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MARCH 19, 2021

Ananya Augustine is Georgia's 2021 spelling champion

She was last year's state runner-up



Ananya Augustine



Long Nguyen

ATLANTA — Thirteen-year-old Ananya Augustine from Eagle's Landing Middle School in Henry County was declared Georgia's 2021 spelling champion after completing a Zoom spell-off with runner-up Long Nguyen from Sweetwater Middle School in Gwinnett County. Both were in a tie-breaker after scoring a perfect 50/50 on the online written test. Both will take part in the Scripps National Spelling Bee that will also be virtual until it

is whittled down to 10-12 students who will then travel to the ESPN Center in Orlando, FL, in July.

In the ensuing spell-off, Ananya correctly spelled "salal." Long then received the word "burtoning" that he unfortunately misspelled. Ananya then correctly spelled her next two words "lucernal" and "chartaceous" to become Georgia's 2021 State Spelling Bee Champion.

"The feeling of spelling my winning word was quite exhilarating to say the least," said Ananya. "Ever since participating in the GA State Spelling Bee from my 4th grade, blessed in consistently improving each year state Bee, it has been my goal to win it. With all the chaos caused by the pandemic, winning the spelling bee was like taking a deep breath of fresh air!"

Long said, "I am glad to be the runner-up of the 2021 GAE State Spelling Bee. This was an exciting and challenging experience for me, but I also had an enjoyable time participating."

The Scripps platform provided for an electronic, written test utilizing 50 randomly selected words that had not been on a previous study list. Each of the 20 finalists took the thirty-minute timed test that consisted of 25 vocabulary and 25 spelling questions.

The twenty spellers ranging from 9- to 14-years-old, all started out on their computers at 11 am from Brookhaven, Peachtree Corners, Bremen City, and Paulding, Forsyth, Cobb, Gwinnett, Henry, Clayton, Crawford, Houston, Columbia, Putnam, Bryan, Glynn, Decatur and Brooks counties. All had the same goal in mind – becoming Georgia's next spelling champion.

GAE President Lisa Morgan said, "GAE applauds not only our 20 finalists, runner-up, and state champion, but all of our students across the state who despite the challenges of this difficult past year, still made time to participate in their school, district, and region bees. We extend our congratulations to every one of them. As we look forward to the national bee, we know both Ananya and Long will put forth their best effort and we will be cheering them on all the way."

All contestants will receive a GAE State Bee lapel pin, ribbon, and participation certificate.

In addition to her first place trophy and \$1,000 (GAE), Ananya also received an iPad Pro and a \$50 Amazon gift card (Horace Mann Insurance Companies), a \$50 Best Buy card (Cumming, GA), a one-year online subscription to Britannica Online Premium, a 2021 U.S. Mint Proof Set (Samuel L. Sugarman Award), a one-year online subscription to Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online, and a GAE Bee Champion lapel pin.

Long, as runner-up, will receive a second place trophy and \$500 (GAE), an iPad Pro and a \$50 Amazon gift card (Horace Mann Insurance Companies), a \$50 Best Buy card (Cumming, GA), a one-year online subscription to Britannica Online Premium, a 2021 U.S. Mint Proof Set (Samuel L. Sugarman Award), and a one-year online subscription to Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online.

One or both also will receive an all-expense paid trip to the national championship in Orlando, FL should they make it to the final in-person contest.

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