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## **“COVID-19” AND “KAMALA” CHOSEN AS JOINT “2020 NAMES OF THE YEAR”**

“COVID-19” and “Kamala” were chosen as joint winners of the Name of the Year for 2020 by the American Name Society at its virtual annual meeting on January 24, 2020.

“COVID-19” was also chosen ANS’s Miscellaneous Name of the Year. In early 2020, the coronavirus caused by SARS-CoV-2 became a worldwide pandemic. Interestingly, “Covid” was chosen as Word of the Year 2020 by the American Dialect Society in its annual vote in January 2020.

“Kamala” is the joint winner of the Name of the Year 2020. Kamala Harris is not only the first female US Vice President, but also the first person of color and Asian descent to hold the second highest office in the US. Her name is rooted in her South Asian heritage and means “lotus flower”.

“George Floyd” was chosen as Personal Name of the Year. Floyd was killed during his arrest on May 25, 2020 when one of four police officers knelt on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. He was accused of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill by a local store clerk. Floyd’s death triggered worldwide protests against police brutality and systemic racism.

“Wuhan, China” was voted Place Name of the Year. Site of first identification of the COVID-19 virus, the toponym is also significant because of references to the “Chinese virus” which led to acts of racism toward Asian Americans.

“QAnon” was chosen E-Name of the Year. This name refers to a disproven and discredited far-right conspiracy. The name QAnon is used simultaneously to refer to the movement, the originator (also called simply Q, which is short for Q Clearance Patriot), and its followers. Formerly viewed as a fringe extremist group, it has now been recognized as a large-scale movement, with some believers charged with violent crimes. The US Federal Bureau of Investigation has warned that QAnon poses a serious potential domestic terror threat.

“Zoom” won the title Trade Name of the Year. To limit the spread of COVID-19, school campuses closed and businesses turned to virtual offices where possible. This led to an increased need for an online platform for virtual meetings and classrooms. During the quarantine measures, Zoom’s software usage increased significantly across the globe, spawning neologisms such as “zoombombing” and “zoom fatigue.”

“Schitt’s Creek” was chosen Artistic Name of the Year. The Emmy-winning Canadian sitcom has been lauded for its portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters and relationships. Daniel Levy and his father Eugene Levy created the show that ran from 2015-2020. The series was originally a cult favorite that experienced a Netflix-bump when it moved to the online video platform. Participants in the ANS discussion pointed out that there was a running requirement on broadcast networks that the title of “Schitt’s Creek” could not be said aloud without putting up a card with the title of the show every time it was mentioned.

The American Name Society is a scholarly organization founded in 1951 devoted to studying all aspects of names and naming. The Name of the Year vote has been held since 2004. “Brexit” was Name of the Decade and “Arrokoth” was the 2019 Name of the Year. “Jamal Khashoggi” was the 2018 Name of the Year. “Rohingya” was the 2017 Name of the Year. “Aleppo” won for 2016, “Caitlyn Jenner” for 2015, “Ferguson” for 2014, “Francis” for 2013, and “Sandy” for 2012.

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