# ALABAMA HISTORY DAY 2027: SPECIAL AWARDS

Each year, a variety of special awards are offered during the Alabama History Day contest to recognize student achievement in particular topic areas. Read the descriptions below to learn about this year's special award offerings for 2027.

## Alabama Character Awards

### Sponsored by the Interstate Character Council, Inc.

The Alabama Character Awards are presented to students of Alabama history whose essay subject(s) exhibit character, or the development of character, in their lives. Students are encouraged to focus their entries on at least one of the Alabama character traits mandated to be taught in grades K-12, which include: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, and perseverance.

To be considered, submit an essay of no more than 500 words.

**About this award's sponsor:** The Interstate Character Council promotes and supports character-building in schools and communities throughout the state and nation. Its vision is to foster a virtuous, just, compassionate society that encourages kindness to one another by connecting education and community stakeholders to promote high-character ideals.

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category. NOTE: Essays submitted should not be more than 500 words.

**Prize amounts:** First place – Jr. ($100); First place – Sr. ($100); Second place – Jr. ($50); Second place – Sr. ($50); Honorable mention – Jr. ($25); Honorable mention – Sr. ($25).

## Alabama Historical Association Special Award

Sponsored by the Alabama Historical Association

This award is presented to one Junior Division paper (grades 6-8) and one Senior Division paper (grades 9-12) addressing an Alabama historical topic within the annual National History Day theme. The award consists of one-year membership to the Alabama Historical Association and publication of students' research papers in an issue of *THE ALABAMA REVIEW: A Quarterly Journal of Alabama History*.

**About this award's sponsor:** Founded in 1947, the Alabama Historical Association is the oldest statewide historical society in Alabama. The AHA provides opportunities for meaningful engagement with the past through publications, meetings, historical markers, and other programs. It is a volunteer-led and membership-supported organization.

Learn more: alabamahistory.net

**Eligible projects:** Both age divisions; paper category (individual).

**Prize:** One-year membership to the Alabama Historical Association and publication of students' research papers in an issue of *THE ALABAMA REVIEW: A Quarterly Journal of Alabama History*.

## Alabama Public Television

## Peggy Haywood Hair Award of Merit

Presented by Alabama Public Television

This award honors Peggy Hair's longtime interest in Alabama history and expresses gratitude for her work building a network of Alabama Public Television friends and supporters. APT is particularly interested in nurturing young filmmakers who will become Alabama's future storytellers.

This award recognizes outstanding Alabama History Day projects in the documentary category (either age division) that best demonstrate the six core principles that ensure the quality and integrity of all public media content: editorial independence, accuracy, fairness, transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability. Special consideration will be given to projects that focus on Alabama folk history. Up to three awards may be given annually. For more information about public media's core principles, visit PBS Learning Media.

**About this award's sponsor:** Alabama Public Television is a center of discovery for people of all ages, motivating children to learn, empowering students and teachers to succeed, and providing a lifelong path to knowledge through our unique programs and services. APT's award-winning broadcast and digital productions share the news and celebrate the life and culture of Alabama with all its citizens. Learn something new every day at aptv.org.

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; limited to documentary category.

**Prize Amount:** First place, $150; Honorable mention(s), $75. Up to three awards may be given annually.

## BIPOC Perspectives in American History Award

Sponsored by State Black Archives, Research Center and Museum
Alabama A&M University

This award recognizes two outstanding Alabama History Day projects; one in the Junior Division and one in the Senior Division. Qualifying projects should focus on individuals, groups, or events in American history that show a uniquely BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) perspective. A focus on Alabama or the U.S. South is preferred; however, subjects may derive from anywhere across the North and South American continents. Substantive use of primary sources strongly encouraged.

**About this award's sponsor:** The State Black Archives, Research Center and Museum was established by the Alabama State Legislature in 1985 and found its home on the campus of Alabama A&M University in 1990. The Archives is dedicated to recording and preserving black history in Alabama and serves as a space for sharing the rich, often overlooked, narratives of black people across time.

Through its collections — ranging from personal artifacts and historical documents to artwork and oral histories — the Archives offers a nuanced discussion of the experiences, contributions, and resilience of black communities. It strives not only to honor the struggles and triumphs of the past but also to act as an educational hub, encouraging dialogue, reflection, and healing. By showcasing the depth of black heritage and culture in Alabama, the Archives hopes to foster a sense of pride and identity, while also challenging historical narratives and empowering future generations to continue the fight for equality, justice, and cultural recognition.

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category.

**Prize amounts:**

- Junior Division $100 (individual project); $50 per team member (group project).
- Senior Division $100 (individual project); $50 per team member (group project).

## David Mathews Center AHA History Day Award

Sponsored by the David Mathews Center for Civic Life

This award is presented to up to two projects in either age division or any category that depicts historical events of community engagement: individuals or groups working collaboratively with each other to create change in their community. Projects should be on an Alabama-related event, movement, or person; however, consideration will be given to those that focus on a community-related movement outside of the state.

**About this award's sponsor:** The David Mathews Center is a non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt corporation in Montevallo, Alabama. We build skills, habits, and capacities for more effective civic engagement and innovative decision-making by connecting Alabama's citizens with community leaders, teachers, organizations, and institutions to share civic practices and discuss issues that affect communities nationwide. Simply put: we work to strengthen civic life in all 67 Alabama counties.

Learn more: mathewscenter.org

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category.

**Prize amount:** First place – $200; Honorable mention – $100 (if presented). NOTE: The David Mathews Center has the discretion to choose to grant one award, none, or both prizes within the same project category or age division.

## Friends of the Alabama Archives Award of Merit in Memory of Rickie Brunner and Cynthia Luckie

Sponsored by the Friends of the Alabama Archives

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY

This award recognizes up to two outstanding Alabama History Day projects in either age division and any category that demonstrate substantive use of the collections of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) in Montgomery.

Projects may be on an Alabama event, movement, place, or person — or, have a broader scope or regional focus strengthened by incorporating resources from the ADAH collections. Special consideration will be made for entries that use collections as integrated source material, building a credible foundation for the project's argument(s), and not solely for illustrative purposes.

**About this award's sponsor:** The Friends of the Alabama Archives is an auxiliary of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, which is the state's government records repository, a special-collections library and research facility, and home to the Museum of Alabama, the state history museum. The ADAH mission is to tell the story of the people of Alabama by preserving records and artifacts of historical value and promoting a better understanding of Alabama history.

See the Friends of the Alabama Archives website for more information: friendsofthealabamaarchives.org/alabama-history-day-awards

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category. NOTE: This is one of two awards The Friends expects to award annually, but it reserves the right to make only one award or none, or to award both prizes in the same project category or age division.

**Prize amount:** First place – $200; Honorable mention – $100 (if presented).

## National Maritime History Prize

Presented by the National Maritime Historical Society

This award is presented to projects that focus on maritime-related topics. To encourage the study of maritime history, the National Maritime Historical Society offers prizes for maritime-related projects in 24 states, including Alabama. Four prizes are offered, with a first and second prize awarded in both age divisions.

**About this award's sponsor:** The National Maritime Historical Society is an international organization headquartered in Peekskill, New York. Since 1965, its mission has been to educate Americans about our nation's extraordinary maritime accomplishments and their continuing relevance for our national prosperity and cultural vitality. Learn more: seahistory.org

**Eligible projects:** Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category.

**Prize amount:** First place: $100 (one each for Junior and Senior divisions)
Second place: $50 (one each for Junior and Senior divisions)

NOTE: All prizes to be divided among team members, if applicable. Both first- and second-place prizes also include a one-year membership in NMHS, which includes *Sea History* magazine, recognition on the NMHS website, and a certificate of achievement. The mentoring teacher for each winning project will also receive a one-year membership with NMHS and recognition on the NMHS website.

## UAB History Scholarships

Presented by the UAB Department of History

UAB COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

UAB's Department of History is offering two awards:

- (1) Up to $10,000 in one-time scholarships to first-place winners of the 2025 Alabama History Day competition. Students must be current high school juniors or seniors participating in the Senior Division. To receive the scholarship, students must enroll at UAB as a history major.
- (2) $100 for the best individual paper/project on the topic of Civil Rights History.

**About the sponsor:** UAB's Department of History is home to world-class faculty with diverse teaching and research interests spanning the globe, from ancient history to the contemporary era. Our location in downtown Birmingham allows students to do internships at museums and historical sites. Birmingham is a perfect place to study urban and public history (two of our strengths!), the history of race and civil rights, nation-building and nationalism, documentary filmmaking, and the histories of technology, medicine, and health.

UAB's Department of History also houses a Media Studies minor. The minor provides students a solid grounding in the history, theory and practice of documentary film, film history, oral history, ethnography, community studies, and media theory. Learn more at uab.edu/history.

**Scholarship award guidelines:**

- The scholarship will be awarded to individual projects only.
- Projects may relate to any topic.
- Scholarship will be received *after* enrolling at UAB and declaring a major in history.

**Scholarship eligible projects**: Individual projects, any category; Senior Division first-place winners who are *current high school juniors or seniors.*

**Civil Rights History Award eligible projects:** Individual projects, both age divisions; any category.

**Prize amounts**:

- Scholarship: Up to $10,000 one-time scholarship
- Civil Rights History Award: $100 (one each for Junior and Senior divisions)

ALABAMA HUMANITIES ALLIANCE

## Wayne Smith Memorial Award in Memory of William Wayne Smith

Presented by the William Wayne Smith Foundation

This award recognizes two outstanding Alabama History Day projects; one in the Junior Division and one in the Senior Division. Projects should demonstrate **substantive use of a map** or maps, geographic or topographic resources that are integrated within the project. Special consideration will be made for entries that use archives or historically accurate maps, building a credible foundation for the project's argument(s) as it relates to the annual theme, and not solely included for illustrative purposes.

**About this award's sponsor:** The WWS Foundation is a nonprofit established in memory of William Wayne Smith. He was born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1926. Smith served in the U.S. Navy during WWII as a Sonarman Second Class. He returned to Montgomery after the war and began working for the Otis Elevator Company. Smith traveled extensively throughout his career, visiting every state and dozens of foreign countries. Upon his retirement, he continued to travel as part of the Friendship Force, highlighted by trips to Egypt and China. Throughout his life, he appreciated anyone with a strong understanding of maps and geography.

**Eligible projects**: Individual and team projects; both age divisions; any category.

**Prize amounts**:

- Junior Division $100 (individual project); $50 per team member (group project).
- Senior Division $100 (individual project); $50 per team member (group project).