

## **Lefan Xuan Wins The "Tori", the SCCA's Newest Award!**

Lefan Xuan of D.W. Daniel High School in Central, S.C. was beaming when presented the South Carolina Chess Association's newest honor, the Hannah "Tori" Whatley G.R.I.T. Award, at the S. C. Scholastic Chess Championships that were held Saturday, February 25th, in Mount Pleasant, S.C. She demonstrated courage during a long, tough day in the high school division to earn the right to participate in the Susan Polgar Girl's Invitational as the Palmetto State's official representative. The event will be held at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. Each year, over 3000 girls nationwide, set their sights on one of the 52 special invitations offered by Grandmaster Polgar. "It is a daunting task to win this opportunity", said David Whatley, the former State Scholastic Chess Coordinator. Mr. Whatley was on hand to personally present the South Carolina Chess Association's newest award, named for his daughter.



The text of the 2017 version of the award reads as follows.

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### **Hannah "Tori" Whatley G.R.I.T. Award Girls with Respect, Integrity, and Tenacity**

This award is presented in recognition of your outstanding achievement in being named South Carolina's official, 2017 Representative to the Susan Polgar Girls Invitational Tournament, to be held at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. You are only the fourth young lady in ten years to embark on this journey.

Your dedication and determination embody the tenacious, fighting spirit of Tori Whatley, the first female from South Carolina to represent our state at the 2008 event. A veteran of six Polgar Invitationals, she is now a student at Webster University and a member of the four-time National Championship chess team.

The South Carolina Chess Association, along with Tori and the citizens of the Palmetto State, wish you success and happiness as you represent our state in this prestigious event.

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Tori is one of the most enduring young ladies in the history of South Carolina Chess. In a nearly 10-year scholastic career, she was more frequently than not, the only girl in any given state tournament, but she stuck it out. Known more for her tough play and regular

tournament attendance, this award celebrates the vigor of her scholastic career that endeared her to competitors, spectators, and officials, both in South Carolina, and in several national events. In fact, only one other girl in the United States has attended more Polgar Invitationals. Ultimately, her efforts were rewarded with a partial scholarship from the Susan Polgar Institute for Chess Excellence (SPICE) at Webster University where Ms. Whatley is wrapping up her junior year as a graphic design student, and as the only North American female member of the National Championship chess program.

It is the South Carolina Chess Association's hope that Tori's success will help draw other girls from our state to regularly participate in the royal game, and help make you aware of the possibilities that exist in higher education for chess-playing students.