

# 16th Scripps National Spelling Bee

The **16th National Spelling Bee** was held in Washington, D.C. on May 28, 1940. Scripps-Howard would not sponsor the Bee until 1941.

The winner was 14-year-old girl Laurel Kuykendall, correctly spelling the word *therapy*. Elizabeth O'Keefe, a 13-year-old girl from New Jersey, took second place after failing to correctly spell "plantain", followed by Eleanor Shea of Nebraska in third.<sup>[4]</sup>

There were 22 spellers this year, and the prizes were \$500 for first, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third.<sup>[4][5][6][7]</sup>

Harold F. Harding of George Washington University was the pronouncer. He earned a round of applause when he slipped and spelled the word "fore" himself, instead of waiting for the speller to do so.<sup>[3]</sup>

Winner Laurel Kuykendall (married name Mullins) died in Caryville, Tennessee on March 11, 2004.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

## References

1. Article (<https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/107674532/>), *Louisville Courier-Journal* ("The match is scheduled for 9 a.m. Tuesday in the auditorium of the National Press Club. The Bee will not be broadcast.")
2. (16 July 1940). Spelling Champion Is Girl of 14 From Tennessee's Hills (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1499&dat=19400716&id=nKBQAAAAIBAJ&sjid=qCIEAAAAIBAJ&pg=6481,297524&hl=en>), *Milwaukee Journal*
3. (28 May 1940). Pronounces Word, Spells It Himself (<https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/146732361/>), *Akron Beacon Journal* (paywall) ("Harold F. Harding, of George Washington university, official pronouncer for the national spelling bee finals, got a round of applause today when he pronounced the word "fore", then spelled it himself instead of wating for the speller. He blamed "nervous strain" for the slip.")
4. (29 May 1940). Tennessee Girl Champ Speller (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=888&dat=19400530&id=sp1aAAAAIBAJ&sjid=Rk0DAAAAIBAJ&pg=7332,8430361&hl=en>), *St. Petersburg Times* (Associated Press)
5. (31 May 1940). National Spelling Bee Champ (<http://fultonhistory.com/Newspapers%2023/Rome%20NY%20Daily%20Sentinel/Rome%20NY%20Daily%20Sentinel%201940/Rome%20NY%20Daily%20Sentinel%201940%20-%202036.pdf>), *Rome Daily Sentinel* (photo)
6. (9 March 2011). And the Winner Is ... (<http://www.shorpy.com/node/10092>), Shorpy.com (1940 photo of top three)

## 16th Scripps National Spelling Bee



National Press Building

<b>Date</b>	May 28, 1940
<b>Location</b>	Auditorium of the National Press Building, Washington, D.C. <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Winner</b>	Laurel Kuykendall
<b>Age</b>	14
<b>Residence</b>	Pippin, near Cookeville, Tennessee <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Sponsor</b>	<i>Knoxville News Sentinel</i>
<b>Sponsor location</b>	Knoxville, Tennessee
<b>Winning word</b>	therapy
<b>No. of contestants</b>	22
<b>Pronouncer</b>	Harold F. Harding <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Preceded by</b>	15th Scripps National Spelling Bee
<b>Followed by</b>	17th Scripps National Spelling Bee

7. (29 May 1940). Farm Girl Tops in Spelling Bee (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19400529&id=Oh5WAAAAIBAJ&sjid=eMDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3183,4851894&hl=en>), *Spokesman-Review* (Associated Press)
8. LaFasto, Drew (31 May 2017). Knoxville student participates in the National Spelling Bee (<http://www.wbir.com/article/news/local/knoxville-student-participates-in-the-national-spelling-bee/51-444543613>), *WBIR-TV*
9. Find a grave (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/61735165>), Retrieved 1 February 2018

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