

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Former Minnesota High School Student Selected as Section 5 Recipient of NFHS National High School Heart of the Arts Award**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: John Gillis

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 12, 2018) — **Georgina Simon**, who graduated from St. Cloud (Minnesota) Technical High School in 2017, has been selected as the 2018 Section 5 recipient of the “National High School Heart of the Arts Award” by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The National High School Heart of the Arts Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of education-based activities. This is the fifth year that the National High School Heart of the Arts Award has been offered.

While a student at Technical High School, Simon was an Advanced Placement Honors student with a 3.9 grade-point average who participated in speech, theatre, musicals, choir, volleyball, track and basketball.

During her emotionally charged performance at the 2017 Minnesota State High School League State Speech Tournament, Simon addressed the traumatic plight of vulnerable women in the Democratic Republic of Congo during civil war – while at the same time provided revealing insight to her parents’ similar real-life experience.

Simon’s parents are from South Sudan, where they fled war and crossed the border to an Ethiopian refugee camp. There, they were selected to come to the United States through a lottery system nearly 20 years ago. Her parents wanted to be able to provide education and opportunities for Simon and her siblings.

Through her 2017 speech performance, Simon educated and increased awareness of the suffering of women in war-torn Africa – and she has a similar future of increasing awareness ahead of her. A clinical psychology major at the University of Minnesota, Simon has the goal of providing mental health services in underdeveloped countries, reducing stigma surrounding mental illness, and increasing awareness in emerging countries. Her unforgettable speech was just a step toward her visions of bettering the world around her.

### **About the Award**

The NFHS divides the nation into eight geographical sections. The states in Section 5 are Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Heart of the Arts Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members.

While the national winner will be recognized June 29 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

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### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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