

For Immediate Release

June 8, 2017

Contact:

Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

CCSD Scholars Awarded College-Sponsored Merit Scholarships

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Chief Officer

Charleston, SC — Four graduating seniors from two Charleston County School District (CCSD) high schools are receiving college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NSMC); Olive Gardner and Martyn Lemon from Academic Magnet, and Matthew Pitts and Justin Taylor of Wando.

The NSMC announced yesterday more than 3,200 students, including 64 from the state of South Carolina, are receiving these specific scholarships, which are financed by U.S. colleges and universities. Hundreds more recipients will be announced in July. Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the finalists in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program who plan to attend their institutions. These awards provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship.

Gardner is receiving money to attend the University of Chicago, where she expects to major in Public Policy.

Clemson University is writing a National Merit Scholarship for Lemon; he plans on majoring in Electrical Engineering.

“Both Olive and Martyn have been serious, purposeful students who are highly respected by both their classmates and their teachers,” said Academic Magnet Principal, Judith Peterson. “I am confident that each one will be valued members of their university communities.”

Pitts is also set to attend Clemson with the help of this scholarship; he will major in Electrical Engineering as well.

Taylor’s National Merit Scholarship is from the University of South Carolina; he plans to major in Computer Science.

“We are pleased to congratulate two Wando seniors on being offered a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship from NSMC,” stated Wando Principal

Sherry Eppelsheimer. "As [Matthew and Justin] prepare to attend these wonderful institutions, the Wando community stands proud of their academic accomplishments, and we look forward to hearing of their continued success."

According to the NMSC, more than 1.6 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2017 National Merit Scholarship competition when they took the 2015 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. Last fall, approximately 16,000 semifinalists were named on a state-representational basis in numbers proportional to each state's percentage of the national total of graduating high school seniors. Semifinalists were the highest-scoring program entrants in each state and represented less than one percent of the nation's seniors.

To compete for Merit Scholarship awards, semifinalists first had to advance to the Finalist level of the competition by fulfilling additional requirements. Each semifinalist was asked to submit a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance. From the semifinalist group, some 15,000 students met requirements for standing as a finalist, and about half of the Finalists will be Merit Scholarship winners in 2017.

###

About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and several specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities led by associate superintendents. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.

About National Merit Scholarship Corporation

NMSC, a not-for-profit corporation that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of National Merit Scholarships provided each year are made possible by the support of approximately 420 independent corporate and college sponsors. These sponsors join NMSC in its efforts to enhance educational opportunities for America's scholastically talented youth and to encourage the pursuit of academic excellence.