Wyoming County Writing Contest

***Topic – Wyoming County History & Culture***

The Wyoming County Planning Commission is hosting a writing competition to encourage and recognize, through grant awards, new or established writers of Wyoming County, WV. The purpose is to help keep alive and inspire new historical and cultural endeavors through the craft of writing. Applicants must submit an entry to the Planning Commission comprised of writers and Wyoming County residents approved by the Beckley Area Foundation (BAF).

Awards will be made based upon the merit of submitted work. There will be three prizes available for elementary students and two prizes available for each of the remaining categories. Winners will be announced in the early Summer of 2024. There is no entry fee, although we encourage each applicant to only submit 1-3 entries. These awards are made possible by the generous gift of a Wyoming County donor, Lonnie Bailey, who created the Literature Fund for Wyoming County at BAF. This is the fourth year for the Literature Fund awards. Each entry will receive a certificate of participation.

Lonnie Bailey is the author of 22 books, 21 of them being composed of poetry. His poetry has been published in 136 anthologies and his songs have been included on sixteen CDs; he had a play performed by the Mullens Community Theater. On more than 300 occasions he has had material published in various newspapers and magazines over three decades. Lonnie Bailey’s work, both prose and poetry, has received dozens of national and international honors. Lonnie has also been inducted into the Poetry Hall of Fame four times.

BAF was established in 1985 and began with a gift of $1.1 million from the Dr. Thomas Walker Memorial Health Foundation as "seed" money for the Raleigh County project. BAF assets have grown to nearly $60 million in over 500 different funds managed by three trustee banks. Today, the BAF is one of West Virginia’s largest community foundations. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed more than $20 million to charities and other worthy projects in the fields of education, public recreation, health and human services, the arts and beautification.

***Deadline***

Entries must be submitted to the Planning Commission between January 15, 2024, and May 1, 2024.

***Eligibility***

The entrant must be a resident of Wyoming County in grades 1-12 or adults 18+. Public, private and homeschool students are allowed. All entries must be the original work of the entrant. Published works are not eligible to be entered.

***Categories & Prizes***

**Elementary (1st-5th grade)**

1st - $150/medal 2nd $100/medal 3rd $50/medal

**Middle School (6th-8th grade)**

1st - $200/medal 2nd $150/medal

**High School (9th-12th grade)**

1st - $200/medal 2nd $150/medal

**Adults (18+)**

1st - $500/medal 2nd $400/medal

***Guidelines***

The author’s name must not appear in the entry.

Entries must be titled, typed in standard 12-point font on one side of 8.5x11 white paper and double-spaced. (A parent or teacher may assist with typing elementary school entries.)

Each entry must contain at least 1,000 words with a 5,000-word max; 1st -5th grades have a 200-word minimum.

Entries with multiple pages must be stapled or secured with paper clips.

Entries must be the original work of the entrant.

All sources should be specifically named.

Poetry will be accepted and not have a word requirement.

Please submit a separate page with your name, category, and school name (if applicable).

***Submission***

Entries must be sent to the Planning Commission at 506A River Road, P.O. Box 1828, Pineville, WV, 24874 or emailed to [christylaxton@wyomingcounty.com](mailto:christylaxton@wyomingcounty.com). **If emailing, please include “Wyoming County Writing Contest” in the subject line.**

***Elementary students may choose to write from one of the following prompts (or create your own):***

**Sunny Summer Day…** What is your favorite thing to do in Wyoming County on sunny summer days?

**Unique Facts...** Research and share three unique facts about Wyoming County.

**Pay it Forward…** What is one thing you would like to do now or in the future to make Wyoming County a better place**?**

**Cityscapes…** If you had a friend visit from another state, what is the one place in Wyoming County you would insist they visit or see? What makes this place so special?

**Notable people…** Write about a famous person born and raised in Wyoming County.