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For Immediate Release

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ZAILA AVANT-GARDE WINS SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

Contestant won local bee hosted by chapter in March

(New Orleans, LA) -- The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated proudly announces **Zaila Avant-Garde**, the first-place winner of its 32nd local competition of the annual **Scripps National Spelling Bee**, has **won the national competition**.

Zaila, Speller #133, is an 8th grader at Clover Lane Home School. Zaila participated in the national bee on Thursday, July 8, 2021 alongside ten other contestants. Zaila correctly spelled "Murraya", a type of tree, to win the competition. The final round of this year's Bee was hosted in person at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort and aired on ESPN and spellingbee.com. **Zaila is the first African-American and first Louisianian to win the national bee.** She is the first homeschooler to win since 2000.

Zaila's journey to the championship began when she participated in the Chapter's bee, along with 59 other students, which was held on Friday, March 12 via virtual platform. Zaila participated in a preliminary round along with 208 spellers on Saturday, June 12. She advanced to the quarter final round, which was held on Tuesday, June 15, along with 73 other students. From there, she advanced to the semifinal round along with 29 students, which was held on Sunday, June 27. Zaila and her parents expressed gratitude to the Chapter for hosting the Spelling Bee. Zaila correctly spelled 'solidungulate,' which means 'having a single hoof on each foot' to advance to the finals.

As the champion, Zaila will receive:

From the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

- a \$50,000 cash prize
- a commemorative medal
- the Scripps Cup, the official championship trophy of the Scripps National Spelling Bee

From Merriam-Webster:

- a \$2,500 cash prize and reference library

From Encyclopedia Britannica:

- \$400 of reference works, including a 1768 Encyclopedia Britannica Replica Set and a three-year membership to Britannica Online Premium.

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Zaila Avant-Garde wins national spelling bee... add one

Zaila's school and The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated will receive engraved commemorative plaques from the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

About The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

Since it was chartered on November 20, 1957, chapter members have engaged in implementing program services through the five National Program Facets: Services to Youth, International Trends and Services, National Trends and Services, Health and Human Services and The Arts. The Chapter's major initiatives include sponsoring the local competition for the Scripps National Spelling Bee; a partnership with Mary McCloud Bethune Elementary School; Obesity Awareness Day; and Law Day, in which Bethune Elementary School students are trained in legal proceedings and participate in a mock trial. The main focus areas are: education and youth activities to assist youth in fulfilling their intellectual potential; addressing issues affecting the African American community through health and wellness projects; fostering cultural appreciation through the arts; and collaborating with other Link chapters to provide services and assistance to global friends. Tracey Flemings-Davillier is the President of the Chapter. For more information, visit www.neworleanslinks.org and follow the Chapter on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @NewOrleansLinks.

About The Links, Incorporated

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation, established in 1946. The membership consists of nearly 16,000 professional women of African descent in 292 chapters located in 41 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and the United Kingdom. It is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of extraordinary women who are committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry. The outstanding programming of The Links, Incorporated has five facets which include **Services to Youth, International Trends and Services, National Trends and Services, Health and Human Services, and The Arts**. For more information, visit www.linksinc.org.

The Southern Area of The Links, Incorporated is comprised of 82 chapters located in seven states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina) and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. For more information, visit www.salinksinc.org.

For more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, visit <http://spellingbee.com/media>

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Zaila Avant-Garde wins national spelling bee... add two



Zaila Avant-Garde – First place winner of local spelling bee and 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee. Photo courtesy of Zaila’s family.



Zaila Avant-Garde holds the Scripps National Spelling Bee trophy. Photo credit: Scripps National Spelling Bee.

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Zaila Avant-Garde wins national spelling bee... add three



Zaila Avant-Garde showered with confetti after winning Scripps National Spelling Bee. Photo credit: Scripps National Spelling Bee.

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