

Essay contest advocates Thomas Jefferson principles

Ashley Feibish

Editor in Chief

Participants of the ninth annual Philip L. Carret "Thomas Jefferson Essay Competition" were honored at a reception and dinner in the Isabella Cannon Room in the Center for the Arts Wednesday night.

The contest was established in 1997 after Carret, a 1917 graduate of Harvard, visited Elon in 1996 at the age of 99. Carret endowed the annual essay competition to "have students reflect on the ideals and principles embodied in Thomas Jefferson's life and career," according to a brochure containing the rules and history of the contest.

Ian Henderson was awarded first place, which included a \$1,000 cash award and an invitation to Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello.

"We feel honored to be part of the essay contest," said Dan Jordan, president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. "We've always enjoyed hosting the winning student ... Our hope is that it will enhance students' knowledge



Brittanie Schroyer/ Photographer

Ian Henderson, Jess Keough and Zach Lauritzen placed first, second and third respectively in the ninth annual Thomas Jefferson essay contest.

of Thomas Jefferson."

During the visit to Monticello, Henderson will meet with the scholars in residence and be recognized in a public program, Jordan said.

"I'm very excited to visit Monticello again," Henderson said. "It will be a different experience."

Henderson said he was inspired to enter the contest after developing an interest for the curriculum.

"I think (the contest) adds to the academic ethos," said Mark Albertson, registrar and assistant to the provost. "Written communication is very important. Anything that advances scholarship and enhances writing is for the betterment of the institution."

Jess Keough received the second place award of \$600 and Zach Lauritzen earned third-place recognition and \$400.

Fifteen students submitted

1,500-word essays in response to this year's question, which read, "From the beginning of American experiment, Thomas Jefferson insisted upon the freedom of the press, confiding in 1786 to John Jay that 'Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press.' This same advocate of an unfettered press later took an apparently contradictory view of American newspapers. He went so far as to label them 'chimneys to carry off noxious vapors and smokes' and, in 1804, even suggested that state governments might claim an exclusive 'right to control the freedom of the press?' And what role did he believe that the press should serve in a free and republican nation? What role did it play in Jefferson's own political experience?"

Each fall, a committee meets to determine the question for the contest. This year's committee members included Clyde Ellis, associate professor of history, Charles Iron, assistant professor of history, Michael Carginan, assistant professor of history, David Copeland, associate professor of

communications, Scott Buechler, associate dean of the Love School of Business, Richard McBride, University Chaplain, Na Midgette, associate provost and Albertson.

Albertson said in choosing the question, the committee first reviews past questions before formulating the newest question.

"(We keep it) relevant to discussion in the academic world," Albertson said.

A separate judging committee consisting of Copeland, Ellis, Irons, Carignan and Harle Makemson, assistant professor of communications, selected the winners after reading each entry.

The committees vary slightly each year, but some members often participate year after year.

"I (completed) all of my higher education at the University of Virginia," said Irons, who has served on the committee for several years. "Thomas Jefferson has been a very real presence the last twelve years of my life."

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