

THE 2014 ELAINE EHLERS ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

NEIL McNULTY

I am Dick Eger, A Trustee on the Morris Arts Board, and it is my pleasure tonight to present Morris Arts' two arts scholarship winners.

Thirteen years ago, Morris Arts collaborated with Elaine Ehlers' family to initiate a scholarship to be given annually to foster new artistic talent, helping a graduating Morris County high school senior who possesses artistic talent to pursue further study in an area related to the arts. Created as a tribute to the memory of my late wife, Elaine Ehlers, the scholarship is an enduring legacy to recognize artistic excellence and encourage the artists of the future. Elaine, a health-care administrator by profession, had a voracious appetite for all things artistic and musical. She derived intellectual and emotional sustenance from the arts, and received great pleasure when she took young people to concerts, the theater and museums.

Morris Arts invites young artists of Morris County who exhibited artistic excellence in the areas of dance, drama, music and the visual arts to compete for this scholarship.

I am pleased to announce that this year's Elaine Ehlers Arts Scholarship award winner of \$5,000 is Neil McNulty, who lives in Randolph, NJ and is a graduating senior at Randolph High School in Randolph.

This talented young percussionist distinguished himself on a national level, earning the position as first chair/principal percussionist in this year's All-Nation Symphony Orchestra, marking him as one of the top high school percussionists in the country. To qualify for that level of recognition, he had to score as a top percussionist for All-Eastern, All-State and Regional

ensembles over a period of years. He has also performed with the House band rhythm section of Jazz at Lincoln Center Band Director Academy, was a finalist in the Don Bosco Prep's Young Artist's Scholarship Competition, and performed world premieres of *Future Relics* and *Flare!* by composer David Sampson. A second place winner in this year's *Morristown's Got Talent* competition as one of the members of *Marimba Four*, Neil successfully made it through the prescreening process at two top conservatories, the Eastman School of Music and Juilliard. Neil's application DVD included an exceptional performance of a highly challenging work for timpani by Elliott Carter, a leading 20th century composer (known for the rhythmic complexity of his music) and a lyrical, intricate composition for marimba by Japanese composer Akeiko Abe.

One recommendation stated, "In my 27-year tenure, I would place him in my top 1% of student musicians....What sets Neil apart from every other percussionist I have sent to music school is his, still, undeveloped raw talent. I see most High School seniors come close to nearing their potential. This young man, although incredibly accomplished, has a staggering amount of natural talent still unrefined. I cannot wait to see what heights he will reach."

Another recommender stated, "Mr. McNulty is a very passionate person regarding his love of music and desire to become a professional musician. Neil is one of the most talented young musicians that I have worked with over my professional career...."

The Arts Scholarship panel jurying this year's applications was unanimous in its choice for the Ehlers Scholarship. They were very

impressed by the wide range of Neil's talent, his mastery of multiple instruments, his expressiveness, skill, poise and exceptional musicianship.

Therefore, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Morris Arts, it is my great pleasure and privilege to award the thirteenth annual Elaine Ehlers Arts Scholarship to this outstanding young percussionist, Neil McNulty.

March 27, 2014