

A HISTORICAL DAY

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE FIRST TWO NATIONAL CHAMPIONS FOR KM AT NHD



Emma M.

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

For the first time in district history, Kettle Moraine has two national champions in two categories from the National History Day (NHD) competition. Middle school students Emma M. and Krin B. were named champions at this year's event, where the theme was Debate and Diplomacy in History: Success, Failures, and Consequences.

A 50-year-old non-profit organization seeking to improve the teaching and learning of history, NHD sees more than half a million students participate annually by conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and state level and the top state entries are invited to the national competition. Emma and Krin won school, district, and state competitions before representing Wisconsin at the national level.

Emma's chosen category was individual performance. The title of her chosen topic was "Lutie Stearns: The Difficult Debate and Wise Diplomatic Steps to Strengthen Our Democracy by Promoting the Establishment of Libraries across Wisconsin and the Nation." Emma earned first place after researching primary and secondary sources by traveling to certain parts of the state and interviewing experts who were influenced by Ms. Stearns' work. Based on her research, Emma wrote a script and performed an individual play. Emma showcased the debate and diplomatic steps Ms. Stearns experienced in establishing a public library system throughout Wisconsin in 1904, more than 10 years before Stearns was granted the right to vote.

"During the Wisconsin progressive era, self-proclaimed radical Lutie Stearns tirelessly debated and used her diplomatic skills to convince political and industry leaders to establish and fund free libraries," Emma states in her conclusion. "The consequence of this historical shift was the empowerment of common citizens."

One of the officials who judged Emma's work wrote: "Your research is more thorough than many academic journals/books. You provided just the right amount of background context and the impact of Stearns on today's modern world. I especially liked how you connected her efforts to the recent push to make Wi-Fi more widely available and the testimonies of both a left-leaning SCOTUS justice, Sotomayor, and Thomas as a right-leaning justice. Again, a huge congratulations for all the hard work you clearly put into this."

Krin took home the first-place medal in the individual documentary category. Her chosen topic was the 200-day marches in Milwaukee in 1967 and 1968. The marches were protesting racist housing practices. Krin's documentary, titled "What They Taught Us: How Grassroots Debate and Diplomacy Shaped the Milwaukee Open Housing Movement," focused on the impact the NAACP's Youth Council had on Milwaukee and the nation.

In the documentary's conclusion, Krin states, "The legacy of the diplomatic mission of youth marchers is seen today through the student protests of school segregation, gun violence, police brutality, and many other social justice issues. The impact that the Milwaukee NAACP youth council had on America is inescapable. This was the starting point for a fair housing ordinance passed in Milwaukee on December 12, 1967, four months before the federal fair housing act was passed on April 11, 1968."

Krin spent hours digging into the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee archives reading first-hand accounts of the events from that difficult period in Milwaukee's history. She also interviewed Ms. Pamela Jo Sargent who took part in the protests at the age of 14. On the first night of the marches, Sargent was hit in her head by a brick thrown by an angry racist. In the film, Sargent shows her scar from that night and explains her grandmother "tried

to keep me from going (to the protests), so I walked upstairs like I was going to do my homework, but I climbed out my second-story window to join the march." Her grandmother was so angry when Pamela Jo came home that night bleeding, she joined her granddaughter and they marched together the very next day.

One of the officials who judged Krin's work stated: "You do a wonderful job of outlining both sides of this debate. You do an incredible job of showing the internal workings of the youth protests. We appreciate how you draw a direct and meaningful line between the protests of the present and those of the 1960s. Ultimately, I think the best compliment we all can provide is that we were surprised 10 minutes had passed so quickly because how much we had enjoyed it."

"I couldn't be more proud of Emma and Krin," said Terry Kaldhusdal, the KM National History Day advisor at Kettle Moraine Middle School. "They didn't just read a textbook and answer the questions in the back. They conducted original, historical research and in doing so, had to overcome many obstacles. They showed grit and determination inside and outside of the classroom. The fact their work gained a national audience and earned KM national recognition is a testament to their talent and their work ethic. We can all learn from their leadership."

Both Emma and Krin are given the title, "National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Scholar" and receive a \$1,000 award sponsored by NEH. In addition, Krin receives The Next Generation Angels Awards from The Better Angels Society. Krin will be recognized for excellence in well-researched history filmmaking in the model of Ken Burns, renown documentary filmmaker. Each year, The Better Angels Society celebrates the first, second, and third place winners with a trip to Washington, DC where they are recognized as part of the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Award for Film, a professional award.



Krin B.

**YOUR RESEARCH IS
MORE THOROUGH
THAN MANY ACADEMIC
JOURNALS/BOOKS**

NHD judge