USU student journalists make headlines with awards for 1st-rate reporting

06/22/2018

Katherine Taylor, a student in Journalism and Communications, reacts to USU winners being announced at the annual awards ceremony hosted by the Utah Chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists.

Utah State University’s student journalists were honored for their excellent reporting in a statewide competition that also recognized The Utah Statesman, USU’s student publication, as “best” in the newspaper category.

The Utah chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, in its June 14 ceremony, awarded Utah Public Radio’s reporters with a shelf of prizes. The Statesman’s reporters were recognized with individual awards as well, with the contest’s judges commenting that “the Statesman is a good quality paper overall, with solid stories, effective writing, nice photos and good design elements.”

The annual competition includes two divisions, one for professional TV and newspaper reporters and a second division for student journalists and reporters working for weekly publications.

Many of Matthew LaPlante’s students were in the audience to applaud the acceptance by this assistant professor of Journalism and Communications of an award for ethical reporting.

LaPlante earned the Quintus C. Wilson Ethics Award for his reporting, along with El Salvadoran student Carolina Pena, about parents from this poor nation who make the difficult decision to send their children on a journey alone to the border of the United States.

Reporters for Utah Public Radio were award-winners at the awards ceremony hosted by the Utah Chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists. From left, Bronson Teichert, Rachel Hager, Riana Gayle, Matilyn Mortensen, Dani Hayes and Kerry Bringhurst.

Awards for Utah Statesman reporters went to:

First place, editorial: The Utah Statesman staff, “It’s Time to Stop Doing Nothing about Guns”

First place, reporting, minority issues: Jackson Murphy, “Dreamers’ at USU Fear DACA Decision, Pres. Cockett Urges Utah Legislators to Protect Them”

First place, reporting on religion/values: Alison Berg, “Satanic Temple Cofounder Promotes Respect, Secularism”

Third place, military reporting: Dillan Passmore, “A Vigil for the Lives Lost in Battle”

Second place, series reporting: Alison Berg, “Torrey Green: Through the Eyes of Others; Torrey Green: The Stories Behind the Accusations”

Third place, government reporting: Carter Moore, “DREAMing of a Better Future”

Second place, sports column: Logan Jones, “A Personal Thank You to the Man in the Odd Cap”

Third place, sports column: Daniel Hansen, “On the Flipside of the Storybook Ending”

Second place, sports deadline reporting: Logan Jones, “No OT Magic for Utah State as Aggies Fall 26-20 in Arizona Bowl”

Third place, spot news: Alison Berg, “Department of Justice Investigating USU for Title IX Practices”
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Third place, reporting on minority issues for Utah State News Service: Zachary Ado, "Deportation Fears Prevent Some Latinos in Cache Valley from Going to Church"

Faculty member Brian Champagne, senior lecturer in Journalism and Communications, earned first place in television news editing for "Avalon vs Soul," and a second place for his television series, "Champagne Automotive Reports," both reported and produced for Fox 13 News.

Utah Public Radio was recognized for its news reporting as well as for original series such as "Crossing Borders" and "A State of Addiction." UPR awardees are:

First place, overall best radio reporter: Rhesa Ledbetter

First place, radio series: Utah Public Radio news team, "Crossing Borders: A Yearlong Storytelling Project"


Second place, radio reporting, education: Rhesa Ledbetter, "Nature is Calling: Satisfying Your Curiosity and Contribute to Scientific Research Using iNaturalist"

Third place, radio reporting, education: Rhesa Ledbetter, "Shower the National Weather Service with Data By Being a Backyard Weather Observer"

Second place, radio, general feature: Kristen Munson, "A State of Addiction: Breaking the Pain Cycle"

Second place, radio, general feature: Matilyn Mortensen, "Crossing Borders: 11-Year-Old Boy Walking Across Country to Raise Diabetes Awareness"

Second place, radio general news: Marilyn Mortensen, "Holiday Vending Machines in Salt Lake City Encourage Giving"

First place, radio reporting, minority issues: Andrea Smardon, "Crossing Borders: Undocumented Immigrants Still Crossing that Borders"

First place, radio personality profile: Rhesa Ledbetter, "Crossing Borders: Merrel Bootmaker Now Gets People Back on their Feet ... Literally"

Third place, radio personality profile: Dani Hayes, "A State of Addiction: We All Suffer"

For more information, contact Dani Hayes at UPR, dani.hayes@usu.edu, or Brian Champagne in JCOM, brian.champagne@usu.edu.

To read the Utah Statesman, visit http://usustatesman.com/