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LINCOLN – The Outstanding Young Nebraska Journalist Award was created and funded by Zean & Marilyn Carney, former publishers of the Wahoo Newspaper, Waverly News, Ashland Gazette, and David City Banner-Press and Past President of the Nebraska Press Association.

This award is awarded to four nominees from the weekly or daily categories. The nominees must be reporters, editors, photographers, graphic designers, production or advertising professionals who have worked for at least one year with a legal Nebraska newspaper.

A select panel of judges appointed by the Executive Director of NPA/NPAS considered among other items, the nominee’s professionalism, creativity, comments or statements on goals, impact of their work on print journalism, the community of journalistic excellence.

The first-place winner for the Outstanding Young Nebraska Journalist Award, in the weekly category, is Emily Hemphill, Seward Newspaper Group. An excerpt from her nomination reads: “A rapport with readers is built by becoming one of their own - being an ever-present face in the crowd, and sometimes standing alone to get the perspective others miss. Becoming a trustworthy reporter is less about the words that make it into the story (though they better be right) and more about action: showing compassion, showing professionalism, showing character and, sometimes, simply showing up.”

The second-place winner of the Outstanding Young Nebraska Journalist Award, weekly category, is Samantha Goff, Grant Tribune-Sentinel. An excerpt from her nomination reads: “In a world where we must compete with the likes of the internet, and social media, I want to keep the newspaper alive, and something people don’t want to miss. I’d like to think that what we are doing today would make those who preceded us proud, and that the cord values and principles of the newspaper are being carried out through my work on a regular and continued basis, and we can hold fast as the cornerstone of our community.”

There was a tie for first-place for the Outstanding Young Nebraska Journalist Award in the daily category. First-place winners are Derek Noehren, North Platte Telegraph, and Spike Jordan, Scottsbluff Star-Herald.

An excerpt from Derek’s publisher nomination letter reads: “In his new role as sports editor, Derek continues to report and photograph events, but also has shown his strength in organizing schedules and coaching a new young sports reporter. Always a team player, Derek is thriving as a leader as well.”

An excerpt from Spike’s publisher and editor nomination letter reads: “Spike has covered everything from council meetings to feature stories, hard hitting to personal columns. With whatever he is asked to do Spike attacks the story with professionalism and a determination to get the full and correct story. Spike is a reporter that goes the extra mile to get the story and tell it in the best possible way. “

The Outstanding Young Nebraska Journalist Award was awarded Friday, April 20, 2018, at the Nebraska Press Association’s 144th Annual Convention at the Cornhusker Marriott, Lincoln, NE.