

2022 WKU High School Media Awards

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Broadcast Categories

[B1 News Story](#)

[B2 Sports Story](#)

[B3 Feature Story](#)

[B4 News Videography](#)

[B5 Music Video](#)

[B6 Narrative Film](#)

[B7 Broadcast](#)

Newspaper/Magazine Categories

[N1 News Story](#)

[N2 Feature Story](#)

[N3 Editorial](#)

[N4 Review or Column](#)

[N5 Sports Story](#)

[N6 News/Feature Photography](#)

[N7 Sports Photography](#)

[N8 Editorial Cartoon](#)

[N9 Front Page Design](#)

[N10 Page Design, Inside Page or Spread](#)

[N11 Multimedia Production](#)

[N12 News Publication](#)

[N13 News Website](#)

Yearbook Categories

[Y1 Sports Spread](#)

[Y2 Student Life Spread](#)

[Y3 Academic Spread](#)

[Y4 Organizations Spread](#)

[Y5 Division Spread](#)

[Y6 Candid Feature Photo](#)

[Y7 Sports Action Photo](#)

[Y8 Feature Story](#)

[Y9 Cover Design](#)

[Y10 Overall Layout/Design](#)

[Y11 Theme Development](#)

[Y12 Advertising](#)

[Y13 Overall Yearbook](#)

Broadcast Categories

B1 News Story

We were looking for good characters to tell a story and soundbites that would pull us into the story. We also looked for clean editing and balanced audio. Some outstanding work here finding real stories to report.

B2 Sports Story

1. LeAndre Bole All Star Game

This feature really shows a genuine understanding in sports storytelling. I was really impressed how the students transitioned from the highlights to a profile of a particular player. I also really was impressed by how not only did the students interview the player, but his coach as well to provide multiple elements in the package. Besides the Jump cut at 0:21 and the framing of the coaches interview, I think this was absolutely fantastic!

2. Highlands Basketball Preview

I really enjoyed the interviews of the coaches. They were all well framed and had good sound. In the future, try and steer clear from shots like the one at 1:31. It held too long and pan shots are something to avoid unless they have action in them. Otherwise, great job!

3. FHS football Season Recap

This had wonderful shots! The videographer(s) is certainly going to be very successful. My only knock is there is no real story in this. It was a great hype video, but for this particular category, it didn't fit the description as well as others did.

B3 Feature Story

Great visuals overall. We were looking for compelling interviews and topics that drive viewer interest. We found some creative edits, in-depth interviews, and relevant stories for today's youth.

B4 News Videography

Very creative shots and smooth editing. We were looking for well composed shots and interviews and we were not let down. Outstanding content.

B5 Music Video

"Ghosted" had diverse shots and a down to earth, naturally flowing narrative that was heartwarming and easy to follow. This entry played around with and utilized the environment effectively to fit the story. The reveal at the end with the ghost giving himself flowers was well-earned, but until the reveal, an extra layer of context or what the ghost was doing besides picking flowers for the reveal would've added an extra narrative layer until the end.

"No Man's Land" utilized the environment beautifully with its aerial videography and smooth camera work. As a viewer, I would've liked to see a visual build with the climax of the song, whether a bit of exposition or small structured story within the video.

The third place entry used their access to the environment well — especially with the high school event. The shots were diverse and fit the song very well. The way they floated between the main love story and the surrounding couples in the green screen shots were very cute and added a lot of atmosphere to the story. As a viewer, the green screen shots momentarily took me out of the main narrative, but the extra creative layer was appreciated.

B6 Narrative Film

"Sergey's On Trial" had a defined beginning, middle, and end, with comedic relief, a strong intro utilizing news reels, and stylistic editing. As a viewer I would've liked to see a more intense or comedic reason for why Sergey is on trial to further enhance the comedic tone or raise the stakes.

"Set of Three" had beautiful shots, a touching voiceover and narrative, and incorporated real photos and videos that added another level of realism to further connect with the viewer. As a viewer, I would've liked to see the more personal and familial touches within the house, which would've connected us with the location and story further - seeing what it was before and after.

"Samurai Psychosis" had a strong opening, with eye catching editing and camera work. I got the gist of the story without relying on dialogue, but I would've liked to see an escalation in intensity during the fight scene until the main character has his satisfying win in the end.

B7 Broadcast

We found some very talented folks on set who were able to maintain pacing and keep the content interesting. Some really well put together news stories that could have actually aired on an evening newscast. Good use of graphics and the visuals really worked.

Newspaper/Magazine Categories

N1 News Story

Devious Licks, Ella Williams, PLD Lamplighter

Comments: Timely, well sourced, clear writing and a solid edit. Hard news angle.

Boone replacing most honors classes with unweighted 'accelerated' courses, Eric Inda, The Rebellion

Comments: Great explanatory journalism. Student focused.

A Decade of Giving Has Been Enough for Mudd, Claire Prater, The Central Times

Comments: I do not see a lot of stories about teachers quitting; personal look at a tough decision. Nicely done.

N2 Feature Story

A Lupus Warrior, Kylie Huber, Livewire

Comments: Contains a lot of elements in excellent storytelling; gets the science explained clearly; lots of human interest.

Overcoming the Obstacles of Teaching in a COVID Year, Joseph Eng, The Echo

Comments: Best of many stories about the impacts of COVID in the classroom. Good organization and structure.

How "Pandemic Brain" is Affecting All of Us, Trinity Kays, PLD Lamplighter

Comments: Another good look at the pandemic impact on schools, with a good science angle. Well done.

N3 Editorial

Scroogenomics: An argument against gift buying, Drew Law

Comment: timely angle, well researched, good message for people to act

Red Carpet Editorial Staff

Comment: Strong message for students to pursue excellence. Clear, articulate writing. Students need a nudge in the right direction sometimes. That usually comes from parents, principals and teachers. It might have more punch when it comes from fellow students.

N4 Review or Column

Requiem for a Laptop, John Vanetti, The Echo

Comment: A very creative take on a routine experience, computer problems. Some nice imagery and subtle knocks at the environmental issues that accompany tech development. I really enjoyed this.

A Teen's World: Homework, Maggie Phelps, The Central Times

Comment: I am thinking that teachers viewed this column with a lot of speculation, but the message is a good one: re-examine what has become routine to see if a better way exists. I have been teaching for 30 years, I assign a lot less homework than I used to for sure.

Plastic surgery epidemic reveals problems with society, Imam Hassan, The Rebellion

Comment: Good research on a relatively overlooked social trend. South Korea? Who would have guessed. I learned quite a bit from this column. Nice work!

N5 Sports Story

Widener's return and impact, Cam Raines, BGHS

Comments: Nice feature writing in this piece. Good use of direct quotes and contacting former players was resourceful. Tip: Eliminate "When asked about ..." from your writing. When readers are in a story, they know the person responding was "asked about." Set up the last Shutt quote this way: "Players responded enthusiastically to the news of Widener's return."

Muller makes the putt of a lifetime, Emma Orme, The Hilltopper

Comment: I like the checking back on alumni angle. and Muller is certainly worth writing about. Reads like solid interviewing was done, and it's a strong story structure, called the "Hourglass Structure," which starts in the present, makes a transition to the past and works back to the present. Good stuff.

Esports Pursuing Back-to-Back Championships, Quinn Nickell, The Echo

Comment: Esports tend to get overlooked because of the bevy of traditional sports teams at the high school level. This is a handily written piece. Could have used more information about specific players and or skillsets developed for non-Esports followers but overall, well done.

N6 News/Feature Photography

The first place entry is a clear winner due to the story that it tells through the expressions and interaction, not to mention the pie. The second place entry has a good expression but could use a little more context. What happened once she got to the stage? Was there any interaction at that point that might add to the story? The third place entry has compelling light that sets a mood, and the people in the background add a storytelling component, making it more than just a picture of an object. I am surprised by how few entries that were submitted; I'd like to see more!

N7 Sports Photography

The first place entry has peak action resulting in classic strong basketball action. Though the player with the ball has his back to the camera, the body language shows expression, and the facial expressions on the other two players in the frame, along with their body language, all adds up to a stellar sports image. The second place entry has an expressive face, which tells the story off the court, a reaction to what is happening on the court. This shows that the photographer is looking in both places for storytelling images; sometimes the moment off the court tells the story better! The third place entry has a more subtle reaction compared to the second place entry, but it is a good study of faces anticipating a play. Again, this tells the story unfolding on the field from a different perspective. Overall, it is good to see that the photographers are not putting their cameras down just because the play is over or hasn't begun. They recognize that stories are everywhere and can happen at any time. This shows very sophisticated seeing on their part!

N8 Editorial Cartoon

1st place: A great use of a collage to talk about the subject of perception placed upon women in the media.

N9 Front Page Design

First place really stuck out as a creative, energetic page. Liked the color and the typography.
Second place was just very clean and classic presentation
Third place has a very old school front page, but everything was well-organized and there was a dominant photo

N10 Page Design, Inside Page or Spread

First place stuck out as the cleanest and most effective design. Nice combo of typography, graphics and photo.
Second place was just a clean sports page.

Third place needs some work on typography, but I knew immediately what the story was about and the graphics were not overwhelming.

N11 Multimedia Production

The first place entry truly made use of several elements required within this category. A wonderful mix of media including well written stories, pictures, audio, video interviews as well as video b-roll in the production to support the narrative. The presentation allowed a user to navigate at their own pace and explore the story about teacher burnout. The content itself was relevant and an important story that needed to be told. The audio editing could have been tighter.

N12 News Publication

Aermail, Atherton High School

Comments: Chockfull of news with variety and depth; a real magazine feel and look; high school journalism is alive and well in Atherton. Very well done!

Livewire

Comments: A notch below the Aermail but not by much; Exceptional visual presentation; very solid work.

The Standard, Hardin County School Early College and Career Center

Comments: Solid publication but not quite as deep in news as the top two placers. Needs more consistency in design but a great vehicle for the students. With a little bit of work, will be a top contender.

N13 News Website

The first place website is a clean, well designed and strong photo selection presentation on its home page. The inside could make use of stronger image selection and more viewing options, but overall the judge was pleased with ease of navigation, clean design and overall content. Second place was a tough decision between first and second. This organization would benefit from considering its furniture (mast, navigation tools, etc) in a redesign to update it to a cleaner, sleeker design. The photo gallery options in their stories are a welcome addition to the overall experience of each story. Perhaps in some of these galleries consider other photo options —

don't just shoot the same situation — look for your subjects doing different things to provide a wider perspective to their story. Third place has a very nice front page design and easy interaction — your story ideas on the three entries were more feature related than news, but what really bothered me the most was the opportunity in all packages for stronger use of visuals but opted for a single portrait in most cases instead. Do not be afraid to get out and experience people doing real things!

Yearbook Categories

Y1 Sports Spread

I was looking for clarity and creativity. All of these entries were easy to read and used unique photo layouts. The photos were visually compelling and one entry even used illustration to complement that.

Y2 Student Life Spread

All of these submissions had so much originality and creativity and I was really blown away. I was looking for originality and expressiveness — what surprised me was how much these yearbook submissions really put so much detail into their pages and it shows how seriously they took their role as a yearbook creator and how much fun they had with it. What set the winners apart were just fine-tune details; all of them are shoe-in winners. I loved the colors, design, and overall feeling and flow of the page for the first place winner. For second place, I adored the originality of the design and the content and saw so much detail on the page. For the third place winners, I loved the creativity and playing with a theme and the consistency, was such a cool concept that I thought was executed well.

Y3 Academic Spread

Overall, the entries that stood out were those that kept an emphasis on intentional design that made sense to the story itself. When looking through the entries, I was looking for a well-executed design that was accessible to me as a reader and that kept me engaged without overwhelming me with too many elements on the page. A mix of multimedia on the page was also appreciated such as usage of illustrations, infographics and photos.

Y4 Organizations Spread

This was a very close call and all the entries were very strong. What set the winner apart here was intentional and eye-catching headers and illustrations. All winners had clean and easy to follow layouts. Always pay close attention to margins to make sure they are even and the page isn't too crowded.

Y5 Division Spread

The spreads that stood out had a clean, simple design that set it apart from other pages to make clear to the reader the division page was the start of a new section while still finding ways to weave in storytelling elements that contribute to the overall book and the theme development.

Y6 Candid Feature Photo

First place - I love the tight shot and the person's facial expression. I also love how it seems he is being embraced by a man in uniform. I am definitely curious to read the caption and learn more about the photo. I wish he wasn't looking at the camera, but overall I love the composition and the expression this photo carries.

Second place - I like how you captured a good action taking place. The quality is nice and sharp and the composition is pretty good. I would like to see more of his face, but very nice shot!

Third place - Since the photo covers both pages, it is difficult for me to view online because the photo is split. I think the composition is nice and the rule of thirds is executed well. I am sure the lighting is not the greatest in there, but I actually like the purple tone and I think it sets a mood. It is difficult with masks to see facial expressions, so I am glad you were able to get the eyes looking up, rather than on the pages.

Overall I am very impressed by these photos. I am always looking for good facial expressions and something interesting taking place. I am surprised with how great the quality seems to be and I definitely don't remember taking such sharp photos in high school, so good job!

Y7 Sports Action Photo

All of the entries surprised me with a great use of compositional technique and all of the photos captured unique moments very well. For the winning entries, I could particularly tell each photographer was intentional with what moments they chose to capture, which is an amazing thing to see in young talent. Moments (interaction), facial expressions, and mood take a sports photograph to the next level — a sports photograph that just shows what sport is being played doesn't fully impress me, I want to feel the intensity and emotion from the game from the photograph. I honestly struggled in choosing the winners out of so much wonderful work this year, keep it up!

Y8 Feature Story

Good writing is all about details. A feature story should have an interesting subject and a writer who intimately knows the subject. I looked for dynamic quotes, good diction, syntax and grammar, and thorough descriptions when assessing each yearbook spread. Feature stories should revolve around a specific subject, and along with the writing, both the design elements and photos should emphasize what's being discussed. What set the winners apart was their care in telling a good story through the use of words, eye-catching photography, headers and subtitles, and correct grammar. The main issue I saw in most submissions was incorrect grammar, lots of white space, too few photos, and awkwardly phrased sentences. Remember to keep in mind that presentation makes up your reader's first opinion of your publication. Pay attention to font sizes and whether they're easy to read, along with spelling and a balance between quotes and paraphrased information. Consider crediting the content creators on each yearbook spread also.

Y9 Cover Design

For each cover, I was looking for creativity, risk, and effective communication. Every cover did a great job representing their school's personality and displaying a common theme in really unique, individual ways. Some focused more on creativity in concept, some on effective communication (in matching the design to their theme), and some on taking a risk. The three that I chose I felt hit a couple of those marks or all three. In my eyes, a cover should act as a sneak peak for what is inside. It won't give anything away, but it will give just enough information to draw you in. Therefore, I approached each book with no knowledge of what was inside, viewing each as a blind outsider. Overall, I really enjoyed every yearbook cover and seeing how it embodied each school. Really great work!

Y10 Overall Layout/Design

The best designed books used consistency throughout to present a cohesive book — they didn't have any single spreads that looked out of place with the rest of the book. The best designs also made good use of dominant images on spreads to provide a clear focal point, drawing a viewer into the spread and creating a visual hierarchy throughout the spread, as opposed to having pages cluttered with many small images. One piece of advice based on what I saw with several entries would be to use only one novelty font on a page then complement it with a simple serif or sans serif font; using any more than that makes the design look busy and cluttered without helping the storytelling mission of the page.

Y11 Theme Development

The books that stood out were those that developed a consistent theme without making the theme overbearing, awkwardly forcing the theme throughout the book. The strongest themes were timely and relevant, without being a vague idea that could apply to any year. It was interesting to see how some books leaned more on the use of words, in headlines and titles, to present the theme, while others leaned more heavily on visuals, like illustrations and symbols, to present the theme throughout the book. I'd like to see a book subtly weave both of those together.

Y12 Advertising

In baby ads purchased by parents, I was looking for consistency throughout the designs. While every ad was different, the best designs used consistent elements — such as fonts, colors and layouts — for all the ads to make a cohesive section while still following all the basic principles of good design. Don't forget about what makes a good design just because you're designing an ad! The best designs also had some type of border to make a clear visual division between different ads. The top books also had a good mix of baby ads and business ads.

Y13 Overall Yearbook

Looking back at yearbooks from last year reminded me of just how bleak some points in the last school year were — kudos to all of the yearbook staffs for powering through and persevering to still publish! The top books had strong stories about the varied students, groups, classes and more at their schools — they weren't just unequivocal cheerleaders for school spirit. They also employed alternative story formats to provide variety throughout the book and engage readers, some of which allowed more students to be quoted and featured than traditional stories might. When designing your books, keep in mind that every mark on a page must have a meaning and be there for a purpose. The top books made sure that everything they placed on a page was there for a reason that furthered the storytelling.