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Team Wisconsin Receives High Honors at the National History Day Competition

Madison, Wis. – This year, fifty-six Wisconsin students traveled to College Park, Maryland to participate in the 2017 National History Day Competition. These students were the top award winners (from over 650 participants) from the Wisconsin state competition held in Madison this past April.

"Many students felt empowered by this year's theme as a large number of our Team Wisconsin topics were heroes or important figures in the students' lives," said Amanda Kruger, acting coordinator of the National History Day in Wisconsin program. "Students were immersed in an enriching experience as they were able to tour many sites and a highlight for many of our students was the opportunity to meet Ken Burns. As two of the documentary students told me, this was the most important thing they have ever done."

While at the competition, students also were taken to several important sites including a night tour of the White House, World War I Memorial, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Museums and many more.

These fifty-six students represented a total of sixteen schools throughout Wisconsin. Students represented Wisconsin in the junior and senior categories of individual and group performances, individual and group documentary, individual and group website, individual and group exhibit and paper.

The 2017 Top 10 projects at Nationals:

- Bronze Medalist - Junior Individual Website, Aidan Dresang, EAGLE School of Madison
- 4th – Junior Group Documentary, Ellie (Ellena) Hein and Joshua Elkin, Kettle Moraine Middle School
- 5th – Junior Group Performance, Julia Amann and Libby Pleva, EAGLE School of Madison
- 5th – Senior Individual Documentary, Michelle Lokken, Oshkosk North High School
- 6th – Junior Paper, Julia Votava, EAGLE School of Madison
- 9th – Senior Individual Website, Liam Tsao, Madison West High School
- United States Marine Corps History Award – Annalise Callaghan, Northland Pines High, Senior Individual Performance
- On display at the National Museum of American History (June 14) – Junior Individual Exhibit "Hair"

Receiving the Bronze Medal, the highest award won by a Wisconsin student, Aidan Dresang, is a prime example of a student following his passions and heroes footsteps through a National History Day project. Aidan, a passionate advocate for the environment, started a nonprofit based around a website he created. His nonprofit, Infinite Turtle (www.infiniteturtle.org), inspires youth to take a stand for the environment. This passion for conservation led Aidan to research more into the life of

Gaylord Nelson and his stand for the environment. Aidan traveled to the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives over six times, made a trip to the Apostle Islands and contacted professors at the University of Wisconsin and Madeline Island Archives for research, interviews, letters and images for his project about the establishment of the Apostle Island National Park. Aidan finished third in the nation for his hard work and passion for the subject.

National History Day is a yearlong academic enrichment program that helps students learn about historical issues, ideas, people, and events. Each year, students must create projects based on topics that fit the National History Day annual theme. The 2017 theme was "Taking a Stand in History".

About Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society, founded in 1846, ranks as one of the largest, most active and most diversified state historical societies in the nation. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, its mission is to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Society serves millions of people every year through a wide range of sites, programs and services. For more information, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.

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