Over 50 Oregon Students Qualify to Advance to National History Day Contest in Maryland

Portland, OR – June 7, 2019 – On Saturday, April 27, over 200 students gathered at Oregon Episcopal School in Portland to compete at Oregon History Day, the statewide qualifying competition for the annual National History Day (NHD) contest. Students presented over 100 research projects, in the forms of papers, documentaries, websites, performances, and exhibits, in front of 62 judges to determine which projects would advance to National History Day® in College Park, Maryland. Over a quarter of those students placed high enough to advance, and many will be traveling across the country this weekend to represent Oregon at the University of Maryland, near Washington, D.C., June 9 – 13.

The Oregon Historical Society (OHS)’s blog, Dear Oregon, recently profiled one of the outstanding projects that qualified to advance to the national competition. High school students Alan Zhou and Kyler Wang are a returning team who went to nationals in 2018 as middle school students with their documentary The Pig War: Confrontation, Escalation, Arbitration (now featured on NHD’s website). Although they now attend different high schools, they were excited to apply what they learned through their experience last year to a new documentary project, Echo of Falling Water: The Destruction of Celilo Falls.

When asked about why they decided to do another History Day project this year, they both expressed their love for history and their desire to learn more about their local history. According to Zhou, this year’s National History Day theme, “Triumph and Tragedy in History,” afforded them the opportunity to explore a wide range of events. After seeing other inspiring documentaries at the 2018 national contest, as well as a film on Celilo Falls in the Oregon Historical Society’s Oregon Voices exhibit, they were motivated to return to the competition.

In a short video interview with Zhou and Wang, which can be viewed on Dear Oregon, Zhou said:
Going to nationals last year was an amazing experience for us. Not only did we get to showcase the documentary that we worked on for months, we also got a chance to see other documentaries and meet people from around the country. We learned that NHD isn't only about the final product — it’s about the journey and people you meet along the way.

Zhou and Wang depart for Maryland this weekend alongside nearly 30 students, including middle school student Kalia Perkins from Bend, Oregon, whose exhibit *People Behind Barbed Wire*, won Best Overall Entry at Oregon History Day. Other notable entries that will represent Oregon include:

- **Stonewall: The Riots that Started the Gay Revolution**, an exhibit by Lane Shaffer, Eliana Leone, and Sunil Williams from ACCESS Academy
- **The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882**, a performance by Alistaire and Ripley Dills from Laurelhurst School
- **The Code Talkers: A Story of Assimilation and Global Conflict Triumph**, by Rishab Jain and Darsh Mandera from Stoller Middle School
- **Let Her Buck: The Tragic Story of Bonnie McCarroll**, by Kaylee Cope and Alexis Leake from Helix High School

As the organizer of Oregon History Day, OHS Education Manager, Kristen Pilgrim, works closely with educators throughout the state to connect students with a wide variety of OHS research resources and digital assets to aid in their project development. Regional competitions take place across Oregon, and qualifying entries compete at the Oregon History Day contest in Portland each spring.

All National History Day® participants compete in the first round of competition, while only the first place winners from round one advance to the second finals round where first, second, and third place finishers are awarded medals. Students may also receive Special Awards in a variety of categories.

More than a half-million students and 30,000 teachers participate in National History Day® annually. Through historical research on topics of their choice and interviews with multiple judges, students learn research and reading skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and self-esteem and confidence. For more information on National History Day®, visit [www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org).

A full list of 2019 Oregon History Day participants can be found at [www.ohs.org/oregonhistoryday](http://www.ohs.org/oregonhistoryday).
About the Oregon Historical Society

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state’s collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website (www.ohs.org), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon’s history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon’s cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.