



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COLUMBUS STUDENT WINS CONGRESSIONAL ART CONTEST

Winner for 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District Announced at Albany Museum of Art

**[For Release April 24, 2019 – Albany, GA]** — Phillip Walker, a sophomore at Columbus High School, will have his oil painting *Mood Marsh* on display in Washington, D.C., for a year after winning the top prize in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District in the annual Congressional Art Competition.

Congressman Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, who represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, made the announcement Thursday at the Albany Museum of Art's Spring Exhibitions Reception.

"It was really surprising and I'm excited to be able to go to Washington, D.C.," Walker said after the announcement. "Art is something I want to pursue. Growing up, I've always had this mindset of STEM education, but I've been really embracing this art side of me lately and I feel it's something I want to do in the future."

About 400 U.S. House of Representatives districts participated in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual competition for high school students that is sponsored by the Congressional Institute. Each district winner's artwork will be on display for a year in the heavily traveled Cannon Tunnel, a pedestrian corridor that connects the House offices with the Capitol. A national reception for the winners will be conducted in late June.

Congressman Bishop, speaking at the announcement, said that when walking through the connecting tunnel, he "can't help but marvel at the talent from all across our country."

Three other students also placed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District competition. Gethyn Ellerson, a junior at Dougherty High School, won second place for *Sweet Reds*, done in colored pencils. Connor Blais, a sophomore at Columbus High, placed third for his watercolor work *Silence*. Honorable mention went to Corbin Austin, a sophomore at Bainbridge High School, for his acrylic painting *Jabo*.

Walker and a parent will receive airfare to Washington to attend the national reception with Congressman Bishop. The Albany Museum of Art, in addition to hosting the announcement, will provide two nights at a Washington hotel and has offered a purchase award of \$250 for the winning work, which Walker accepted.

"The museum's generosity and your support for our students has always been and continues to be vital in making this competition possible," Bishop said to AMA Executive Director Paula Williams. "The support you are giving really intensifies the aspirations and hopes, and gives encouragement to these young people. They make up probably 40 percent of our population, but they're 100 percent of our future."

Williams said the AMA is pleased to be able to partner with Congressman Bishop's office on the contest.

"We always love to have the opportunity to support and encourage creativity in the minds of our young people," Williams said. "We're proud of the role the museum plays in enabling the winning student in this contest to experience some of the abundance of art and culture our nation's capital has to offer."

"A trip to Washington can be a lifetime experience. It will be memorable, and, we hope, inspirational."

Bishop added that selecting a winner was "not an easy job" because the submissions were "exceptionally impressive." The district competition was judged by Sam Stabler, artist and curatorial assistant with Lyndon House in Athens, Ga.; Michael Mallard, professor of art at Albany State University, and Annie Vanoteghem, AMA director of education and public programming.

"As I walk through the corridor that connects the House office buildings to the Capitol, and I see all that artwork up there, I often stop at the 2nd Congressional District of Georgia and look at the submission from our congressional district," Bishop said. "And I stick my chest out with pride."

"I always say that in the 2nd Congressional District we have some of the best, some of the brightest, some of the most creative and ingenious young people anywhere in the world. One profound illustration of that is this art competition conducted each and every year."

He thanked the art teachers, parents, college art faculties, local arts groups and the AMA for their support, as well as the students for their hard work.

Walker said he was excited to have an opportunity to take in the art at the nation's capital. He last went to Washington when he was in the seventh grade, he said.

"When I went there, my sisters wouldn't let me go around to all the art stuff much, so I think it'll be cool to go for art and what I want to do," he said. "It'll be interesting to learn things I couldn't learn when I was there the first time."

He said he started seriously engaging in painting around Christmas when he was in the eighth grade. His winning entry was inspired by Tasmanian artist Clifford How's work.

"The image is of a marsh I visited," he said. "I woke up early one morning when we were at the beach and I took a long trip through the marsh and I took the photo."

"I was inspired by the artist Clifford How to make this. He has these really cool palette-knife paintings with really cool atmosphere, and I was inspired by that, and I kind of brought to it my own history of South Carolina roots and what the marsh and the beach meant to me."

## CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *Memory and Meaning*, works by Masud Olufani, is in the Haley Gallery through June 15, 2019;
- *Undercurrents*, works by Jerushia Graham, is in the East Gallery through June 15, 2019;
- *Ghost Yonder Moonscape*, works by Zipporah Camille Thompson, is in the West Gallery through June 15, 2019;
- *A Life Well lived*, works by Alex Mixon, is in the Hodges Regional Gallery through April 30.

## ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art, located in Albany, Georgia, adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open 10 am through 5 pm Tuesdays through Fridays and noon until 5 pm on Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, [www.albanymuseum.com](http://www.albanymuseum.com) or call 229.439.8400.

## PHOTO CAPTIONS

**Congressional\_Art\_0052:** U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, presents Columbus High School sophomore Phillip Walker with the first-place certificate for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Georgia in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition. The announcement was made Thursday, April 18 at the Albany Museum of Art. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

**Congressional\_Art\_0055:** Albany Museum of Art Executive Director Paula Williams presents Columbus High School sophomore with the \$250 purchase award for his painting *Mood Marsh*. As winner for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Georgia in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition, Walker's painting will be on display at the nation's capital for a year. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

**Congressional\_Art\_0060:** U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, presented awards to the winners for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District he represents in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition on Thursday, April 18 at the Albany Museum of Art. With Bishop L-R are students Corbin Austin, Bainbridge High School, honorable mention; Phillip Walker, Columbus High School, first place, and Connor Blais, Columbus High School, third place. Gethyn Ellerson of Dougherty High School placed second but did not attend. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

**Congressional\_Art\_0067:** Phillip Walker, a sophomore at Columbus High School, stands with his oil painting *Mood Marsh*. As winner for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Georgia in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition, his painting, along with those of winners from other congressional districts, will be on display for a year in the pedestrian corridor that connects U.S. House offices to the U.S. Capitol. The announcement was made by Congressman Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, on Thursday, April 18, at the Albany Museum of Art. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

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