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Georgia Southern University

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Evin Hughes, Dual Major in Information Technology and Writing and Linguistics Wins Muhammad Ali Writing Award for Ethics

September 27, 2012

Georgia Southern University senior Evin Hughes has won the first ever Muhammad Ali Writing Award for Ethics. The award, co-sponsored by the Muhammad Ali Center and the Norman Mailer Center and Writers Colony, in partnership with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), is given to the outstanding college student whose writing reflects Muhammad Ali's legacy of living a life dedicated to high ethical standards.

Lonnie and Muhammad Ali, and director, screenwriter, and producer Oliver Stone will present Hughes the award and a check for \$10,000 at the Norman Mailer Center's fourth annual benefit gala on Thursday, Oct. 4, in New York City. Actor Alec Baldwin and Tina Brown of Newsweek Magazine and The Daily Beast.com will host the event, which celebrates renowned and emerging writers alike. Hughes, a Swainsboro, Ga. native, will also receive a week-long writing workshop next summer at the Mailer Center in Provincetown, Mass., travel and hotel accommodations and tickets for the Gala.

The essay by the Georgia Southern dual major in Information Technology and Writing and Linguistics, emerged as the winner among eight semi-finalists and four finalists from such universities as Columbia, Georgetown, Oregon State, George Washington, Notre Dame and Alabama.

The three judges who read his prize-winning essay, "Float like a Plane, Sting Like a Bomb: The Ethics of U.S. Drone Attacks," included noted author and Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Elie Wiesel. In his nearly 5,000 word-winning entry, Hughes wrote about the harm of drones as weapons in "the war on terror" and of a hopeful new future devoid of the violence created by drones.

The writers were judged on their understanding of the ethical issue posed in their essay, as well as for original thinking and insight, effectiveness in presenting a point-of-view and achieving an overall emotional or intellectual effect.

"This recognition of Evin Hughes reinforces the power of writing," said Georgia Southern professor Phyllis Dallas who encouraged him to enter the contest.

"We faculty in Writing and Linguistics know that writing can affect the world, whether it is a poem or story that captures for its reader the beauty of language or an insight or emotion that leaves the reader knowing, as C.S. Lewis wrote, that we are not alone; or whether it is a finely crafted essay like Evin's that brings together his ethics, his critical analysis of a subject, and his synthesis of the research and writing of others to articulate an argument that asks its reader to consider and see their world anew and to question how to achieve peace and social justice."

Donald Lassere, president and CEO of the Muhammad Ali Center said, "The Ali Center is so proud of Evin and the rest of the student finalists and honorees being recognized at the Norman Mailer Center's Gala. This has been an outstanding partnership for the Ali Center and it has afforded us another opportunity to share Muhammad's legacy with the younger generation which Muhammad and Lonnie care so much about."

The Norman Mailer Center is an educational non-profit dedicated to supporting and celebrating those writers who challenge the status quo and surprise their audiences. The Muhammad Ali Center's mission is to preserve and share the legacy and ideals of Muhammad Ali and the National Council of Teachers of English is devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all scholastic levels.