



# Macy Crosser

NSPA Photojournalist of the Year 2022 Portfolio

The Harbinger | Shawnee Mission East High School | Prairie Village, KS

# Personal Statement

A year ago I would not have believed you if you told me I was submitting a portfolio for photojournalist of the year. I had the mindset of a newbie with my one year of pandemic-affected experience, still learning the ropes and how to hold my camera steady. This past year as an assistant editor for my school newspaper, I say with confidence I have grown into a whole new photographer, a photographer I am proud of. You can learn so much from working with others, and as an assistant I definitely took advantage of spending time with my experienced editors. The position of an assistant also gave me the opportunity to better my work and prepare to step into head photo editor for my senior year. If there is one word to describe my year in photography, it would without a doubt be growth.

My favorite part of gaining experience is talking to other photographers and advisors to pick up tricks and tips along the way. I've noticed each photographer has their own unique touch. I have grown so much in one year and finally feel like I have developed my own personal style through my photos. Although I am nowhere near done improving, I have made impressive progress and I am proud of the work I've created.

Although sports photography is my personal favorite genre, I love the challenge of immersing myself into atypical situations to get atypical shots. With my swimsuit tied, goggles on, and camera safely secured in an underwater camera bag, I jumped into my high school pool to take pictures of a little kids swim clinic run by our state champion high school swim team. Treading water for an hour with a camera in hand is not easy work, but getting out of my comfort zone felt rewarding. My photos contributed to a photo essay published in the newspaper the next week. Although my photos weren't perfectly executed that first time, next time I decide to jump in the water I know my shots will improve. Improvement was what I cared about most. Although improvement is not always consistent, I noticed subtle development in my photos throughout the year, which motivated me to keep working. Knowing I have improved has been one of the best and rewarding experiences as a photographer.

One of the most important lessons I've learned so far is to search for emotion and expressions in order to capture the most powerful photos of people. Photographing raw emotion shown by real people is moving when done well. It's almost always found in the eyes: the eyes entice me. Luckily, masks have been slowly removed from daily life, which makes it ten times easier to photograph human subjects. Without the added challenge of masks, it drove me to work harder to find a different shot. The shot that has that wow feeling. The shot to tell the story. I spent increasingly more time trying to maximize the story in each photo, instead of carelessly shooting with little purpose. A different lens, camera settings, or even a couple inches in a different direction can make all the difference in a photo. I have been blessed with the ability to learn more about people through a single photo. I've found that photos can tell stories that words sometimes can't. Every person, photo, event, game, has a unique story, and I have become determined to tell each story with impact through my camera lens.

## Got that Goal



### Caption

After junior Ike Sheets shoots and scores the first goal of the game, junior Ryan Grinstead and senior Ryan Vanice follow Sheets as they rush towards the rest of their team during the SM East vs. Lawrence High playoff game on Oct. 26. Sheets' goal gave the boys momentum and they continued to score, winning the game 3-0.

### Description

Soccer has always been my favorite sport to capture because of the fast pace, passion and excitement the players show. Naturally, I had to shoot the first playoff game of the season, where emotion would be at its peak. Knowing the importance of following the action even after the play has ended, I wouldn't have gotten this intense reaction if I had put my camera down after the goal.

# Inches Away



## Caption

Inches from the ground, the football slips out of cornerback George Kopp's hands, fumbling the ball in the second quarter of the SM East vs. Olathe South football game on Sept. 24. Kopp intercepted the ball and ran to gain 20 yards, but a hit from behind caused him to lose it and turned the possession back over to Olathe South. This fumble was one of many mistakes that caused Olathe South to beat SM East 34-21.

## Description

This image captures the most controversial play of the game. The SM East fans argued that Kopp was down before fumbling the ball, which this picture proves otherwise. I was proud to capture the exact moment and sitting on the sidelines, I knew the referee had made the right call.

# Final Hoorah



## Caption

Choir teacher Ken Foley and senior choir students pump their fists in the air after singing the school song to end the SM East graduation ceremony on May 17. "I was reflecting on all of the lasts: the last time being with all of my choir seniors and the last time singing the school song," said senior choir member Ashley Garverick.

## Description

Instead of shooting the bulk of the students in this powerful moment, I chose to shoot the choir: a tight knit group of seniors separated from the group. I love the broad range of intense emotion captured in this photo, and each student you look at gives the audience a different feeling. You can see smiles and tears and pride in each different student pictured, which encompasses the emotion surrounding graduation.

# A Source of Strength



## Caption

Seniors Maggie Merckens and Hannah Geoffrey fill in the yellow smiley face on the hallway window, representing a mood checklist for the Sources of Strength mural on Nov 1. The mural was painted by members of the Sources of Strength club to spread mental health awareness around the school.

## Description

This scenario presented an unique challenge to frame the students faces and activity of painting the window all in one photo. As soon as I arrived, I knew I wanted to crawl under them and shoot below, where they would be highlighted by the light of the window. So I did just that and despite the discomfort and closeness, I layed under them, pushing my wide angle lens up towards their faces.

# Learning from Literature



## Caption

At the second annual Juneteenth Festival in the Prairie Village community on June 19th, an elementary school girl reads the inside cover of “Cameron Battle and the Hidden Kingdoms”, by Jamar J. Perry. The diverse selection of literature for all ages was chosen to support black authors at the celebration.

## Description

Testing out my new fisheye lens this summer, I arrived at the Juneteenth festival in hopes to capture how the community comes together on the holiday. Browsing the tents, I noticed the girl nose deep in this book with a black boy on the cover. After doing my research, I learned that the author started writing so that black children could see themselves as the hero in their own stories, and that this purpose was being fulfilled right in front of my eyes.