



FOR RELEASE
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CHARLES GYER of HOUMA, LA, NAMED 2009 PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced the selection of Charles F. Gyer of Houma, Louisiana, who attends Vandebilt Catholic High School in Houma, as a 2009 Presidential Scholar.

Gyer is one of 141 outstanding American high school seniors that have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship, and service at school and in their community. The Presidential Scholars will be honored for their accomplishments in Washington, D.C., from June 20 to 24.

“Every year for nearly half a century we've been honoring America's best and brightest students and every year they continue to make outstanding contributions to society while reaching milestones in their academic pursuits,” Duncan said. “This year's Presidential Scholars continue that trend. They are shining examples of excellence in academics and in the arts and are role models that all students should emulate.”

Charles Gyer is a graduating senior from Vandebilt Catholic High School where he served as Student Council President, Yearbook editor, chess club president, and Quiz Bowl team captain. Charles’ passion for community involvement stemmed from his experiences as an Eagle Scout. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Charles began to research cost effectiveness of natural resource and land use strategies and compiled his research on his website www.energyandgeopolitics.com. He plans on furthering his studies in energy policy this fall at Yale University.

The 141 Presidential Scholars include one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at large and 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts. A 29-member Commission on Presidential Scholars appointed by the President selected the Scholars based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals.

For the past 45 years, this prestigious program has honored over 6,000 of the nation's top-performing students. Of the three million students expected to graduate from high school this year, more than 3,000 candidates qualified on the basis of outstanding performance on the College Board SAT and ACT exams, or by nomination through the nationwide youngARTS™ competition conducted by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.

The Presidential Scholars program was created in 1964 to honor academic achievement. It was expanded in 1979 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, literary and performing arts.

Since 1983, each Presidential Scholar has invited his or her most inspiring and challenging teacher to travel to Washington, D.C. to receive a Teacher Recognition Award from the U.S. Department of Education and to participate in the recognition events.

The teacher chosen for recognition by Gyer was Alan Phillips, of Houma, LA.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A complete list of 2009 Presidential Scholars is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/awards.html>