

(New Brighton, PA) — At a reception at the Merrick Art Gallery on Saturday, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) honored the winners of the 2008 Congressional Arts Competition for Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District. The Congressional Arts Competition is held in all 435 Congressional Districts every year to celebrate the artistic talents of America's high school students.

Twenty-six high school students from across Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District submitted entries this year. Four local artists -- Elizabeth Asche Douglas, the owner of the Douglas Art Gallery in Rochester, PA; Cynthia Kundar, Museum Director of the Merrick Art Gallery; Michael L. Morrill, Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of Pittsburgh; and Tey Stiteler, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications at the Carnegie Museum of Art -- evaluated the artwork and selected the winners. The fifteen paintings selected as finalists will be on display at the Merrick Art Gallery through May 16.

**“The Congressional Arts Competition is a wonderful opportunity for students across the country to showcase their artistic skills,”** Altmire said. **“I was impressed by each piece of art submitted by students from across my district. The quality of these paintings and photographs shows that western Pennsylvania has a host of gifted young artists and that our schools are doing a great job of fostering their talent.”**

First place winner Christina Giusti, a sophomore at Sewickley Academy, won a \$20,000 scholarship to the Savannah School of Art and Design and will have her drawing, entitled Portrait of Renata – After J.S. Sargent, hung in the United States Capitol for one year. Second place winner Jack Opal, a junior at Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School, submitted a photograph entitled Rembrandt, which will be hung in Congressman Altmire's Washington, D.C. office for one year. Third place winner Brittani Hall, a senior at Ambridge Area High School, submitted a painting entitled Artistic Interpretation of Square, which will be hung in Congressman Altmire's Aliquippa district office for one year.