



13-Year-Old Kansas Girl Wins 2009 Scripps National Spelling Bee

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WASHINGTON, May 29 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Kavya Shivashankar, a 13-year-old speller from Olathe, Kan., won the 2009 Scripps National Spelling Bee Thursday night.

Kavya was named the national champion in the Championship Round after correctly spelling the word "Laodicean" which is defined as "lukewarm or indifferent in religion or politics."

An eighth grader at California Trail Junior High School in Olathe, Kavya represented The Olathe News in this year's competition at the Grand Hyatt Washington. This was the fourth Scripps National Spelling Bee in which she competed.

The spelling competition began Tuesday with 293 competitors who qualified to compete in the Bee by winning locally sponsored bees in their home communities. The 2009 competition marked the largest field of competitors in the history of the event.

Rich Boehne, president and chief executive officer of The E.W. Scripps Company, declared Kavya the national champion and awarded her the engraved Scripps National Spelling Bee Championship loving cup immediately after the winning word was correctly spelled.

"Congratulations to Kavya who prevailed over some of the most challenging words known to humankind to emerge as the 2009 national champion," Boehne said. "At Scripps we're honored to be the host of the National Spelling Bee and we're amazed by the skills displayed each year in this celebration of academic excellence. Congratulations to all 11 million spellers who started the journey to Washington, and especially to the 293 champions who captivated the nation this week - one word at a time."

Round-by-round results can be found online at www.spellingbee.com. The ABC Television Network broadcast the final rounds live, with replays tentatively scheduled to be aired on May 30 at 3 pm (ESPN2), June 2 at 11:30 pm (ESPNU), June 3 at 8:30 pm (ESPNU), and June 13 at 4 pm (ESPNU).

Finishing second in this year's competition was Tim Ruitter, a 12-year-old seventh grader representing Times Community Newspapers of Reston, Va.

Finishing third was Aishwarya Pastapur, a 13-year-old eighth grader representing the State Journal-Register of Springfield, Ill.

Cash prizes for competitors range from \$100 to \$30,000 for the national champion. All spellers receive a commemorative watch; the Samuel Louis Sugarman Award, which consists of a \$100 EE U.S. Savings bond; and Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, on CD-ROM from Merriam-Webster.

The national champion also receives an engraved loving cup; from Sigma Phi Epsilon Educational Foundation, a \$5,000 scholarship; from Merriam-Webster, a \$2,500 U.S. Savings Bond and complete reference library; and from Encyclopaedia Britannica, reference materials valued at more than \$2,800 and the Britannica Test Prep Precocious Package valued at \$799.

The finalists each receive from Encyclopaedia Britannica the 51-volume "Britannica Discover America" and the 2008 "Encyclopaedia Britannica Student Edition" DVD-ROM.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational promotion, administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company and 287 local spelling bee sponsors in the United States, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Department of Defense Schools in Europe; also, the Bahamas, Canada, China, Ghana, Jamaica, New Zealand, and South Korea. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all of their lives.

About Scripps

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