

THE POWER OF WORDS

By reading the writings of inspirational African-American leaders, these young people learned how words can change the lives of others and themselves.



Basil Abdalla

EASTERN REGION

Frank W. Cox High School
Virginia Beach, Virginia



Starr Shands

CENTRAL REGION

Dinwiddie High School
Dinwiddie, Virginia



Atif Javed

NORTHERN REGION

Fairfax High School
Fairfax, Virginia



Benjamin Stoll

WESTERN REGION

Grace Christian High School
Staunton, Virginia

THEY READ ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES


to overcome the oppression of slavery, to persevere through racism and prejudice, and to stand strong in their beliefs. The more they read, the more these students understood how their own writings could affect attitudes and opinions and become catalysts for change. That's what led them to enter Dominion's 2011 Strong Men & Women: *Excellence in Leadership* series student writing contest. And as proof of their persuasive writing, they've become this year's winners.

Their essays earned each of them a laptop computer and a grant for their school. For further inspiration, they were introduced to some of the African-American leaders Dominion has been honoring for the past 21 years. Instead of reading about this year's Strong Men & Women honorees, they were able to meet them in person. And experience the power of their words firsthand.

The Strong Men & Women: *Excellence in Leadership* series is an annual series sponsored by Dominion to honor the contributions of influential African-American leaders. In conjunction with this series, Dominion is helping prepare future leaders by providing student scholarships and grants, as well as resource material for schools. To learn more about the series, its honorees, and available resource materials, visit www.dom.com, keyword: strong.



Dominion



Excellence in Leadership

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS OF LEADERS
FEATURED IN WINNING ESSAYS**

1830s

Frederick Douglass escapes from slavery and goes on to become the nation's most eloquent voice for emancipation.

Winning essay by Atif Javed

1920s

Langston Hughes joins other influential African-American writers and artists in creating the Harlem Renaissance, and publishes his first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*.

Winning essay by Benjamin Stoll

1960s

Malcolm X makes his pilgrimage to Mecca, which transforms his life and his message, inspiring him to disavow racism.

Winning essay by Basil Abdalla

2000s

Nikki Giovanni is nominated for Best Spoken Word Album at the 46th Annual Grammy Awards and is named by Oprah Winfrey as one of twenty-five "living legends."

Winning essay by Starr Shands