Christian J. Savage, of Southwest High School, was recently named one of ten high school seniors in Minnesota named semifinalists in the 2010 National Achievement Scholarship program.

The National Achievement Scholarship Program, conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), is a privately financed academic competition that operates without government assistance. It was initiated in 1964 to recognize academically promising Black students throughout the nation and to provide scholarships to a substantial number of the most outstanding program participants. To date, over 29,500 young men and women have received Achievement Scholarship awards worth $94 million.

More than 1,600 Black American high school seniors who have been designated semifinalists in the 46th annual National Achievement Scholarship Program. These scholastically talented young men and women now have an opportunity to continue in the competition for approximately 800 Achievement Scholarship awards, worth $2.6 million, to be offered next spring.

Approximately 1,300 semifinalists are expected to fulfill additional requirements and advance to the finalist level in the 2010 program. All Achievement Scholar awardees will be selected from the finalist group on the basis of their abilities, accomplishments and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

More than 160,000 high school juniors from all parts of the United States requested consideration in the 2010 National Achievement Scholarship Program when they took the 2008 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®). Semifinalists were designated within geographic regions and are the highest-scoring program entrants in the states that make up each region.

To advance to the finalist level in the competition, semifinalists must present a record of high academic performance throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, write an essay and earn SAT scores that confirm the PSAT/NMSQT performance. Also, the semifinalist and a high school official must complete a detailed scholarship application in which they provide information about the student's participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, and educational goals. The substantial amount of information collected about each finalist will be used in the selection of scholarship winners.

National Achievement Scholarships provided in 2010 will be supported by corporations, professional organizations, foundations and NMSC's own funds. Two types of scholarships will be offered. Every finalist will compete for one of the 700 one-time National Achievement $2500 Scholarships, which will be awarded on a regional representation basis. In addition, corporate and business sponsors will underwrite about 100 Achievement Scholarship awards for finalists who meet criteria set by the grantor. Although some corporate-sponsored awards provide a single payment, most are renewable for up to four years of undergraduate study.