. The chapter contests usually occur in December or January. The chapters choose the date of their competition, but all must be completed in advance of the state society entry deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup>.
4. Chapter Cash Awards are determined by the chapter.

5. The chapter winner will receive a bronze medallion and a certificate
6. Certificates will also be awarded to the 2nd place and 3rd place winners
7. Recognition certificates for all other contestants.

### **New Jersey State Society Contests**

1. The New Jersey State Society Contest will be held at the Annual February Board of Manager's Meeting in February.
2. State Society Award will be \$600, a silver medallion, and a certificate.
3. Certificates will also be awarded to the 2nd place and 3rd place winners
4. Recognition certificates for all other contestants.
5. If the state's winner is selected as a National Finalist, the state society will cover the cost of travel and hotel to the National Society Congress in August for the winner and their chaperone.
6. National Society Finalists will include a video, a printed copy of the oration, the entry forms, a signed publicity release form, and a photograph of the state winner.
7. By June 1<sup>st</sup>, the National Judges will choose the National Finalists based on the video submissions.

### **Video Requirement**

The contest video must be of continuous feed and not exceed 800 Megabytes in size. No editing is permitted. It should be recorded in a horizontal frame on an iPhone or Android Phone. By recording it, the judges can evaluate the contestant's stage presence. We suggest you find a venue with a stage and an American 50-star flag on the left and a SAR flag on the right. No state flags or other signage should be present. It is important not to identify the location where the video was recorded. Please keep the background simple, so it does not distract from the contestant. Because we will be posting the three top national winners to the NSSAR website, the videos are to appear on stage. Please ensure that the sound is clear and audible before you start recording. You may use a lavalier microphone when recording. The State Society winner will receive a unique DropBox link for uploading their videos and entry packets. The State Society will assist the winners with the production of their videos - venue, flags, and other general assistance.

### **National Society Contest**

The six National Finalists arrive the day before the National Society Contest. A welcoming reception is held early that evening. Contest day begins with breakfast on your own, followed by a mandatory sound check. Each finalist will have a brief opportunity to experience the view from the oration stage, and there will also be a

drawing to determine the presentation order. The contestants will then have time on their own to explore National Society Congress city with their chaperone prior to the competition early that evening.

The NSSAR offers scholarships or cash awards for the top winners:

1. The National First Place Winner receives \$8,000
2. The 2nd Place Runner-up receives \$5,000
3. The 3rd Place Runner-up receives \$3,000.
4. Each also receives an Olympic-sized medal.
5. All other non-placing finalists are awarded \$500 cash.
6. All other state winners receive \$200 cash.
7. The National First Place Winner presents their winning oration the following day at the National SAR Youth Awards Luncheon.

A complete set of rules, along with the application for both the applicant and the sponsoring SAR members, can be found on the National SAR website at [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)

For further information and contest planning assistance contact:

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or

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