

Shelburne student earns Gillian Shute Memorial Award

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A Shelburne student with aspirations of a career in the justice system has been recognized with one of Dufferin County's most meaningful legal awards.

Vanessa Sousa was presented with the 2026 Gillian Shute Memorial Award during a ceremony at the Dufferin County Courthouse in Orangeville, where members of the Dufferin County Law Association (DCLA) and Justice Miller gathered to celebrate her achievement.

Sousa didn't expect to win, but accepted the award with pride.

"Honestly, it's a really big honour for me," she said. "I applied for the scholarship just because it was something interesting to write about; I really didn't think I would win. I'm pretty passionate about law, and have been throughout high school, so I was ecstatic to hear I won."

The annual award honours the legacy of Gillian Shute, a respected Orangeville-area lawyer who practised for more than two decades and was known throughout the legal community for her dedication to serving others.

Presented each year by the DCLA, the award recognizes a local secondary school student who demonstrates an interest in law and legal issues. The association, representing lawyers practising in Dufferin County, established the award to inspire future generations while preserving Shute's legacy of compassion, professionalism and public service.