



Best of Mississippi

Scholastic Journalism Awards

S P R I N G

**Winners will be announced at the MSPA statewide high school journalism convention at Ole Miss on Tuesday, March 27, 2018.
Publications must be MSPA members to compete. Contact MSPA director R.J. Morgan for more information.**

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Rules and Regulations

**DUE
FEB
15**

ELIGIBILITY AND COST

The only requirement for eligibility in any of our contests is that your publication be a member of MSPA. All contests are free to enter.

TYPES OF AWARDS

MSPA awards excellence in four different areas of scholastic journalism. The contest calendar breaks down like this:

FALL

Yearbook
Literary Magazine

SPRING

News Publication (paper/magazine/site)
Broadcast

** There are five Spring awards that are open to any student or publication (details on the next page).*

Within each of the above areas, our contests break out into **Publication (PUB)** and **Individual (IND)** categories. For Publication Categories, schools submit examples of the staff's abilities in a given area, and awards are issued in the name of the publication. For Individual Categories, schools submit strong individual works for recognition, and awards are issued in the name of the student.

CONTEST STRUCTURE

Judges will select up to five finalists, and from those one winner.

DIGITAL SUBMISSION

We've tried to make submitting your work as uniform as possible, thus we no longer take paper submissions. Only pieces submitted properly (and on time) will be considered in each category. Once you have shared your submissions, you may not make any further edits to the files/entries.

To submit digitally, begin by creating a Dropbox or Google Drive account (Google Drive is preferable). Both of these are free and user-friendly.

1. Once you've created an account, create a "[School Name] Submissions [Year]" folder in your account. This is where all your files will go.
2. Now you're ready to stock your Submissions folder with all the files you plan to enter. DO NOT use subfolders. Your files will automatically sort alphabetically by the category codes in the file name.

FILE NAMES – All file names should follow the same format: **CategoryCode_School_StudentName**. If submitting multiple entries from the same student in the same category, tack on a 1, 2 or 3 at the end of the filename.

FILE TYPES – Photos should be submitted as JPEGs. Everything else should be PDFs. Please crop pages down to only the elements being judged in that category.

3. Include one PDF with a composite list of entries, ordered by category with a total file count. This list helps us ensure all submissions were received.
4. Once all your files are in your submissions folder, simply share that folder with **mississippischolasticpress@gmail.com**. The office will download the files as soon as they are uploaded, and advisers will get an email confirming the submissions have been received. If you do not receive an email notification within 24 hours of submission, please email MSPA director R.J. Morgan at morgan@go.olemiss.edu.

If you have any questions about the submission process, call or email for clarification.

*** All entries become the property of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association and may be displayed in a collection of winning entries. Because of time and financial constraints, printed entries cannot be returned. ***



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OPEN TO ALL PUBLICATION TYPES

1. High School Journalist of the Year



Are you the best high school journalist in Mississippi? Prove it by applying for this highest honor. This award is sponsored by the Journalism Education Association and the Mississippi Press Association. **The winner gets a \$250 cash prize and advances to the national-level competition.** Candidates must develop a comprehensive online portfolio detailing and reflecting on their successes as a high school journalist (full requirements and judging rubric available at JEA.org). Open to journalists of all publication types.

Category Code: JOY

2. Scholastic Press Ally Award



A publication where students have the power and responsibility to cover their school accurately and fairly usually requires a lot of support from outside the classroom. Whether that support comes from an administrator, parent or counselor, a diligent IT worker, community member or local business, or any number of other sources, MSPA wishes to honor one of these scholastic press allies with statewide recognition. To nominate your greatest ally, submit a PDF with up to three (3) support letters or artifacts.

Category Code: SPA

3. Orley Hood Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism



High school sports are a major part of our culture and our communities, which makes the student reporters covering them particularly significant. This award is presented in partnership with the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and is meant to honor the best high school sports journalist in the state. To enter, students should submit a PDF portfolio with a brief resume and up to three (3) sports-related work samples. These may include videos (links), columns, features, game stories, breaking news or in-depth enterprise pieces. The winning student will be announced at MSPA's Spring Convention in Oxford and also recognized later at the Clarion Ledger Sports Awards banquet in Jackson. Any student on staff at an MSPA-member school is eligible. Judging will be all-inclusive.

Category Code: OHA

4. Best Social Media Presence



Modern journalists are increasingly using social media to connect with their audience, promote content and report on events in real time. Developing a staff presence on sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat is an important strategy for high school media outlets to utilize and for MSPA to honor. To enter, list/link all of your staff's social media accounts on one PDF. Judging will be based on their combined effectiveness at informing their audience.

Category Code: PSM

5. Best Integrated Marketing Campaign



One key facet of the modern media field is being able to understand, engage and persuade your consumers. How does your staff do this? Usually through some type of coordinated marketing effort. Whether it's selling yearbooks, launching a reader or viewership drive or just trying to spread the word about your new Snapchat account, we want to see your best marketing skills at work. To enter, submit a PDF portfolio that includes a written description of the campaign along with any photos, screenshots, videos (use links), etc. you feel best illustrate the specifics/success of the campaign. Promotion and branding should be evident. Creativity and Innovation are key. Special attention in judging will be given to trendsetting/following and unique approaches.

Category Code: IMC



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INDIVIDUAL HONORS

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APPLYING

Applying for these awards involves a **two-step process**. A call for nominations will be sent out on the MSPA listserv late in the fall semester, and a brief (100 words or less) online nomination form should be completed **on or before Jan. 10**. Nominations should explain why the nominee is deserving of the honor and can be submitted by anyone (principal, colleague, adviser, student, parent, etc., or the nominee themselves). A committee of judges will evaluate all nominations and narrow the field to five (5) finalists, each of whom will be prompted to complete a more detailed self-reflection form before the normal Feb. 15 contest deadline. Any adviser/editor at an MSPA-member school is eligible, regardless of school size.



ADVISER OF THE YEAR

Good journalism advisers are the most critical part of a program's success. They are more than just teachers; they're managers, motivators, mentors and sometimes even mediators. They are asked to simultaneously be visionaries and micro-managers, helping their students navigate through a variety of daily struggles. These are the people who make scholastic journalism possible, and MSPA seeks to honor those Mississippi advisers who excel at their craft.

SPRING

JoAnne Sellers Newspaper Adviser of the Year

Broadcast Adviser of the Year

FALL

Caroline Fair Yearbook Adviser of the Year

Literary Magazine Adviser of the Year



EDITOR OF THE YEAR

Scholastic publications don't just happen. It takes long hours and hard work to create a product that serves its student body and community in a meaningful way. There's no way to achieve this without dedicated and visionary student leadership. Through these awards, MSPA seeks to honor those students who push their publications, staffs and schools toward a higher level of success.

Newspaper Editor of the Year

Yearbook Editor of the Year

Broadcast Editor of the Year

Literary Magazine Editor of the Year

All four Editor of the Year awards are part of the Spring awards cycle.



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News Publication Division

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This is MSPA's largest division of competition. Newspapers and news magazines have long been the foundation of American journalism. In recent decades, these institutions have adapted to modernity and added news websites and social media accounts to the arsenal of tools they use to deliver information to their audiences. MSPA encourages scholastic journalism programs to do the same. Below is a comprehensive list of categories honored.

PUBLICATION AWARDS

These are awarded in the name of the publication. Submit PDFs of your **three** best issues from the current school year using **category code PNP and your school name** (Ex: PNP_Brownsville1, PNP_Brownsville2, PNP_Brownsville3). Judges will use these three issues to judge categories 1-5. Judging in all categories will be based on the diversity and quality of the stories, and the overall effectiveness of their display.

- (PNP)
1. News & Feature Writing
 2. Sports Writing
 3. Opinion Writing
 4. Print Layout and Design
 5. Newspaper of the Year (Highest Honor, all-inclusive)

6. Online Presence (POP)

This is the top award for a high school news site. To enter this category, submit your website's URL in a Word document or PDF with the category code and school in the file name (Ex: POP_Brownsville). Judging will be based on the overall quality/frequency of content and the appearance of the website.

7. Most Improved News Publication (PMI)

An entry consists of PDFs of the last issue published before Feb. 15 of the previous school year and the last issue published before Feb. 15 of this school year (Ex. PMI_Brownsville1, PMI_Brownsville2). Judges will look for significant growth in writing, photography, design, etc.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS (LIMIT 3 ENTRIES PER CATEGORY, PER SCHOOL)

(File Name Example: INS_Brownsville_AbigaleBagwell)

1. News Story (INS)

Articles entered should report new facts on planned or past actions or developments. Judging will be based on clarity, organization, attention to detail, quotes, attributions and thoroughness.

2. Depth Reporting (IDR)

Special category for entries in which a writer/writers has completed extensive research on a large, complicated topic (think school safety or local economy). Such stories often involve comprehensive surveys and investigations. Judging is based on depth of effort and clarity of presentation.

3. Feature Story (IFS)

Features differ from news stories mainly in that features do not necessarily have a time element. They may be about people, events or other topics; they are generally more descriptive than straight news. Judging will be based on clarity, descriptions, attention to detail, quotes, attribution and thoughtfulness.

4. Opinion Piece (IOP)

These are opinion articles that lay out a clear stance on a given issue. They may also be columns or commentaries on sports or culture with no specific conclusions drawn or solutions presented. Entries will be judged on clarity, reasoning, organization and thoughtfulness.

5. Staff Editorial (IUE)

These are unsigned opinion articles that represent the thoughts of the entire staff. This is the voice of the paper. Entries will be judged on clarity, reasoning, organization and thoughtfulness. Though the article is unsigned, the adviser must designate the name of the actual student writer for recognition.

6. Review (IRV)

These are opinion articles that critique a topic (books, movies, music, food, etc.). Judging is based on clarity, reasoning, organization and thoughtfulness.



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News Publication Division

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7. Editorial Cartoon (IEC)

Any single cartoon or series, humorous or other, which was student-drawn and printed during the contest period is eligible. Judging will be based on the artist's skill in visually and verbally conveying a message. Editorial cartoons differ from "comics" in that they do present a message.

8. Sports Story (ISS)

All copy that reports on athletic contests or issues is eligible for entry. Judging will be based on clarity, organization, attention to detail, quotes, attributions and thoroughness.

9. News Photo (INP)

News photos capture actions or reactions to a news event. Any single photo that appeared in a member publication and was taken by a staff member is eligible. Judging is based on composition, focus and contrast - how effectively the photographer conveyed the reason for taking the picture.

10. Feature Photo (IFP)

Feature photos are more posed or artistically framed than news photos. Any single photo that appeared in a member publication and was taken by a staff member is eligible. Judging is based on composition, focus and contrast - how effectively the photographer conveyed the reason for taking the picture.

11. Sports Photo (ISP)

Sports photos capture actions or reactions involving athletic events or athletes. Any single photo that appeared in a member publication and was taken by a staff member is eligible. Judging is based on composition, focus and contrast - how effectively the photographer conveyed the reason for taking the picture.

12. Page Design (IPD)

The entire page or spread must be entered. It does not matter whether the designer wrote any of the stories or took any of the pictures on the page. Judging will be based on the attractiveness and effectiveness of the design, including the clarity and placement of headlines and other elements.

13. Infographic (IIG)

Infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly. Judging will be based on the attractiveness and effectiveness of the design, including the clarity and placement of headlines and other elements.



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Broadcast Division

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School newscasts are the fastest-growing area of journalism in Mississippi. Each year, more and more schools are giving their students control of the airwaves and allowing them to deliver quality audio and video programs to their student body. Below is a comprehensive list of categories honored.

PUBLICATION AWARDS

These are awarded in the name of the publication. Submit a PDF with links to your best three broadcasts (45-minute max total run time) from the current school year using **category code BCN and your school name** (Ex: BCN_Brownsville). Judges will use these three shows to judge categories 1-7. Judging in all categories will be based on the diversity and quality of the stories, and the overall effectiveness of their display.

(BCN)

1. **Best Opening Sequence** (1-minute max run time)
2. **Best News Coverage**
3. **Best Feature Coverage**
4. **Best Sports Coverage**
5. **Best Creativity** (PSAs, hype videos, weather reporting, creative contests, etc.)
6. **Best Daily Newscast** (if applicable)
7. **Newscast of the Year**

8. Most Improved (BMI) - For this category, submit a PDF with links to one complete broadcast from before Feb. 15 of the previous school year and one complete broadcast from this school year. Total runtime for both shows should not exceed 30 minutes.

9. Best Online Streaming Program (BOS) - For this category, submit a PDF with link to a student-produced broadcast (audio or video) of a sporting event or school program. Judges will look at on-air talent as well as technical execution.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS (LIMIT 3 ENTRIES PER CATEGORY, PER SCHOOL)

(File Name Example: BNP_Brownsville_AbigaleBagwell)

1. **Best News Story (BNS)** – This category is for your program's best individual student news reports. Any breaking news, events, in-depth pieces, etc. are permissible. Maximum length of 3 minutes per entry.
2. **Best Feature Story (BFS)** – This category is for your program's best individual student feature reports. Good features can be lighthearted, serious, emotional or in-depth. Maximum length of 3 minutes per entry.
3. **Best Sports Story (BSS)** – This category is for your program's best individual student sports reports. Any sports-related previews, recaps, features or exclusives are admissible. Maximum length of 3 minutes per entry.
4. **Best Anchor (BANC)** - Who is the best on-air talent in Mississippi? Submit your highlight reel to find out. Maximum length of 5 minutes per entry.
5. **Best Weather Reporter (BWET)** - There's a lot that goes into delivering a weather forecast for your student body. How well do your weather reporters stack up? Maximum length of 3 minutes per entry.
6. **Best PSA (BPSA)** - This category is for public service announcements and videos that argue for a specific cause or action. Only student-produced entries will be accepted. Maximum length of 3 minutes per entry.
7. **Best Hype Video (BHYP)** - This category is for videos that excite or engage the student body ahead of a major sporting event or school function. Judging will be based on difficulty and effectiveness. Maximum length of 2 minutes per entry.
8. **Best Podcast (BPOD)** - Does your publication put out a great podcast? Submit your best episodes here. Maximum length of 15 minutes per entry.
9. **Best Longform Story (BLS)** - This category is for lengthy in-depth pieces on a singular topic. For example, a 30-minute look at the history of integration in your town/school. Or a behind-the-scenes documentary-style look at your football team's season. Judges will look for innovation, effectiveness and excellence. No maximum length.