

USCSF holds University of US graduation ceremony for 2022-23

For the News-Leader

Recently, the University of US, established by the U.S. Constitution Scholarship Foundation (USCSF), held its seventh annual graduation at Yulee High School for its University of US students.

University of US Director of Operations Sharyl Wood and USCSF co-founder Howard Pines opened the ceremonies congratulating the students while handing out \$100 awards to the 53 graduates and 21 students who submitted qualified essays.

The Honorable Jenny Higginbotham was the keynote speaker. She discussed the key attributes of leadership and, speaking to a class of future leaders, she offered advice on how to develop these leadership skills.

Eva Burbo, one of the top University of US students, then discussed her experience in the program and what her goals are for the future.

Al Watson, president of USCSF, congratulated Constitution Bowl winning teams and highlighted that Yulee High School, with coach Thomas Blake, had now won the bowl two years in a row.

This year, the essay competition topic asked the students to discuss why the founders decided to form a democratic republic versus a pure democracy, whether they would make a different decision today and what other changes they would make in our system to improve the country.

Judge Robert Foster, head of the essay competition committee, shared his insights on the program and announced the five essay scholarship winners.

The top winner, Burbo, received a \$10,000 scholarship. The other four winners, Baylee Cruce, Olivia Rogers, Charlie Norstrom and Landon Plungis, each received \$5,000 scholarships.

Foster then recognized the two leadership award winners.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Pictured are, from left, Sharyl Wood, Eva Burbo, Olivia Rogers, Judge Robert M. Foster, Landon Plungis, Charles Norstrom, Baylee Cruce and Howard Pines.

This \$1,000 scholarship is based on the student's active participation in the program, as highlighted by the number of classes attended, the lecturers and the student's participation in the different events, including the Constitution Bowl, the trip to Tallahassee and the essay competition.

The leadership award winners this year were Ronan Parkinson and Emma Norstrom.

Dr. Kathy Burns, superintendent of Nassau County Schools, closed out the program, emphasizing the importance and impact of USCSF, and then invited the guests to dinner. The U.S. Constitution Scholarship Foundation is a non-profit educational and scholarship organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and understanding of the U.S. Constitution and American Heritage. Since its inception in 2016, USCSF educational programs have delivered more than \$200,000 in scholarships and awards to high school juniors and seniors in Nassau County, Florida. Visit www.uscsf.net for more information.



Leadership scholarship winners Ronan Parkinson and Emma Norstrom accept \$1,000 awards from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Steven Ardia essay scholarship winner Eva Burbo accepts a \$10,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Essay scholarship winner Olivia Rogers accepts a \$5,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Steven Braddock essay scholarship winner Baylee Cruce accepts a \$5,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Essay scholarship winner Landon Plungis accepts a \$5,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Schroeder essay scholarship winner Charles Norstrom accepts a \$5,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.



Leadership scholarship winner Emma Norstrom accepts a \$1,000 award from Judge Robert M. Foster.