

BRANCH NEWS

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

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**THE ENGLISH
SPEAKING UNION
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH**

**Monday
March
6**

**Refreshments
3:30 p.m.**

**Lecture
4:00 p.m.**

**University Club
of Winter Park
841 N. Park Ave,
Winter Park, FL**

**Program Leader
Elaine Laegeler**

Join Us on Monday, March 6!

Barbara Perry, Ph.D.
presents

The Kennedys in England
From Fairytale to World War II Nightmare



Professor Barbara A. Perry, a presidential scholar, and Kennedy family biographer will speak on how one of America's most historic dynasties experienced the heights of political and social achievement in pre-war London only to see their dreams dashed by diplomatic missteps and the tragedies of wartime casualties.

Barbara A. Perry is the Gerald L. Baliles Professor and director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

Shakespeare Competition Results!



On February 20, 17 students from the tri-county area arrived at Orlando Shakes to participate in The English-Speaking Union’s annual Shakespeare competition. Contestants were vying for the opportunity to win \$1,000.00, an additional prize to cover the cost of travel to New York City for the National competition, and a scholarship to Orlando Shakes’ The Young Company, which is valued at \$250.00. This year’s contenders made for difficult judging decisions. On the panel of judges this year were Anne Hering: Director of Education at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Donna Miller; former Program Coordinator for Orange County’s Language Arts, and Dr. Maurice “Sucky” O’Sullivan: Kenneth Curry Professor of Literature Emeritus at Rollins College.





Left to Right: Casey Kerr, Delaney Polk, James Helsing

Casey Kerr from Lake Nona High School took First Place with a portrayal of Bottom from A Midsummer Night's Dream and Sonnet 81 under the direction of their teacher, Ms. Jennifer Gautier. Second Place went to Delaney Polk from Windermere Prep. Delaney was coached by her teacher, Ms. BambiEllen Fadoul, on her depiction of Lady Macbeth from Macbeth and Sonnet 144. In Third Place was James Helsing who was trained by his teacher, Ms. Marie Gentile, at Boone High School.

New to the competition in 2021 was the Richard Burbage Award. Named after one of the most famous actors at The Globe Theatre, this award celebrates the work and dedication of teacher sponsors who have managed year after year to keep their students engaged, their involvement in our competition ongoing, and our audiences enriched. The 2023 recipient of the Richard Burbage Award is long-standing sponsor Kristopher Kahn of Cypress Creek High School. The final award given this year is The Love of the Bard Award. This award requires a teacher nomination and is an award given annually to one student who, "Exhibits determination, grit, fortitude, and a true passion for Shakespeare's works." This year's winner is Malaki Headrick of Avalon Private School.

After serving 27 years as either the Shakespeare Competition Coordinator for the Central Florida Branch of the ESU, or an Assistant Coordinator, Ginger Bryant completed her final year of service in her rewarding role. Brett Carrier will be seamlessly stepping into the role for the 2024 Shakespeare Competition. We wish Casey Kerr the best of luck in New York City at the national competition this April.

Ginger Bryant, Shakespeare Chair



Branch Winner and Team Teachers
Left to Right: Jennifer Gautier, Casey Kerr, Gail Chase



President's Message

All Things March



March is one of our more curious months. In addition to knowing we need to beware the Ides of March, we celebrate everything from **National Grammar Day** (the 4th) and **Dentist's Day** (the 6th) to **International Women's Day** (the 8th) and both **Potato Chips** and **Pi** on the 14th. (3.14 is, of course, the perfect day for pi.)

For many of us, the month's most important day is March 17, **St. Patrick's Day**. That is especially important in Florida where the New World's celebration of Ireland's Patron Saint, a man never officially canonized a saint, began. In 1601 Padre Ricardo Arturo, the St. Augustine parish priest sponsored the first parade in honor of San Patricio. Like many who came to La Florida with the Spanish, Ricardo Arturo was actually an Irishman, Fr. Richard Arthur. During the generations when Irish Catholics could not own land, attend schools, or hold office in their native land, many sought careers and fortunes in France and Spain. In France they founded wineries and one, Richard Hennessy, began distilling and exporting brandies. Hennessy Cognac is now the world's best-selling brand.

The Irish who migrated to Spain became an essential part of Florida's heritage. Miguel O'Reilly and Thomas Hasset, two of the many Irish priests who came to Florida, supervised the building of St. Augustine's Cathedral from 1793 to 1797. Arturo O'Neill led Spain's Hibernian Brigade, composed primarily of Irish soldiers, during our Revolutionary War as it supported the colonies by raiding English settlements throughout the Caribbean and eventually capturing Pensacola in 1781 to force the surrender of British troops in one of the two American colonies that remained loyal to England.

For his service Colonel O'Neill was appointed the first Spanish Governor of West Florida from 1781 to 1792. Another Dublin-born Spanish officer, Enrique White, served as Governor of East Florida from 1796 to 1811.

President's Message Continued...

Our state's Irish heritage is not, of course, solely military or ecclesiastical. We have four unincorporated areas (Hibernia, Shamrock, Dublin, Killarney) named in honor of the land the Romans called Hibernia, the land of winter, a place they considered far too cold to even consider invading. That may be why so many Irish citizens choose to hibernate in the Sunshine State each year, joining the 8.4% of the state's residents who claimed Irish ancestry in the 2020 census.

Above all, St. Patrick's Day is a celebration of the man who in the fifth century transformed himself and Ireland. Kidnapped as a teenager and brought to Ireland as a slave, he escaped, became a priest, and returned as a missionary. Among all the legends about him, the most convincing ones have him converting the Irish to a new kind of Christianity, one that celebrated life and beauty and treated men and women equally. At the same time, he convinced his adopted people to abolish and condemn slavery almost a millennium and a half before our country did.

This year we are especially fortunate that the Winter Park Art Festival begins on St. Patrick's Day. As we celebrate both, remember that the traditional Irish toast on St. Patrick's Day is sláinte (slahn-cha [to your health]), although my father, especially as he grew older, preferred, "May you live as long as you want, and never want as long as you live."

Sláinte,

Socky O'Sullivan
President



ESU NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT



The Nominating Committee would like to invite any of the Central Florida Branch membership interested in participating more in-depth by serving in any capacity to let us know. You will find it a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

If you would like to contribute your time and talents by serving as an officer on the board, please contact Nominating Committee chair Elaine Laegeler at laegelere@gmail.com. If you would like to serve on one of the committees, please contact President Socky O'Sullivan at mosullivan@rollins.edu.

Elaine Laegeler, Nominating Chair



Introducing Our 2023 Drey Scholars!

The Scholarship Committee met on January 14 to review applications for the Teachers Learning Abroad (Tlab) and met again January 28 to conduct interviews. I want to recognize the committee members of our ESU Branch for all the time and dedication it takes to read the applications, university transcripts, essays, cvs and letters of recommendation, and traveling to the University Club for interviews that began at 8 a.m. on a Saturday morning. They are Jan McClure, Donna Miller, Fran Morrissey, and Kristina Thompson. They deserve a big round of applause!

After deliberations, the committee chose five teachers from Orange and Seminole Counties to be our 2023 Drey Scholars; it gives me great pleasure to announce their names and the schools where they teach our youth:

- Bryan Boggiano from Lake Nona High School will be attending the Globe Theater's Program, Teaching Shakespeare through Performance.
- Jonathan Jackson from Windermere High School will also be attending the Globe Theater's Program, Teaching Shakespeare through Performance.
- Olivia Mindermann from Horizon High School will be attending University of Edinburgh and studying Creative Writing.
- Jillian Rodriguez from Lake Howell High School will be attending Oxford University and studying History, Politics and Society at Exeter College.
- Greg Wedel from Lake Howell High School will be attending University of Edinburgh and studying Modernism and Contemporary Literature.

Congratulations to these amazing educators, and we wish them many adventures this summer as they travel across the pond, representing our Branch in the United Kingdom and furthering their educational experiences.

Reta Jackson, Scholarship Chair



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2023 Drey Scholars' Reception

Family members and friends of the newly named Drey Scholars, with members of the Executive Board of Central Florida Branch of ESU and active members of our Branch, gathered on Sunday afternoon, February 5th in the Library of the WP University Club to honor our 2023 Scholars. The program began at 2 p.m. with Reta Jackson, Scholarship Chair, introducing Dr. Maurice O'Sullivan, President of the Branch, who gave a brief history and explanation of this international organization. Then, Donna Miller talked about her friend, Jessie Drey, who endowed our organization with the monies that support the Teachers Learning Abroad (Tlab) scholarship program. The program continued with Reta introducing each scholar and Dr. O'Sullivan presenting a certificate. Gisela Davis presented a full-year branch membership and a membership badge so all can recognize our scholars, and Jackie Abrams gave each the initial check for \$2,000 to be used for travel expenses and books. Their tuition, room, and board will be paid by invoice from the National Office of ESU and ranges from \$5,000 to \$6,600 depending on the program. The audience gave lots of applause for each of these wonderful educators who represent the best of the teaching profession.



Following the program, everyone enjoyed the refreshments of sandwiches, fruits, soft drinks, and of course, George's famous cookies. Lots of conversation and congratulations filled the library and many pictures were taken.

I must share one unusual note. Two former scholars came to support and honor Olivia Mindermann because Sheri Hjelm was Olivia's AP literature teacher when she was a high school student and Kristina Thompson was her directing teacher when she interned at Freedom High School. Now, Olivia is making them proud by joining the teaching profession at Horizon High School. What a legacy!



Left to Right: Sheri Hjelm, Olivia Mindermann, Kristina Thompson

Reta Jackson, Scholar Chair

Program Schedule 2022-2023

All programs are on Mondays at the University Club of Winter Park unless otherwise indicated.

Monday, March 6, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Barbara Perry, UVA

“The Kennedys in England”

From Fairytale to World War II Nightmare

Monday, April 3, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Holly Mandelkern

“Kindertransport Program of 1938 through 1939”

Monday, May 1, 2023, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Speaker: Ed Larson

George Washington’s Second Revolution.

Our Annual General Meeting will precede our guest speaker, Ed Larson

Former Scholar Update!



Congrats!

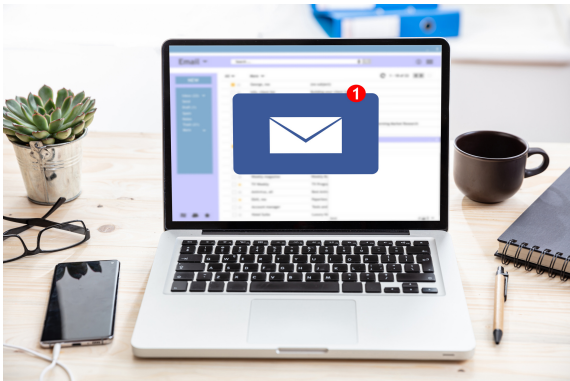
Elaine Wiedemer, former Drey Scholar 2018 who studied at Oxford, has received her Doctorate of Education. Here, she is pictured with her daughter who- like us -is proud of her Mom. Elaine continues teaching for the Department of Defense at the American Air Force Base in Spangdahelm, Germany.



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**THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
CENTRAL FLORIDA BRANCH
Membership Application**

- I wish to become a member of the English-Speaking Union, Central Florida Branch.
- I wish to renew my membership of the English-Speaking Union, Central Florida Branch.

Please send a check for \$45 (single membership) or \$60 (couple membership) to the **English-Speaking Union, 144 East 39th Street, New York., NY 10016.**

Name and Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

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Visit the E-SU Central Florida website at www.E-SUus.org/centralflorida for more information.

**The English-Speaking Union
Central Florida Branch**

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