

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2017

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**VBA Announces Sierra Espeland as the Statewide
VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program Winner**

Glen Allen – The Virginia Bankers Association (VBA), together with the VBA Education Foundation and the VBA Emerging Bank Leaders, is pleased to announce that Sierra Espeland is the statewide scholarship winner of the VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program. Sierra was previously awarded a \$2,500 regional scholarship, and will now receive an additional \$5,000 for a total of \$7,500 toward her college education. Funds come from banks all over Virginia that support the VBA Education Foundation.

This year, the VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program had a record number of student participation with more than 400 students hosted at banks across the Commonwealth. The purpose of this experience is for the students to learn about banking, financial services, and the vital role banks play in their communities. Sierra, who shadowed at Burke & Herbert Bank, reflected about her experience by saying, “Put simply, banks are a fundamental brick upon which society is built. They facilitate growth by providing capital for new entrepreneurs, engaging their employees in the community with service projects, and developing personal relationships with their customers. Without banks, our community would have greater difficulty functioning, and we would not be able to sustain the growth we are currently able to.”

“We are excited to award Sierra with this scholarship as she enrolls at the University of Vermont this fall. A key objective of the VBA Education Foundation is to make sure that Virginia’s students are prepared for their financial futures. After reading Sierra’s essay, we know that she is well-equipped to succeed in college, and we are proud to be supporting her education financially through this program.” said Bruce Whitehurst, President & CEO of the Virginia Bankers Association. The VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program began in 1991 when the third Tuesday in March was declared Bank Day in Virginia by the Virginia General Assembly. On this day, Virginia high school seniors spend a day in banks across the Commonwealth shadowing bankers in their daily duties. After their day, the students write an essay about their experience. Thirteen scholarships (six regional, six honorable mention and one statewide) are awarded based on the merit of the essays.

Bank Day took place on Tuesday, March 21st with six regional \$2,500 scholarships awarded to:

- Capitol Regional Winner: William Omberg, Douglas S. Freeman High School, Union Bank & Trust
- Central/Southside Regional Winner: Elizabeth Rice, Parry McCluer High School, Bank of Botetourt
- Hampton Roads/Eastern Shore Regional Winner: Virgil Thornton II, Hampton High School, Old Point National Bank
- Northern Virginia Regional Winner: Sierra Espeland, Colonial Forge High School, Burke & Herbert Bank
- Southwest Virginia Regional Winner: Camryn Cook, Castlewood High School, New Peoples Bank
- Valley Regional Winner: Skylar Wampler, Broadway High School, F&M Bank

An additional six, \$1,000 honorable mention scholarships were awarded, one in each of the regions. The following students were chosen as the honorable mention winners:

- Capitol Honorable Mention Winner: Madeline Enderle, Patrick Henry High School, Wells Fargo
- Central/Southside Honorable Mention Winner: Lauren Lawson, Appomattox County High School, The Farmers Bank of Appomattox
- Hampton Roads/Eastern Shore Honorable Mention Winner: Jordan Wideman, Hampton High School, Old Point National Bank
- Northern Virginia Honorable Mention Winner: Molly Avery, Fauquier High School, The Fauquier Bank
- Southwest Virginia Honorable Mention Winner: Hannah Jenkins, Tazewell High School, New Peoples Bank
- Valley Honorable Mention Winner: Chandler Showalter, Waynesboro High School, F&M Bank

Since 2012, the VBA Education Foundation has distributed \$111,000 in scholarship monies to 54 students, all while educating more than 1,600 participating students about the banking industry. As Sierra said in her essay, “At Bank Day, I learned why financial management is important, and how it can sustain either a positive or negative impact on businesses and individuals alike. I learned why it was essential my [robotics] team established good credit, *why* we tracked our expenses so stringently, and *why* we chose to manage our finances the way we do. Bank Day helped me to answer the ‘*why?*’ questions about building a solid financial foundation for my future, and has given me the tools to now establish the ‘*how.*’”

Click [here](#) to see pictures from Bank Day. The VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program will take place next year on Tuesday, March 20, 2018.

Photo Caption

Sierra Espeland (fourth from left), VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program statewide winner, pictured with E. Hunt Burke (far left), chairman & CEO, and Scott McSween (far right), president, Burke & Herbert Bank.

About the Virginia Bankers Association

Established in 1893, the Virginia Bankers Association is the unified voice for commercial and savings banks in Virginia. The VBA maintains an active legislative advocacy program, provides training to bankers statewide, and provides a variety of products and services to help its member banks best serve their communities.

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