



EMIL DANSKER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

“Jessica Graue's career and her achievements align perfectly with the spirit of this award. Her work both in the industry and in the classroom is commendable. It is so important to have teachers and mentors who are actually still doing the journalism! The fact that she is so tuned in to the trends in the industry and is able to help her students understand those trends is a rare, valuable asset.”



RISING STAR AWARD



This was a very tough competition to judge as there are a ton of talented young reporters who submitted entries. These two stood out the most.





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LARGE PRINT WINNERS



Rose's polished, descriptive prose conveyed an unmistakable in-depth knowledge of the regional scene and incorporated multi-faceted views from a deep bench of seasoned sources. Though he clearly took his topic seriously, he also clearly had fun with it. Superior work.



All stories by this writer epitomized the description of the category: highlighting questionable behavior by a large company that clearly impacted consumers, employees and the community at large. The writing was strong, leads gripping and tenacity came through in every sentence. "I don't want them to get away with this," the writer was saying. And that's what makes great journalism.



Gripping writing and thorough reporting with
clear impact.





An impressive and comprehensive series of stories examining the politics, the practice and the philosophies behind Ohio's use of the death penalty.

Excellent work!





Clear, fact-based reporting on a high-profile chain of tragic events.





Ray Marcano's columns are very personal and touch the reader no matter what the subject – whether it's about decisions by elected officials that affect the entire community and the nation, or the tragedy of losing his son-in-law. A fine collection of work.



“This was one of several story packages exploring the impact of Ohio property taxes and discussions about where to go from here. Staver took what can be a dry, wonkish topic and made it interesting, compelling and understandable. These stories prove the value – and the power – of explanatory journalism done well.”



Excellent in-depth reporting and humanization of people who are rebuilding their lives and navigating a complex system. Compelling interviews with subjects and written sensitively. Well done!





Fantastic reporting using public records to see what elected officials are up to from their lavish travel schedules to their failure to pay a mortgage. Your readers are lucky to have you. You are a good watchdog. Keep up the dogged reporting.



“

Important reporting bringing needed awareness to radon and its impacts on health. Excellent sourcing, on-the-ground reporting, photography and graphics. The testing partnership and ongoing tracking of radon is also impressive.

”

This package stood out for its depth, historical context and sophisticated reporting on the long-standing challenges facing the predominantly Black community of Lincoln Heights. The reporters skillfully threaded the neo-Nazi demonstration and its aftermath across multiple stories, with each piece examining a different dimension. They covered the immediate confrontation and community fear to armed neighborhood patrols and the deeper legacy of racial inequity, disinvestment and distrust. The reporting was ambitious in scope, well-sourced and grounded in both accountability journalism and the voices of residents directly impacted.



Good reporting and use of data to show the complexity of the issues. Centering the voices of people experiencing homelessness brings the reader close to the heart of the story. Vivid writing takes the reader inside a repurposed shelter that “still feels like a jail.”





Compelling, thorough reporting that doesn't ignore the complex aspects of religion. The writing was visual, contextual and human-centered. This is a great example of the religion reporting we need more of. Well done!





An ambitious project that clearly explains potential issues that arise when doctors take payments from pharmaceutical companies. I appreciated both the in-depth look at a high-profile case, and the easy explanation for readers to use public records to look up information on their own doctors.





Bastock's strong reporting and writing skills allow her to use small examples and anecdotes to draw readers in and illustrate larger stories about sports. I appreciate her ability to tell personal stories about professional athletes.





Newsy! Easy to view and navigate website for the viewer. A clean look that backs up the strong news content for the viewer/reader. Good use of dark vs. light/big vs. small typography to lead the viewer into the different story packages.





Atassi's thoughtful, well-researched columns display sound reasoning, weighing difficult issues with nuance and insight, while never compromising on a steady ethos.



The ambitious, thorough and well-told investigations were impressive. The headlines and ledes were attention-grabbing, and the overall presentation was thoughtful and purposeful. This paper prioritizes public service journalism and that thread is evident in the investigations and enterprise, but also in the smaller dailies, features and columns. I particularly appreciated the "How we did it" pieces that offer readers a look behind the big investigations, which made the paper feel like a dialogue with the community. That's local journalism that is clearly positioning itself as a service worth supporting.



Excellent variety in cover designs to catch the reader's attention. Good use of color along with typography to create a strong center of visual impact.



“Excellent collection of work across different scenarios, from powerful moments that show us why images have the ability to move us to lighter moments that bring joy. Nice eye for color, perspective and framing as well. The margins between entrants in this category were razor thin. Keep up the good work, everyone!”

I'm so impressed with Jessie's ability to break down difficult jargon-filled legislation and complicated policy into stories that are easily understandable and pleasurable to read. She dove into the thorny topic of Ohio's restrictive childcare options with ease, giving readers a deeper understanding of how the state has gotten to this point. After reading each of Jessie's stories, I walked away feeling smarter and more informed. Congrats to Jessie on her excellent reporting. Keep up the Great work!



Excellent job of working with limited editorial space to visually separate "list" from advertising. Clean and easy-to-read typography highlighted on the pages for the reader. Consistent and appealing.





SMALL PRINT WINNERS

Dance is one of the most frequently neglected genres in arts journalism. That made the centerpiece of *Cincinnati Magazine's* April 2025 issue all the more remarkable. Its 16 jaw-dropping pages delved far beyond the mainstream, as a sextet of writers gave readers tantalizing profiles and the info to identify and locate artists, teachers and venues where some 25 disparate dance forms — from Appalachian clogging to queer ballroom culture — were practiced throughout the region. A rare achievement.

Bev's thoughtful consumer reporting on food-related trends engaged me in a way none of the other entries did. I was particularly impressed with her tipping trend story — not only did she dive into how people are affected by it today in Canton, but she also tackled the psychological effects (why people feel compelled to tip or not tip and the associated guilt), the history of tipping, and the bills that incentivize tax breaks on tipping. Her writing felt lively and engaging — I felt like I was right there with her at a cafe, staring down at the screen and thinking: To tip or not to tip? Her writing is relatable and smart.



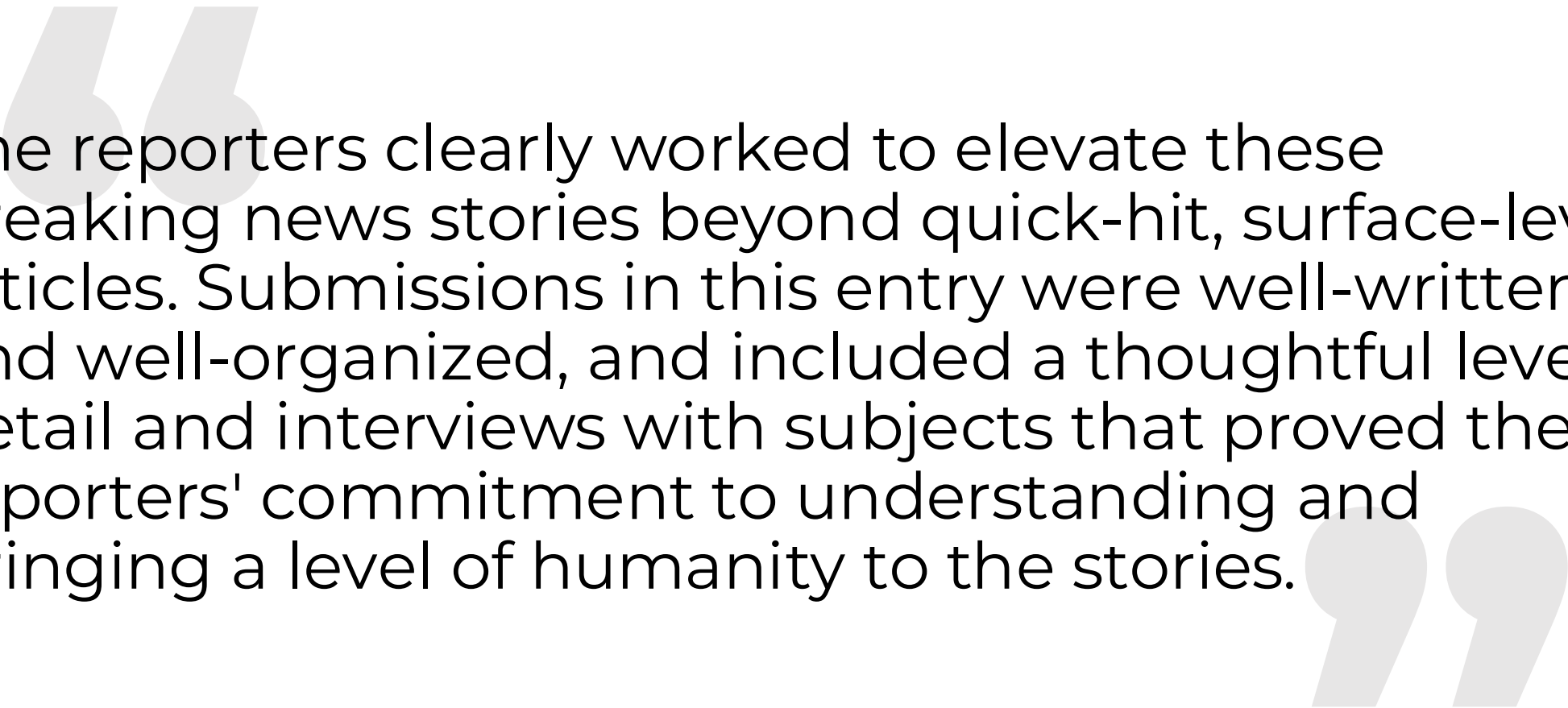
Solid reporting. You tackle complex stories and write with confidence. Your coverage looks at important issues, especially why students advance grades even when they are falling behind. You are a good community watchdog.





This is interesting, thorough reporting – especially for folks who may not understand the reasons why certain decisions/rulings are made. Your approach from several sides of your stories was appreciated.





The reporters clearly worked to elevate these breaking news stories beyond quick-hit, surface-level articles. Submissions in this entry were well-written and well-organized, and included a thoughtful level of detail and interviews with subjects that proved the reporters' commitment to understanding and bringing a level of humanity to the stories.



This writing made a clear and concise argument and addressed a very important issue. Well done.





Strong writing, compelling voices and helpful context propel Canton's reporters to the top of a category with many submissions. Nice use of data and visuals in stories about earthquakes caused by fracking, car crash, and a TikTok scam targeting a local tailor. Well done!





Your story on Trish Parker is the stand-out in your collection. It is haunting. It is richly reported. Your writing carries suspense and intrigue and is packed full of details. Powerful storytelling.

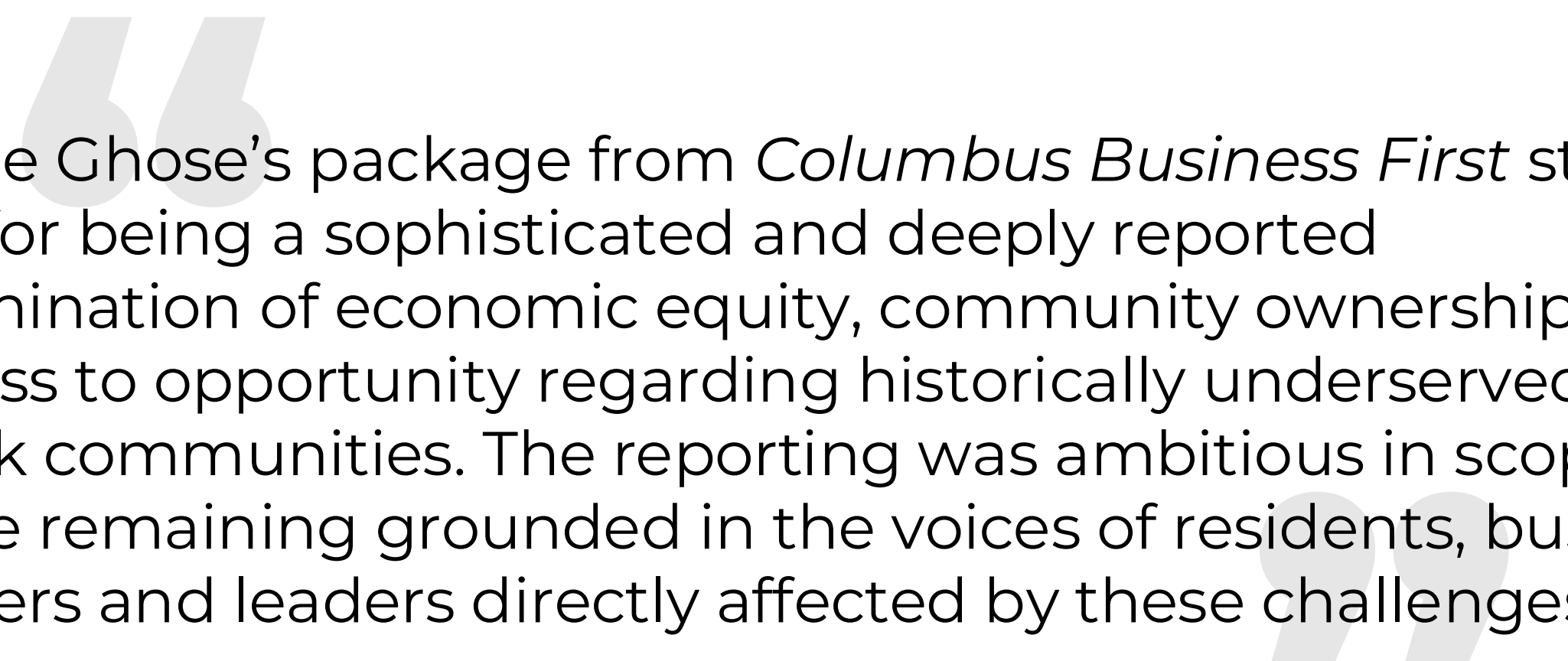


You are a watchdog for your community. Good reporting from the absurdity of a driverless bus not being used to the taxpayers picking up overtime expenses for law enforcement. You write with authority and find interesting investigative stories to cover. Keep digging and holding the government accountable.



Clear command of the beat and the players. Good work sussing out the behind-the-scenes pieces the community should know about to make informed choices about their district and its leadership.



A large, light gray quotation mark graphic that frames the central text block.

Carrie Ghose's package from *Columbus Business First* stood out for being a sophisticated and deeply reported examination of economic equity, community ownership and access to opportunity regarding historically underserved Black communities. The reporting was ambitious in scope while remaining grounded in the voices of residents, business owners and leaders directly affected by these challenges.

“These stories do a great job of articulating the complex experiences of people who struggle with substance abuse with care and compassion. Strong, immersive reporting that keeps the reader captivated and provides helpful information toward treatment and recovery.”



Goshay's professional interviews and prose let us clearly hear her subjects without becoming proselytic on their behalf.





Garrett found the perfect example to illustrate the dangers of radon. She did an excellent job reporting on the complex issue and distilling it into a readable, compelling piece that alerts Ohioans to a public health problem.



“

Outstanding dive into issues that many have opinions on, but few truly understand. Great piece to make this real, personal for readers who may just be casual, curious observers.

”



This is a nice mix of business news and resources for business leaders. The story highlights and option to order reprints that is included at the top of articles is a nice attention to detail.





Goshay demonstrates refreshing ability to laugh at the audacity of local, state and national politics while also driving home the seriousness of policy decisions and their effects on people.



Excellent local news coverage, including impressive use of public records and investigative reporting. Standout examples include Washington influence piece, immigration turmoil and informational graphic data package documenting federal employees across Ohio in advance of federal layoffs. Clean, consistent design with excellent photography. An enjoyable read, front to back



Strong centers of visual impact on all pages. Easy for the reader to see the hierarchy of the page. Good flow to bring the reader into the page. Visually attractive pages that are not overdone and easy to read.



An engaging mix of content that highlights unique, quirky, and meaningful local people and businesses. Well-designed advertising with strong photography and consistent editorial execution. This magazine does a great job of covering the community while encouraging interaction and involvement.



An outstanding collection of images! The competition in this category was incredibly tough. Excellent moments and perspectives, with strong storytelling bolstered by creativity. Overall, a compelling way of seeing.





Botos' writing has a warm, conversational tone that captures the impressive range of stories well. At a time when so much newspaper writing sounds like AI, these stories are a gentle reminder of what makes a good, fresh read.



“The category was packed full of great special sections, but this one stood out the most not only because of the way it was designed and the content, but also because it is a great way to use a special section to help highlight local non-profits.”

The margin between first and second in this category was razor thin – both publications have comparable strengths and skillsets. *Columbus Business First* gets the nod, thanks to the diversity of stories covered and the sheer strength of the storytelling. Compelling cover packages with not only thoughtful narrative, but also significantly additive visual journalism, made this publication memorable long after the reading was completed. Just exceptionally well done.



TRADE PUBLICATION WINNERS



Good variety for visual impact to attract attention to the cover. Strong focal points to catch a reader/viewer.





Immediately grabs the reader. The story takes a popular show and highlights its impact in the real world and the local community. Strong writing and good flow.



A well-planned responsive site that effectively utilizes stylesheets, search filters, menu bars with pull-down categories and multiple access points, and sharp graphic design elements to provide easy access to resources and to keep its audience current on news and information that affects their livelihoods.



Really clean graphics to lay out the numbers/trends year over year. I felt this story also gave the reader important context for the increases in exports from southeast Asia.



Who knew tires could be so interesting! From sand-dune testing in the dry deserts of Peru to the air-conditioned convention floors of the CES show in Las Vegas to the introduction of a new Pope (yes, Manley manages to find the 'tire angle' of the nomination of a new Pope and an exclusive scoop on who makes the tires for the Popemobile). Manley's column is interesting, news-breaking and fun without – forgive me – tire.



A nice, organized layout with well-written stories that are very relevant for those in business.





DIGITAL MEDIA/ FREELANCE WINNERS



This story weaves the story of a venue with a thumbnail profile of its founder, within a cultural moment that makes this move timely.



Kowalski wrestles complicated subject matter with clarity and style, consistently couching local issues within a national context. She provides just the right balance of science, politics and practical news as she explores FirstEnergy's push to loosen reliability rules amidst growing weather-related outages; the Port of Cleveland's efforts to go solar and electric; and the fickle fate of hydrogen power as alternative energy in the era of DOGE cuts and other industry setbacks.



Terrific work by Shuler in writing about the costs of the drug war to individuals and families and to the country's reputation as well. Draws readers in.





Accountability coverage that's engaging and fun to read, filled with the smart use of public records, colorful quotes and many perspectives.





The writer seamlessly weaves history, a kind of reverse detective narration, mathematics, astronomy, bigotry and politics to craft an intriguing read, with the occasional wry observation to spare. But what really sets this entry apart is the elegance of the writing.





Clear, reader-first journalism that breaks down the impact of policy decisions for the public.





Excellent use of public records law to access information and corroborate what sources have said. The interview with Wolfzorn is especially prevalent and important to have.





Developing click-activated areas on a spinning globe is no small task. Designing a search component around the selections is an accomplishment. The concept, design and navigation of this interactive culinary passport are commendable!



“This whole Health Justice in Action series represents important work worthy of first place. The story "Living on the edge: Eviction takes a toll on the health of families" was especially compelling, both for the presentation and the clear load of work that went on behind the scenes to get the story. Good job.”

This series is a fantastic example of community reporting. The coverage of the issue spanned the whole year with great sourcing, supporting visuals, and writing that makes the story accessible to the community. The journalists stayed on top of the important developments and showed great usage of records and statements relevant to the story, while making sure human voices and community interest remained at the center.

This podcast centers voices that often go unheard, especially when it comes to conversations around gun violence. More than just sharing the stories of those deeply impacted, it also offers solutions and hope. For listeners outside the community, it provides a deeply personal lens to create understanding. For those inside the community, this is space for people to feel heard and validated.



Excellent piece with great narratives and
pacing throughout the piece. Congrats!



“

This entry demonstrated excellent visual storytelling. Strong pacing and scenes kept the interview engaging while allowing viewers insight into this family's daily life.

”

Freelancers are a rugged breed, making their mark as independent professional journalists across a broad array of topics and publications. In 2025, Young's clear, compelling and thoroughly researched prose epitomized this category, making stories on anthropology, natural sciences and history approachable in top-tier national publications.

A clean design, partly due to the absence of ads, this site is clearly and visually organized around issues central to public policy with separation between categories of objective news reporting and commentary. The non-profit stated purpose of the site to combine government coverage with incisive investigative journalism, reporting on policy consequences, and contributing political insight and principled commentary is well-served.

“Outstanding work! The time and care put into this interesting story stands out — the photographer captured images on and off the field, day and night, at school and at home. That dedication elevated the visuals. The photos show a keen eye for moment, composition, emotion and storytelling detail. Excellent job!”



TELEVISION WINNERS



Excellent continuing coverage to answer questions about incoming leadership and the city's finances. An important topic that impacts residents city-wide.





This entry showed exceptional storytelling through video and information not readily available, and made it understandable through video, graphics and documents to help viewers understand the impact.



A thorough and thoughtful deep dive that extends beyond a typical true crime documentary. The team at WKYC expertly navigated the delicate balance of providing valuable insight from those involved in a violent crime without sensationalizing their acts of violence. The script and editing helped viewers navigate a complex narrative that delves into religion, psychology and power.



Good storytelling, breaking issues down into bite-sized pieces, and showing the actual impact of losing a language, waiting for federal funding and learning to use hacking skills for good instead of something illegal and why all those things are important.



“

This entry took real issues with real people in an enterprise manor to get to the heart of what's happening. The reporters did a nice job demonstrating the impact through storytelling.

”

I couldn't wait to see what happened next in this gripping story of "The Shawshank Redemption" prison. The building was certainly the protagonist, and its creepy incidents became the other players in this story that felt like it wrote itself! Great job telling the building's past and present story through multiple lenses. I loved the many wonderful twists and turns in this reported feature story. Congrats!



The story has an excellent hook and is visually very interesting. Well shot, and the writing is on point. A very nice little story for a day turn assignment!



Thorough reporting that reveals the business tactics of a non-profit hospital and how those tactics impact patients struggling to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system, as well as the rigid realities of the legal system. ABC 6 not only identified the dramatic increase in lawsuits, but put the numbers into context. Instead of building a story around a single tip, the team rounded out its reporting by following the paper trail, attending court and seeking accountability.



Fascinating angle on a very important topic in our country right now. Solid reporting that exposed the problem and highlighted solutions for this vulnerable population. The story also moved visually, despite a lack of visuals.



A large, light gray opening quotation mark.

I cried, I laughed and I cheered. These stories were beautifully told, unveiling emotional details at the perfect time. The writing and delivery was clear, creative and compelling. Great reporting!

A large, light gray closing quotation mark.



Nice design and navigation. With more news consumers using mobile devices more than desktop, this website offers a seamless user experience on mobile. Minimal, less intrusive ads and pop-ups help the experience as well.



“Great team coverage and loved seeing it anchored from the field. Covered several impacts and geographic areas and rounded it out with the meteorologist. Lots of great b-roll and drone of flooding that was showcased nicely, along with the voices of real people being impacted.”

Nadeen Abusada has an incredible, inviting presence on air. Her work in this entry shows her range – from asking the tough questions on a crime news day turn to showcasing a 100-year-old swimmer. Abusada's stories center around the people and the emotions, which draw you in. Her delivery and confidence keep you watching.



From captivating human narratives to capturing a scene that defines the extent of an operation or issue, Pooley employs the skill and judgment of a seasoned professional in conveying a story through videography.





RADIO WINNERS



Excellent information and coverage are heard by the listener in an easy-to-understand format. With very little knowledge of the issue, I was able to grasp the complexity of the issue.





This entry had a breadth of exceptional audio stories zooming in on Ohio individuals and communities impacted by federal cuts. Excellent pacing and use of tape.





The reporting is compelling and deeply sourced. The reporter does an excellent job balancing different perspectives on community-led efforts to address violence and amplifying voices from marginalized neighborhoods.



Producers Luckens, Virginelle, Miguelito, Gerly and Jacques share personal, powerful stories of kidnapping threats and family separation. They also take listeners into the kitchen and play terrific music. It's a documentary reported by the right people, in the right place. Keep up the good work. Beautifully produced, insightful documentary series that presents the story about the death of a young man that many people outside of Ohio likely haven't heard about but should.

Team picked ambitious topics but found effective ways to present the voices affected and place the stories in their larger context. These stories are great examples of how a reporter's reporting and framing elevated a story into a piece of enterprise journalism. This series tackles an important topic in education and does it with professional writing and voicing along with natural sound. It includes history and graphics.

“Erin’s stories have a nice pace, clear reporting and clean editing. She ensured the Amish community was not represented as a monolith, and she presented community viewpoints while respecting wishes to not broadcast Amish voices over the radio. Nice body cam audio of an officer pulling over a buggy!”



Great creative storytelling, came from the heart.





Great sound, wide-ranging reporting on NATO conference, strengthened local tie. Well-done.





Important coverage of wide-reaching financial decisions. Submissions also feature a good mix of sourcing and clear audio.





Excellent reporting with great pacing, questions,
and editing!





Strong main character voice, good explainer of law, fair treatment of company, illustrated thorough investigation. Good work!





There were many strong submissions in this category. This entry stood out for its timely and essential reporting, use of audio, pacing and variety of interviews. Exceptional use of hour-long format.





A great series that shows a wide variety of sports coverage that is not the norm. Very well-paced and thought-out pieces!





Nice, clean layout on desktop and mobile. The homepage and category pages prioritize the latest news. Almost every page has a section recommending more stories to read, which is great for keeping readers engaged on the website longer.





Warm, conversational delivery of daily newscast.
This friendly, professional presentation feels like a
coffee break chat.





Great mix of stories and spot types. Was great to hear natural sound mixed in as well.





Wide range of experiences shared from engaged callers, did not shy away from facts. Host was thorough in interviews. Well done.





This reporter covered a range of essential stories
with engaging tape.





COLLEGE JOURNALISM WINNERS

“This series of stories is impressive. It's ambitious and well-executed. You found the people who lived the 1985 season and got them to look back and remember. The writing is both crisp and compelling. The photographs and the web design add to the presentation. Keep up the great storytelling!”

“This story takes a deep breath, draws a clear line around the impact of inhales regarding a wide number of issues brought by SBI, then breaks down each of the most prominent issues in a clear and methodical way. The writer draws on good sources but remains in control, earning the reader’s trust.”



The staff of the *bg news* gives the reader the content and a look to attract their reader. The price of parking tickets, AI in the classroom, pups on campus and taking a different approach to sports. Lively student newspaper.





Sunny Lloyd's experiment and experience with going vegan is enjoyable. Very personal and reflective, with great touches of humor.



The writer found a creative way to turn what could easily have been a cliché sports story into a compelling piece. The writer's in-depth reporting and understanding of the team dynamics allow him to use a team meeting as the framework for a story that captures a transformative moment in a season. Clear writing makes the story readable and enjoyable.

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