

Jordan Pilgrim Finalist in the 2010 National Merit Scholarship Program

Jordan Pilgrim has advanced to Finalist standing in the 55th annual National Merit Scholarship Program of two thousand and ten by demonstrating through distinguished performance high potential for future academic accomplishment. Pilgrim will have the opportunity this spring to compete in the competition for some 8,200 National Merit Scholarships, worth more than 36 million, from a group of more than 15,000 Finalists. Approximately half of the Finalist will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Scholarships are underwritten by NMSC with its own funds and by approximately 500 business organizations and higher education institutions that share NMSC's goals of honoring the nation's scholastic champions and encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence.

Steps in the Competition

More than 1.5 million juniors in about 22,000 high schools entered the 2010 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2008 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Finalist, which represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of Semifinalist in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a Finalist, a student must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. The Finalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes the student's essay and information about the Finalist's participation and leadership in school and community activities. Merit Scholar designees are selected on the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies, with regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference.

Merit Scholarship Awards

Three types of National Merit Scholarship awards will be offered in the spring of 2010. Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state representational basis. About 1,000 corporate-sponsored scholarships will be provided to approximately 270 corporations and business organizations for Finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children or the grantor's employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located. In addition, about 200 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 4,700 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalist who will attend the sponsor institution.

National Merit Scholarship winners of 2010 will be announced in for nationwide news releases beginning April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join more than 267,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.