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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**ARKANSAS CITY, KAN., APRIL 22, 2025** — Jessi Ritchhart, a student at Cowley College, has been named the 2025 City of Arkansas City Outstanding Student. The award was presented during a banquet held on April 21, 2025, in the Wright Room at Cowley College. As the recipient of this honor, Ritchhart will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Genesis Mendez, a student at Arkansas City High School, was named first runner-up and will receive a \$500 scholarship. Haven Gutierrez, from Arkansas City Middle School, earned the second runner-up title and will be awarded a \$250 scholarship.

Finalists for the 2025 Outstanding Student Award included students from Cowley College, Arkansas City High School, and Arkansas City Middle School. Representing Cowley College were Jessi Ritchhart, Aaliyah Owens-Fox, and Riley Perdue. Arkansas City High School finalists included Nathan Fleig, Eliza Ward, and Genesis Mendez. From Arkansas City Middle School, the finalists were Carmen Galdamez-Barron, Katy Seaton, and Haven Gutierrez.

Established in 1984, the Outstanding Student Award program honors students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance and civic involvement. Local teachers, staff, and administrators nominate students annually. The Outstanding Student Award Committee—appointed by the Mayor and City Commission—then selects three finalists from each school through informal interviews. One finalist from each school is ultimately recognized, with one overall winner chosen.

Students will be recognized and presented with their scholarship awards during the City Commission meeting on May 6 at 5:30 p.m.

**CUTLINE:** From left to right: Jessi Ritchhart, a student at Cowley College, has been named the 2025 City of Arkansas City Outstanding Student and will receive a \$1,000

scholarship. In the center is Genesis Mendez, a student at Arkansas City High School, holding her son Elio. She was named first runner-up and awarded a \$500 scholarship. On the right is Haven Gutierrez from Arkansas City Middle School, who was named second runner-up and will receive a \$250 scholarship.