

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

**Virginia Student Selected as Section 2 Recipient of
NFHS National High School Heart of the Arts Award**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Gillis

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 9, 2016) — **Marisa DeFranco**, a senior at Arlington (Virginia) Wakefield High School, has been selected the 2016 Section 2 recipient of the “National High School Heart of the Arts Award” by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The National High School Heart of the Arts Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of education-based activities. This is the third year that the National High School Heart of the Arts Award has been offered.

With strong academics, great co-curricular activities involvement, and an extensive visual media arts background, DeFranco has distinguished herself in a myriad of ways.

A three-year member of the National Honor Society with a 4.0 grade-point average, DeFranco is a four-year starter on the varsity softball team, where last year she was named Most Valuable Player and earned all-conference honors. A former member of the swimming and diving team, she also has been manager of the boys basketball team.

In addition, she has been the boys basketball photographer and videographer for three years, and a two-time winner of the Scholastic Art Award. Among other awards, she was named Arlington County Manager Photography winner, was a three-time Photography Student of the Year, and won the Videographer Arlington Educational Television Service Award.

Many of DeFranco’s videos were used to promote various athletic events and teams. She also created, directed and produced a music video for Wakefield High School’s Best Buddies. In another

video, DeFranco filmed Wakefield's diverse student body as it promoted the Upstanders Club while sharing the message of tolerance and acceptance.

About the Award

The NFHS divides the nation into eight geographical sections. The states in Section 2 are Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Heart of the Arts Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members.

While the national winner will be recognized June 29 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Reno, Nevada, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 16 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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