



THE PENNINGTON SCHOOL

For Immediate Release:

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PENNINGTON, N.J., May 16 ---Pennington School student Stevenson Sanderson Bowden, a seventh-grader from Pennington, placed first in New Jersey in the 2018–19 Library of Congress Letters About Literature contest, a reading and writing contest for students in grades four through twelve. Seven Pennington students also received Distinguished Honors in the competition, which was sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

According to the competition website, “students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. Tens of thousands of students from across the country enter Letters About Literature each year. Letters are judged on state and national levels.”

Sanderson Bowden’s letter to Natalie Babbitt, the author of *Tuck Everlasting*, was judged First Place winner in New Jersey for Level II (grades seven and eight). Her letter will continue on to Washington to be judged nationally.

Distinguished Honors winners for their creative and well-written letters were sixth-grader Anna Basile of Pennington, N.J.; seventh-graders Samantha Lambdin of Ewing; Riya Mehra of Newtown, Pa.; Hunter Shaffer of Langhorne, Pa.; Nicolette Kirikian of New Hope, Pa.; Mei Mei Castranova of Pennington; and eighth-grader Elena Sperry-Fernandez of Pennington.

The competition required four rounds of judging to select the first- and second-place winners, as well as the Distinguished Honors recipients. The award celebration took place on Wednesday, May 15, at the Livingston College Student Center of Rutgers University in Piscataway, N.J. In total, twenty-four Pennington Middle School students in grades six through eight participated in the competition.

The Pennington School is an independent coeducational school for students in grades 6 through 12, in both day and boarding programs. The curriculum is college preparatory, with an emphasis on individual excellence, fostering the development of the whole student through academics, athletics, community service, and the creative and performing arts.

-30-

Caption for photo: Pennington Middle School students celebrate their awards at the award celebration took place on Wednesday, May 15, at the Livingston College Student Center of Rutgers University in Piscataway, N.J.

From left: Riya Mehra, Hunter Shaffer, Anna Basile, Nicolette Kirikian, Mei Mei Castranova, Stevenson Sanderson Bowden, and Samantha Lambdin.