



## A CHRONICLE OF HIGHPOINTS OF THE IBPOE OF W. INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Annual International Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elk of the World Oratorical Contest is the pinnacle of Scholarship Programs conducted by IBPOE of W. which is an international non-profit, community based fraternal organization. The organization began in 1898 (128 years ago) and was born out of the need for neighbors to band together to aid those less fortunate. The concept grew and eventually fraternal lodges sprung up throughout the United States, Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands. In 1903, the daughters (ladies) of Elks were organized; thus, the Grand Temple of Women became an auxiliary to the Grand Lodge.

Each year (between the months of March and July) many local Elk Lodges and Temples sponsor International Oratorical Competitions. Local winners compete in Local, District (where applicable), State, State Associations and Region Contest.

Winners of the State Association Contests must compete in the Region Contest to qualify for the State Association Certificate of Entitlement (\$1500.) The Region winner must participate and complete in the International Contest to qualify for the \$1,000. Certificate of Entitlement. The International winner is awarded an additional \$7500. amounting to a grand total of \$10,000. All monies will be paid directly to the contestant's college/university of attendance.

Oratorical competitors research the current topic assigned by the Elks Department of Education and develop a speech to demonstrate their comprehension and ability to articulate an informed oral presentation without a script to a live audience and judges.

The Department of Education is proud of all its former competitive oratorical winners' abilities; in fact, some of the nation's greatest scholars and community leaders have been successful scholarship competitors namely:

**Dr. Dorothy I. Height** received an Elks Scholarship. She attended and graduated from Barnard College in 1929.

**Thurgood Marshall** attended and graduated from Howard University School of Law. He graduated first in his class in 1933. He later served on the Supreme Court.

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** graduated from Morehouse College (1948) and became a National hero for the Civil Rights Movement.

**Miss JonMel Davenport** was the 2011 National Winner. Currently, she is an attorney.

**Marcus Reneau** won in 2015. He is licensed to practice law in both South Carolina and the District of Columbia. He is also a member of the IBPOE of W. Legal Staff.

THE IMPROVED BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS OF THE WORLD  
GRAND LODGE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
2026 INTERNATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST  
APPLICATION



Theme: ***“You may encounter defeats; but, you must not be defeated”***

Maya Angelou 1928

Region \_\_\_\_III\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_ Non-binary \_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State/Zip)

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cellular: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY HISTORY:**

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State/Zip)

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State/Zip)

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:**

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School Status: Junior\_\_\_\_\_, Senior\_\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Explain: Official documentation must be provided from school or official administrative governing body)

GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipated Graduation: Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Have you participated in previous IBPOE Of W. (National/International) Oratorical Contest?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ If Yes, provide date, when and where

**Career Aspirations:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Extra-Curricular Activities:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Community Activities:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PREFERRED COLLEGE(S):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SPONSOR: LODGE & NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ Cantell Lodge #1417 \_\_\_\_\_

**SPONSOR: TEMPLE & NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ Gladys Merrell Temple #1049 \_\_\_\_\_

**SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE YOU APPLIED FOR:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ORATORICAL CONTESTANT  
HOLD HARELESS STATEMENT**

In consideration of my participation in the activity identified below and conducted by the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World Inc. (AKA the Elks Department of Education) the undersigned does agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Elks Department of Education, its representatives, officers, and employees from any and all liabilities, claims, obligations, judgements, suits, damages, expenses, attorney's fees incurred or paid arising out of or on the account of the undersigned's participation in the event listed below. Be it understood and agreed that my participation in the activity is not required, expected or considered a function and or responsibility of the undersigned for or on behalf of the IBPOE of W. Elk's Oratorical Contest. Therefore, injuries arising from or on account of the undersigned participation in the activity will not be compensable from IBPOE of W. workers compensation program or other indemnification fund or insurance to which IBPOE of W may have access or coverage.

**Activity:** The Judging of the IBPOE of W Oratorical Contest: I accept the judge's final decision as the contest winner.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Parent's or Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Parent's or Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Elk Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Title

## IMPROVED BENEVOLENT PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS OF THE WORLD



### ***“Keeping the Lamp of Learning Burning”***

Theme: ***“You may encounter defeats; but you must not be defeated”***

Maya Angelou 1928

### 2026 TOPICS

1. Mental Health Crisis of African Americans. Synopsis----Address the psycho-social stigma and economic impact of Mental Health in African American communities and families.
2. Transgender Identification. Synopsis----Explore the legal and social rights of an individuals to determine their sexual identification.
3. How will tariffs affect the economy and employment globally. Synopsis----Contestant must describe the impact of global tariffs.
4. Supreme Court verses Executive Orders. Synopsis----Contestant must examine the Constitutional and Judicial Rights between the executive and judicial branches of government
5. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Synopsis---Consider its relevance including the advantages and disadvantages of open membership.

***PLEASE REMIND CONTESTANTS:*** THE SNYNOPSIS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THEIR SALUTATION AND TOPIC STATEMENT



THE IMPROVED BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELK OF THE  
WORLD  
2026 INTERNATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST SEASON



Theme: ***“You may encounter defeats, but, you must not be defeated”***

Maya Angelou 1928

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

This contest is produced and presented via the consent of:

Rev. Dr. William T. Wallace, Sr. PGER  
Grand Commissioner of Dept. of Ed.

M’s Jessica A Fenwick, PGDR  
Grand Directress of Dept. of Ed.

Leonard J. Polk, Jr. PGER  
Grand Exalted Ruler

M’s Margaret D. Scott. PGDR  
Grand Daughter Ruler

**ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONTEST  
TBA**

## ***INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS***

### **Eligibility:**

1. Traditional high school juniors and seniors who are below the age of nineteen (19) years of age as February 1<sup>st</sup> of the year (2026) of the IBPOE of W Elks International Oratorical Competition are eligible to compete in the International Oratorical Contest.

a. advanced, non-traditional, home school students must provide official status (written documentation) from their respective school's administration.

1. anticipated date/year of graduation should be considered

b. geographically, location is not a prerequisite for competing in the contest. Contestants may compete outside of their permanent address area.

2. Students who have previously competed in their junior year may compete in the following (senior) year providing they did not win the previous International Oratorical Contest.

a. contestant must compete in the next contest to qualify for previous scholarship winnings

b. only one (1) Certificate of Entitlement (State Association, Region) is awarded

3. The Certificate of Entitlement is the official document necessary for Contest Winners (State Association, Region) to receive an Elk Scholarship

### **Contestant Requirements:**

1. Contestants must choose one (1) of the five (5) International Oratorical Contest Topics

a. contestants must research, write and orate on their chosen topic

b. contestants must utilize current and relevant data

2. Oration must be a minimum of eight (8) minutes but not more than (10) minutes

### **Written Materials:**

1. Original doubled space---three copies must be given to the Contest Manager/Director one (1) week prior to the contestant arriving at the designated contest. (all levels)

a. failure to comply is a 3-point deduction of total score

2. Fine turning (minor adjustments) is permitted; however, the speech content may not be significantly changed after the State Association Contest.

3. Copyright speeches are not permitted in any Elk International Oratorical Contest
  - a. contestants may not utilize the services of a professional speech writer.Contestants must write their own speech
4. AL (Artificial intelligence is prohibited).

### **Violations could result in automatic disqualification**

#### **Time Limit Considerations:**

A non-Elk individual will be the timekeeper.

The time keep shall administer and record the timing of the oration and indicate time limit violations to be deducted (if applicable) by the computation/tally committee.

The Oration must be a minimum of eight (8) minutes; but not more than ten (10) minutes.

- a. Three (3) points for each 15 seconds or portion of will be deducted for going under or over the time limits.

#### **SALUTATION:**

1. All contestants at the Local, District, State, State Association and Region must use the same salutation: Mr. Director, Miss Directress, Honorable Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen: I have chosen for my topic\_\_\_\_\_

**Note: The contestant's topic must be identified during the salutation and not later in the oration.**

2. The speech is an oration. The style of delivery should be appropriate to the message; however, dramatic presentations (anything read or performed that has been written by another person (short story/poem) are not acceptable.
3. Appropriate gestures are allowed, singing and props are allowed. The contestant should avoid dramatic presentations including acting or performing as an object, thing or another person.
4. Contestants must refrain from any reference of self-identification:
  - a. including reference to self or anyone associated with self-including the sponsoring lodge, temple, school, college or university association or anything unduly influencing the judges and or audience.

**Prizes and Scholarships:**

1. Trophies, monetary donations, and certificates may be awarded at all levels (local, district, state, state association, region and international) according to the discretion of the respective oratorical committees

- a. State Association Contest: a \$1500. Certificate of Entitlement is awarded to the winner
- b. Region: \$1000. Certificate of Entitlement is given to the winner
- c. International \$7500.

Winners of each level must compete at the next level to receive previous scholarships.

2. Monies will not be paid to the university or college for the winners of all IBPOE of W Scholarship (State Association, Region, and International) until they have successfully completed enrollment and submitted the required documentation for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

a. the student must provide the following document to obtain their scholarships:

- 1. proof of enrollment for the college/university
- 2. Certificate(s) of Entitlement
- 3. signed and sealed copy of transcript
- 4.

Documents must be sent to:

Rev. Dr. William T. Wallace, Sr. Grand Commissioner:

IBPOE of W. Department of Education

P.O. Box 1124

Salisbury, Md. 21802

and

Miss Jessica A. Fenwick: Grand Directress

IBPOE of W. Department of Education

P.O. Box 6

Clements, Md. 20624

## **RECAPITULATION**

### **2026 IBPOE of W. INTERNATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST IMPORTANT NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

1. Participants must be either a junior or senior and below the age of eighteen (18) by February of the year in which the contest occurs.
2. Complete and submit the official IBPOE of W International Oratorical Contest Application
3. Participants must choose one (1) of the five (5) official topics for the 2026 International Oratorical Contest Season
4. Participants must research, document and write a speech not less than eight (8) minutes nor more than ten (10) minutes.
  - a. Applicable points will be reflected and applied in the Timekeepers' score sheet and the contestant's final score
5. Winners of each level must proceed and participate in the successive levels to receive the Certificates of Entitlement.

#### **Salutations:**

Local, District, State, State Association and Region salutation is

Mr. Director, Miss Directress, Honorable Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have chosen for my topic \_\_\_\_\_

International Oratorical Contest salutation is

Grand Exalted Ruler, Grand Daughter Ruler, Grand Commissioner of Education, Grand Directress of Education, Honorable Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have chosen for my topic \_\_\_\_\_