

DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CLERK'S OFFICE



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THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2025 THIRD CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS ESSAY CONTEST

In commemoration of Law Day, the Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals hosted an essay contest for 5th and 6th grade students within the Third Circuit, which is comprised of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The contest was spearheaded locally by the District Court of the Virgin Islands.

The Third Circuit Committee and each district within the Circuit partnered with bar associations, civic organizations, and educational institutions across the geographical reach of the Third Circuit to promote and oversee the essay contest. Fifth and sixth grade classes and individual students were invited to submit an essay with the theme, *“We the People”*. Students were asked to consider questions like “Why did our Founders refer to ‘the People’ in the first three words of the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution?” and “What does ‘We the People’ mean to you?”

Three schools participated in the St. Croix Division: the Alfredo Andrews Elementary School, Church of God Holiness Academy, and Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School. Four schools participated in the St. Thomas/St. John Division: All Saints Cathedral School, Joseph A. Gomez Elementary School, Joseph Sibilly Elementary School, and Virgin Islands Montessori School & Peter Gruber International Academy. The essays were evaluated in two categories: individual essay submissions, for essays written by individual students, and class essay submissions, for essays written collectively by a class. The District Court Judges selected the winner of each category after assessing the submissions for focus, content development, organization, and style.

The District Court of the Virgin Islands is pleased to announce the winners in each category: The first-place winner in the individual essay contest category is Aylayna Francis of Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School. The first-place winner in the class essay category is the Alfredo Andrews Elementary School’s 4th, 5th, and 6th grade Gifted and Talented Class. All essay submissions were outstanding and reflected the great amount of time, thought, and effort that students and teachers dedicated to this contest.

The District Court of the Virgin Islands extends sincere thanks to the participating students and teachers; the Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals; the Courts and Community Committee of the District Court of the Virgin Islands; and participating lawyers from our legal community.

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