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For Immediate Release

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LOCAL SPELLING BEE WINNERS ANNOUNCED
Top Spellers to compete in national competition in Washington, D.C.

(New Orleans, LA) -- The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated announces the winners of its annual spelling bee competition.

First Place Winner:	Matthew Yi
Second Place Winners:	Abigail Curtis-Moore and Kailyn Randall
Third Place Winner:	Kennedi Rybiskie

The 33rd Annual New Orleans Spelling Bee was held virtually on March 18, 2022. Ninety-three (93) students from nineteen (19) public and non-public schools from a seven-parish area, including home-schooled students participated.

Matthew Yi will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete in the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee. He will also receive a trophy, Webster Dictionary, a lifetime subscription to Rosetta Stone and Scholastic Book Dollars. The second and third places winners will receive a trophy, a Webster Dictionary and Scholastic Book Dollars.

In 2021, the first place winner of the local spelling bee, **Zaila Avant-garde, won the 32nd Annual Scripps National Spelling Bee.** Zaila, Speller #133, was 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 was hosted in person at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at the Walt Disney World Resort and aired on ESPN and spellingbee.com. **Zaila was the first African-American and first Louisianian to win the national bee.** She was the first homeschooler to win since 2000.

Zaila's journey to the championship began when she participated in the chapter's local spelling bee, along with 59 other students, which was held on Friday, March 12, 2021 via virtual platform. Zaila participated in a preliminary round, along with 208 spellers on Saturday, June 12, 2021. She advanced to the quarter final round, which was held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 along with 73 other students. From there, she advanced to the semifinal round, along with 29 students, which was held on Sunday, June 27, 2021. Zaila correctly spelled 'solidungulate,' which means 'having a single hoof on each foot' to advance to the finals. Zaila and her parents have expressed gratitude to the chapter for hosting the spelling bee.

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Winners of local spelling bee ... add one

About the New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

Since it was chartered on November 20, 1957, members of The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated 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: financial support for college students, 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 Southern Area of The Links, Incorporated

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.

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 decent 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.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program, having launched in 1925. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives. Visit www.spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

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Matthew Yi – First Place Winner



Abigail Curtis-Moore – Second Place Winner (tie)

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Kailyn Randall – Second Place Winner (tie)



Kennedi Rybiskie – Third Place Winner

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