

Olin Nafziger → Photojournalist

What I find most fulfilling about photojournalism is its ability to convey moments into narrative form. Throughout the year, I've had the opportunity to document a wide range of events and capture the unique talents of individuals at my school who may not otherwise share their gifts with the community. If given the chance to change one thing about my journalism experience, I would have embraced it sooner. I adore spending time after school or on the weekend traveling across the city to cover a parade, or a sporting event that I never would have attended otherwise.

As a photojournalist, my weekly workload typically consists of one or two non-sports assignments, along with the coverage of two school sports teams per season. While my responsibilities entail documenting at least two games and a practice for each sport, I often go above and beyond by voluntarily covering extra sports or taking on assignments others may shy away from.

Upon receiving an assignment, I promptly reach out to subjects, schedule meetings and upload edited photos within a day or two of the assignment. I'm very proud of my punctuality, knowing that my efficiency and dependability contributes to the seamless publication of articles awaiting accompanying photographs.

One of my proudest accomplishments this year was my commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices and shedding light on overlooked stories within our school community. For instance, when I received a message from the captain of the girl's basketball team, asking if any photojournalists were planning to attend their matches. It was nearing the end of the season, and she wanted there to be enough photos to represent the team in the yearbook.

I brought it up with my adviser, who told me that yes,

photographers were attending basketball games—but only the boy's team. I recognized this as an opportunity to fix an inequity. Despite not being tasked with covering basketball and despite my lack of ever having seen a basketball game before, I took it upon myself to stay late after school and photograph two games that week. Journalism to me is about sharing the stories that not everyone is able to experience live, and it frustrates me when I end up covering something like this—an event that more people should experience, but don't. But that's what I feel my role as a journalist is: to shed light on unseen stories and convince the audience that they are stories worth seeing.

When pro-Palestinian protests erupted on the nearby UChicago campus early this year, I was given the opportunity to take the skills that I had learned covering school events and bring them into the real world. When the encampment was removed by university police early in the morning, I woke to the sounds of news helicopters circling my house. I took my camera and headed to the encampment, unsure of what I'd find.

What I did see was a tense confrontation between protesters and police, and I did my best to use the lessons learned from covering school events to stay safely out of the way, while still capturing the action of the moment.

Additionally, I took the opportunity to practice my interviewing skills, talking to university students that had been removed from the encampment earlier in the morning. Ultimately, my experience this year has underscored the essential role of journalism in today's world.

As I continue to participate in photojournalism, I am more motivated than ever to tell these vital stories, ensuring that every voice is heard and every moment is witnessed.



On May 2, the fourth day of the encampment, a demonstrator stands in front of a group of police waving a Palestinian flag. On Monday, April 29, UChicago United for Palestine launched an encampment on the University of Chicago's Main Quad to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The encampment and pro-Palestinian protests continued for days.



When an encampment protesting the war in Gaza popped up steps away from our high school on the university's main quad, I grabbed my camera and got my first chance to follow a breaking news story. For more than a week, I spent time before, after and during school on campus taking photos. I took hundreds of photos for multiple stories that week, and was even seen in the background of a national CBS news segment — holding my camera while trying to hide in the bushes.



After being removed from the encampment early on May 7, two UChicago students chant in front of the university bookstore on South Ellis Avenue and begin chanting “UCPD, KKK, IOF, they’re all the same!” — referring to the Ku Klux Klan and using a pejorative term for the Israeli Defense Forces — and “Where does our tuition go? Killing children, hell no!”



This photo was taken the morning that university police took down the pro-Palestinian encampment set up at the University of Chicago, as two students that were removed from their tents before dawn chant against a wall of police.



With her left foot wrapped in red silk, Daisy Coleman suspends herself in the air. This form of acrobatics, called aerial silks, is Daisy's specialty in circus performance.



This photo was a culmination of a month-long process to find a spot to capture this student and her passion for aerial silks. I found out that her mom worked at an arts center that I could bike to, and with her help, we gained access to the building early one morning before school for a photoshoot in a vacant room. This allowed me to take the pictures and edit them for publication later that day, allowing the article to be published as quickly as possible.



At a practice on Jackson Park golf course, Nathan Lio swings at his golf ball.



This photo marks the start of my time as a photographer on the journalism staff. As my first assignment, I had never seriously done photography before, but spending time with and shooting the golf team made me feel immersed in the opportunity to capture the moment. Over the course of three days spending time and shooting the golf team, I not only became comfortable with the controls on my camera, but I developed an enjoyment for photojournalism and turning narratives into image form.



Nice shot/ Walking to the pin, sophomore Anaya Douglas goes to retrieve her ball. "This year as a team we were able to accomplish a lot of the goals that we set coming into the season. But overall my favorite part of the season is always just spending time with the team, and the friendships and community we built during practice and all the tournaments," Anaya said. Photo by Olin Nafziger



This photo was taken at the first basketball game I've ever attended, after finding out that no one on the photojournalism staff had covered the girls basketball team yet. Almost no one outside of the team was in the stands cheering them on, despite how well they were playing. This photograph reminds me of the importance of equal representation in journalism coverage, as capturing moments like this allow them to be spread to far more people.