



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

# NEWS

SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Vicki Cessna, Executive Director

269-903-0163 (direct)

269-929-8298 (cell)

[vcessna@diokzoo.org](mailto:vcessna@diokzoo.org)

## The Diocese of Kalamazoo announces St. Thomas Aquinas Scholarship winners

**May 19, 2017 (KALAMAZOO, MICH.):** Bishop Bradley, on behalf of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, recognized ten Catholic High School Senior students who are the recipients of the St. Thomas Aquinas Scholarships. The program, now in its second year, recognizes outstanding Senior capstone projects from the three Catholic high schools in the diocese: Hackett Catholic Prep, Kalamazoo; Lake Michigan Catholic High School, St. Joseph; and St. Philip Catholic Central High School, Battle Creek.

More than \$10,000 in scholarships were awarded for seniors to use to offset the cost of university and college tuition and expenses.

“I’m honored on behalf of the entire Diocese of Kalamazoo to recognize the outstanding work of these Catholic school students,” said Bishop Paul J. Bradley. “The depth of all the students’ topics shows they can wrestle with the challenging moral and theological questions of our day much in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, a doctor of the Catholic Church.”

The top three scholarship winners are:

**First Place, \$5,000 scholarship: Colin Tichvon**, Hackett Catholic Prep, who will attend Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., and major in Integrated Sciences/Physics

**Second Place, \$3,000 scholarship: Hope Baldwin**, Hackett Catholic Prep who will attend the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., and major in neuroscience

**Third Place, \$2,000 scholarship: Erika Spafford**, Lake Michigan Catholic High School who will attend Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Mich., and major in pre-medicine.

The senior capstone project is a graduation requirement for all senior high school students attending the Catholic High Schools in the Diocese. Students select their theological topic at the end of their

junior year. They then conduct research, prepare a report and present it to a panel of judges. Scores are tabulated based on a variety of factors including demonstration and depth of knowledge on the theology topic, research quality and written and oral presentation skills.

“The students’ presentations clearly illustrate their commitment to excellence,” said Margaret Erich, Superintendent for the Catholic schools in the diocese. “Their work is a testament to the outstanding instruction and mentorship they’ve received. We’re proud to recognize these students with scholarship monies to assist them in their college careers.”

Seven runners-up were awarded a \$500 scholarship: Katherine Bridenstine, Hackett Catholic Prep; Gabrielle Craig, Lake Michigan Catholic High School; Noah Ellinger, St. Philip Catholic Central High School; Grayson Obey, St. Philip Catholic Central High School; Taylor Pessetti, St. Philip Catholic Central High School; Philip Schichtel, Hackett Catholic Prep; and Stella Yang, Hackett Catholic Prep.

All ten scholarship recipients were recognized at an awards banquet with Bishop Paul J. Bradley on Thursday, May 18 at Radisson Plaza, Kalamazoo. [see WINNERS for more detailed information.]

-30-

**Caption for group photo:**

Back Row (left to right): Colin Tichvon, Hackett Catholic Prep (1<sup>st</sup> Place); Katherine Bridenstine, Hackett Catholic Prep; Hope Baldwin, Hackett Catholic Prep (2<sup>nd</sup> Place); Bishop Paul J. Bradley; Philip Schichtel, Hackett Catholic Prep; Noah Ellinger, St. Philip Catholic Central High School;; Grayson Obey, St. Philip Catholic Central High School; and Margaret Erich, Superintendent, Office of Schools, Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Front Row (left to right): Taylor Pessetti, St. Philip Catholic Central High School; Erika Spafford, Lake Michigan Catholic High School (3<sup>rd</sup> Place); and Stella Yang, Hackett Catholic Prep. Not pictured: Gabrielle Craig, Lake Michigan Catholic High School.

Additional individual photos available upon request.

The Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo is the territory of Catholic churches and community led by Bishop Paul J. Bradley. The diocese was founded in 1971 when the Second Vatican Council called for the creation of smaller dioceses so that bishops could be more available to the people they serve. Today the diocese encompasses 5,337 square miles of nine counties in southwest Michigan: Allegan, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Branch and includes 59 parishes as well as 23 Catholic schools. [www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org](http://www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org).

## **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:**

### **Colin Tichvon – First Place**

Hackett Catholic Prep

Parents: Andrew & Laura Tichvon

Higher Ed Institution: Northwestern University

Major: Integrated Science Program/Physics

Title of Presentation: “Science, Theology, and the Beginning of the Universe - A unified answer to the mystery of the Creation narrative”

### **Hope Baldwin – Second Place**

Hackett Catholic Prep

Parents: Roger & Suzann Baldwin

Higher Ed Institution: The University of Notre Dame

Major: Neuroscience

Title of Presentation: “Voting as a Moral Catholic”

### **Erika Spafford – Third Place**

Lake Michigan Catholic High School

Parents: George & Rowema Spafford

Higher Ed Institution: Grand Valley State University

Major: Pre-Medicine

Title of Presentation: “Can Abortion Ever be Justified?”

The following students each receive a \$500 scholarship

Listed in alphabetical order:

### **Katherine Bridenstine**

Hackett Catholic Prep

Parents: Paul & Anne Bridenstine

Higher Ed Institution: The University of Michigan

Major: Biology

Title of Presentation: "Response to the Dilemma of Frozen Embryos"

**Gabrielle Craig**

Lake Michigan Catholic High School

Parent: Kellie Craig

Higher Ed Institution: Lake Michigan College

Major: Biology and Phlebotomy technician

Title of Presentation: "Cloning: a violation of Human Dignity"

**Noah Ellinger**

St. Philip Catholic Central High School

Parents: Jeff & Marissa Ellinger

Higher Ed Institution: Kalamazoo College

Major: Biochemistry

Title of Presentation: "Genetic Manipulation"

**Grayson Obey**

St. Philip Catholic Central High School

Parents: Dan & Tracy Obey

Higher Ed Institution: University of Michigan

Major: University of Michigan

Title of Presentation: "The Morality of Stem Cell Research"

**Taylor Pessetti**

St. Philip Catholic Central High School

Parents: Marc & MaryKay Pessetti

Higher Ed Institution: University of Michigan

Major: Statistics

Title of Presentation: "Is Abortion Ever Justified?"

**Philip Schichtel**

Hackett Catholic Prep

Parents: Kurt & Karin Schichtel

Higher Ed Institution: Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Major: Political Science

Title of Presentation: "Is Pornography Negatively Affecting Society"

**Stella Yang**

Hackett Catholic Prep

Parents: Klyul Cho & Hye Ri Chun

Higher Ed Institution: Holy Cross College

Major: Sciences or Chemical Engineering

Title of Presentation: "The Mystery of the Church"