

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Church Of God Holiness Academy Z'Qi Chapman Is 2017 Territorial Spelling Bee Champion

Education / **Published On April 03, 2017 10:36 PM /**

Staff **April 03, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- Following nine rounds of exciting competition, Z'Qi Chapman (#5), an 8th grader at Church of God Holiness Academy on St. Croix, emerged as the 2017 Territorial Spelling Bee Champion on Thursday, March 30. He will represent the Virgin Islands at the 90th Scripps National Spelling Bee, May 28-June 4, 2017 in Washington, D.C., the Department of Education announced Monday.

The Territory's top 12 spellers—six from each island district—competed in the 44th annual territorial competition held at the John H. Woodson Jr. High School. The students represented Wesleyan Academy, Good Hope Country Day School, St. Patrick's Catholic School, All Saints Cathedral School, Church of God Holiness Academy, St. John Giffit Hill

School, Gladys Abraham Elementary School, Lockhart Elementary School, Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, John H. Woodson Jr. High School and Eulalie Rivera Elementary School.

The soft-spoken Z'Qi credits his success to the support of his family and coach, Mr. Stephen Marcel. Of his big win, Z'Qi said, "I feel excited and nervous at the same time." He further pointed out that his winning strategy is simple, "Studying, studying and more studying." Z'Qi has only participated in spelling bees over the last three years and looks forward to representing the Virgin Islands at the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The territorial competition began with a practice round that afforded each student the opportunity to spell a single word without points or penalty given. Round 1 began soon thereafter, with each student spelling his or her word correctly. In Round 2, Mera Foster (#6) of Giffit Hill School was eliminated from the competition on the word "brooding." The remaining spellers continued to Round 3, at the end of which Carmindy Pickering (#9) of Pearl B. Larsen, V'Andre Rochester (#10) of BCB Middle School, and Ivante Mark (#12) of Eulalie Rivera were eliminated on the words "doleful," "wane" and "fellowship," respectively.

Aiden Glasford (#1) of Wesleyan Academy was eliminated on the word "Mounties" in Round 4 and Michael Atwell (#2) of Good Hope Country Day School was eliminated on the word "urbane" in Round 5. Near the end of Round 6, Makayla Todman (#11), the current St. Croix District Spelling Bee winner and two-time Territorial Spelling Bee champion in 2015 and 2016, was eliminated from the competition on the word "pandowdy."

Round 7 continued with remaining participants correctly spelling the words "semester," "legislation," "vertebral," and "pedicure." In that round, Waniya Baig (#8) of Lockhart Elementary was eliminated on the word "billycan." After an impressive run, Daniel Lugo (#3) of St. Patrick's Catholic School, Krishiv Amarnani (#4) of All Saints Cathedral and Joshua Morgan (#7), the current St. Thomas-St. John District Spelling Bee winner from Gladys Abraham Elementary were eliminated on the words "palfrey," "surmountable," and "discalced," respectively. Z'Qi was left standing at the end of Round 8, having spelled the word "hydrate" correctly. He then spelled his final word, "prodition" correctly in Round 9 to claim the 2017 championship.

Coach Marcel expressed his pride in Z'Qi's successful run. "I knew we had a great chance because he is a very brilliant student," he said. "We studied very hard. We studied the different languages, the roots of words, entomology, prefixes and suffixes. We expect him to go very far, as well, in Washington, D.C."

As part of his prize package, Z'Qi received a trophy, an electronic tablet and a \$200 Amazon gift card. Additionally, he received the Samuel Louis Sugarman Award, a free one-year subscription to Britannica Online Premium and a one-year subscription to Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online. As a primary sponsor of the Territorial Spelling Bee, the Virgin Islands Daily News will cover all travel and hotel expenses for Z'Qi, his family members and his coach to attend the National Spelling Bee. Each Territorial Spelling Bee participant also received a certificate and a gift bag containing a notebook, pen, flask, flashlight, screwdriver set, and a flash drive.

At the opening of the spelling competition, Assistant Commissioner Chermaine Hobson expressed her support and confidence in the students' ability to perform well. Host Principal Rodney Moorehead also greeted students, parents and guests. St. Croix Central High School band students performed the Virgin Islands March and the Star Spangled Banner under the direction of Mr. Joins. The John H. Woodson Jr. High School concert band, under the direction of Mr. Mario Thomas, performed a series of selections before the start of the program.

District Spelling Bee coordinators, Dr. Carla A. Bastian, language arts coordinator in the St. Croix District and Mrs. Jessica John-Baptiste, language arts coordinator in the St. Thomas-St. John District, assisted in the success of the program; and Ms. Denise Gomes, program manager, State Office of Curriculum and Instruction, coordinated the 44th Annual Territorial Spelling Bee.

Mr. Victor Somme, III, director of the Alternative Education Program on St. Croix, served as Master of Ceremonies; Maureen Moorehead was Chief Judge, presiding over judges Mr. Avon Benjamin and Mrs. Cheryl Jeremiah-Ambrose; Rev. Wesley Williams and Mr. Richard Muhammad were pronouncers; Mrs. Shamika Williams-Henley and Mrs. Nicole Samuel-Miller served as observers; Mr. Gerald Walters served as monitor; Dr. Everett Ryan recorded the competition; Mrs. Yvette McMahon-Arnold and Ms. Dinah Brown, 2017 VI State Teacher of the Year, served as comfort persons; Mrs. Judith Molloy was the competition's grievance official, and Alexandria Baltimore-Hookfin oversaw registration. Superintendent Colleen Mae Williams and St. Croix District Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Maria Encarnacion, offered congratulatory remarks to students.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and the Virgin Islands Department of Education are also sponsors of the Territorial Spelling Bee.

Student and Coach:

#1 Aiden Glasford, Coach: Agnes Bellot; #2 Michael Atwell, Coach: Denise Blanchette; #3 Daniel Lugo, Coach: Sharosne Elcock; #4 Krishiv Amarnani, Coach: Suzy Gomez-Smith; #5 Z'Qi Chapman, Coach: Stephen Marcel; #6 Mera Foster, Coach: Mary Burks; #7 Joshua Morgan, Coach: Loretta Silcott; #8 Waniya Baig, Coach: Daniela Roumou; #9 Carmindy Pickering, Coach: Veronica Sargeant; #10 V'Andre Rochester, Coach: Tamik Pilgrim; #11 Makayla Todman, Coach: Chantelle Quinones; #12 Ivante Mark, Coach: Ellen Cyrille-Charles.