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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lancaster ISD Student Art Work Amazes Local Artists

Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD – The artistic talent and creativity of Lancaster ISD’s elementary and secondary students made the judging of the Black History Bowl Art and Essay Competition a tight race for the four local artists who agreed to judge the art portion of the day’s contests.

Ultimately, two young students’ artwork were chosen as the winners in the elementary and secondary divisions. West Main Elementary third grade student, De Caymion Andrews’ artwork titled, *I FLY*, a charcoal and pastels art portrait won elementary division. George Washington Carver 6th Grade STEM Learning Center student, Angelica Palacio, who submitted a color pencil art piece titled *Color of Nature* won the secondary division.



The esteemed panel of noted artists included Ebony Lewis, a local teacher and two-dimensional expressionist, Jeremy Biggers, a realism and portrait painter and graphic designer, Cedar Valley College Art and Visual Design Instructor Jessica Battes-Grabowski and Lancaster legend and renowned artist, Jer Giles, a veteran scenic artist, noted for commissioned to re-paint the State Fair Classic icon Big Tex and the current mural on the front of the District’s Athletic Indoor Fieldhouse.

The artwork theme coincided with the National Black History Month Theme, *African Americans in Times of War*, which celebrated the Centennial Year of the end of World War I and according to Giles, the contest unfolded many creative surprises for the industry judges.

“I am so impressed with the creativity in the artwork,” he said. “It is important to give back to the community that gave me so much. I hope it will mean a lot.”

Lewis shared that when she viewed the students’ art submissions, she felt immediately humbled.

“To see the looseness and the freedom and to see students doing things without regard...and it comes out great! I was impressed,” she said.

Lewis, whose works include the use of mixed media, acrylic and spray paint, felt a familiar connection with some of the students’ pieces.

“It reminded me of my work...so free,” she added.



Sixty-five students in both elementary and secondary grades submitted artwork. The artists agreed that judging was extremely difficult because the work was very advanced.

Biggers, who began painting early in life and sold his first painting while still in high school, was also astonished.

“I was not expecting this level of artistic expression and the use of advanced techniques that are usually difficult for students in elementary.”

Specifically, Biggers and the other artists were impressed by the students’ skilled use of mixed media and charcoal techniques.

“When I was in elementary school, we used pencils for drawing,” he said.

Another aspect of this experience made Biggers excited to participate.

“This is important to me because growing up in South Dallas, I did not have access to art supplies,” he said.

While he has been interested in art since he was a young child, Biggers shared that it was not until he reached high school and enrolled at Booker T. Washington School for Performing Arts that he realized that art was something that he could really do professionally and that there were instructors who were good and able to teach him.

Cedar Valley College Art Instructor, Battes-Grabrowski, also found her life path in high school and pursued art as a college major.

She described the judging as very difficult.

“They did some amazing work. I enjoyed the portraits the most and the charcoal sketches were strong and really stood out to me.”

In Lancaster ISD, the students from elementary benefit from a robust fine arts course portfolio lead by highly-qualified staff. All grade levels are exposed to art, theater and general music.

The student winners will also be publically acknowledge at the upcoming Board meeting.

