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PATRICK HENRY-ROANOKE STUDENT IS VHSL JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Student also wins scholarship

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CHARLOTTESVILLE—Ciara Mulcahy, former junior editor, staff writer and illustrator for “The Edge,” a teen page in *The Roanoke Times*, current founder of the City Scribes writing program, and senior at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke, is the Virginia High School League’s 2016 Student Journalist of the Year and Charles Savedge Scholarship recipient.

Mulcahy found an outlet for her natural curiosity in The Edge program, and soon began “photographing and interviewing students who linger in the school hallways and the diverse masses that many people in [her] hometown fear.” She investigated and reported local stories ranging from the arts, to sports and community events. One standout story focused on local organ donor cases, inspired by her mother’s need for a kidney transplant, which she used to help encourage her peers to register as organ donors.

When The Edge program was terminated due to financial constraints, Mulcahy founded the City Scribes program by gathering a team of forty high school volunteers to teach journalistic writing. This team mentors middle school students in five Roanoke City schools and is planning a writing and local media festival this spring.

“The selection committee was highly impressed with Ciara’s moxie,” said VHSL Director of Activities Lisa Giles. “She displays incredible leadership and is clearly engaged in her community.”

Schools from all of the six VHSL groups nominated students for this annual award. Group 5A, of which Patrick Henry is part, submitted four nominations. Group 6A submitted the most nominations with eight.

Mulcahy was the unanimous choice of a three-person selection committee composed of college journalism educators and a professional journalist. “Ciara’s work is meaningful,” said Tom Mullen, director of public affairs journalism at the University of Richmond. “And her level of scholarship certainly makes her a standout.”

Mulcahy is a National Merit Finalist, Wendy’s High School Heisman State Finalist, National AP Scholar, and a Bezos Scholar for *The Aspen Institute*--only one of twelve students in the United States to be selected for the leadership development course.

Mike Spear, associate professor at the University of Richmond noted Mulcahy’s sensitive story writing and round reporting. “Her story on organ donation was solid,” said Spear.

Mary Brogan, Production Editor at Daily Press Media Group, notes Mulcahy’s passion to journalism and leadership as qualities worthy of the Savedge Award. “Her undertaking of [the City Scribes] project shows her strong commitment to keeping student journalism alive and well in the Roanoke Valley.”

Mulcahy maintains a 4.59 grade point average and has been accepted to Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

About the Charles Savedge Scholarship / Student Journalist of the Year Award

Named in honor of the celebrated publications adviser who was affectionately known as "Mr. Yearbook," the award began in 1991 when Jason Roop, editor of *Style Weekly* magazine in Richmond, was the first recipient. Each year, VHSL member schools may nominate one candidate for consideration. Complete applications will consist of a one-page, typed, double-spaced essay written by the student which describes the significance that participation in publications has had in her/his life; a journalism-specific resume to include staff involvement and leadership positions, internships, conferences attended, awards received, etc.; two samples of work that best represent the student's journalistic abilities and contributions to student or community publications; and a letter of recommendation that addresses the student's contributions to publications and the qualities that best describe the nominee.

About VHSL

An alliance of Virginia's public high schools, the 315 member schools of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) serve the Commonwealth's youth by establishing and maintaining standards for student activities and competitions that promote education, personal growth, sportsmanship, leadership and citizenship. Nearly 200,000 students participate in 28 different sports and eight academic activities, culminating in 162 state championships each year.

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