

August 25, 2017

To: High School Contacts

From: Tom Changnon  
Tom Changnon  
Superintendent

Re: American Heritage Scholarship Series

Our office is pleased to join Modesto City Schools and The Modesto Bee in coordinating the **American Heritage Scholarship Program** again this year. This county-wide effort to promote a greater understanding of our American heritage provides an opportunity for students to compete for **\$10,000 in academic scholarships** (based on available funding). Over the course of the last 15 years, this program has distributed more than \$200,000 in scholarships.

Students interested in participating are asked to attend a presentation given by Aaron Daniel Pennekamp on **September 19, 2017 at 7:00 pm at Beyer High School, Little Theater**. Students will then write and submit a 2,000-word essay.

**This year's essay prompt:**

*"Is the death penalty constitutional? The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits the government from inflicting "cruel and unusual punishments." Many believe depriving someone of his or her life is "cruel," "unusual," and immoral, and therefore unconstitutional. Others feel some crimes—treason, murder with special circumstances, killing members of law enforcement, etc.—require the ultimate punishment. Take a position and defend your point of view using logical argument and citations to relevant historical, social, and legal sources."*

The Modesto Bee is planning to run several advertisements that encourage students to pick up the packets from their teachers and counselors. **Please distribute these application packets to teachers, counselors, and chairs of the following departments: History/Social Science and English.**

The lecture is scheduled for **September 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm at Beyer High School, Little Theater**. **The presentation will be live streamed and archived for viewing to accommodate students who are unable to attend.** The lecture will be available through SCOE's website ([www.stancoe.org/go/americanheritage](http://www.stancoe.org/go/americanheritage)). We STRONGLY urge students not to depend on the online video but to attend the lecture on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Again, we are pleased to support this tremendous opportunity for our local students and the community. Thank you in advance for any support you can provide to make this scholarship available to your students. Please direct any questions regarding this program to **Valerie Escobar (238-1706)** or [vescobar@stancoe.org](mailto:vescobar@stancoe.org).