

# Solada Mills

## *Gladiator Yearbook Editor In Chief*

### Contributions

**As A Staffer:** I worked on many spreads alone to support my group, and I worked hard in and out of school shadowing editors and learning our software in order to bring my yearbook knowledge up to par with the editors at the time.

**As a Mod Editor & Group Leader:** During summer I worked with a partner editor to create all of the mod templates we would use throughout the year, ensuring they would look lovely, adhere to our theme, and staffers would be able to easily use them. Leading my group, I put every effort to bring all five of us closer together and closely taught my new staffers to be comfortable working on the yearbook when I wouldn't be their leader in the next year.

**As an Editor-In-Chief:** As a co-Editor-in-Chief, I helped create our theme and its design, managed the staff to ensure a kind environment, and oversaw the production of every page in our book to make sure we stayed consistent throughout and met deadlines properly. When I came into the position, I had in my mind the voices of my fellow staff, and I entered fully prepared to push the boundaries of our class which had fallen into a consistent routine. Here are the two most significant changes I made this year:

*Customized Spreads*— I introduced the idea of “customizing” our spreads instead of using full templates throughout the book. Although it required a lot more involvement from us, it became so rewarding for the variety and design of our book. Groups would have “spread meetings” with either EICs or the lead design editor, and we would use elements we made over the summer to make unique spreads that catered to the content being covered. We even created designs on the spot for groups with a particular idea in mind. This simultaneously gave our book more personality and made groups much more invested in making their spreads great, because they were completely involved in the decision-making.

*Sunday Checks*— I introduced a system we call “Sunday Checks,” where all groups gave themselves weekly goals to meet in a communal spreadsheet. This kept a higher sense of accountability within the class without harboring resentment. It also helped my co-EIC and I with keeping track of where our spreads were and how our deadline's progress was going.

## Leadership Philosophy

My philosophy is to lead in a way that makes people enjoy being in our publication, and is very rooted in communication. I have worked very hard to make lasting personal connections with every member of our class, and I go out of my way to help people when they need it and to be clear with my expectations. I never make a member of the staff come to me for help— I go to their computer instead. I don't want to seem unapproachable, and I want everyone to be curious about our yearbook. As a result, there is less of a divide between me and the rest of the class. I don't hide things that I don't need to, my thoughts are clear on display, and I encourage honest communication between all levels of staff. I am so incredibly proud of the warm and connected environment that we've created this year.



## Proudest Moment

My proudest moment came from mentoring Andrea, a staffer in my group last year. She shadowed me and I tried teaching her all I knew. I showed her all my love for the yearbook, hoping it would encourage her. After the year ended I saw her theme project, the culmination and demonstration of her abilities, and it was stunning. This even led to her going straight to Lead Design Editor! This memory is a reminder that I have the ability to foster great future editors, and that my teaching methods are effective. I can't wait to see where she goes.



## Statement of Support

Solada Mills is a rare soul. She is thoughtful, driven, and guided by a deep sense of compassion. She is inherently curious and endlessly creative. As a leader, Sol doesn't just manage; she acts as a mentor. She sees the unique strengths in each of her staffers and works with care and intention to uplift them and help them thrive. Her optimism shines daily and her belief in others is highly contagious. What sets Sol apart is that she doesn't lead for recognition; she leads to make others shine. With this spirit, she will continue to thrive and inspire.