

Macy Williams, Shawnee Mission North High School

Minneapolis 2026 Best of Show, Editorial Leadership: All Media

List your contributions to your high school student media program, including positions held and job descriptions if needed.

I joined the SMN Brickhouse staff as a freshman, beginning my journalism career with eight stories, one design, and one photo published in the 2023 Brickhouse yearbook. Quickly, I found my home in Room 184 and began taking every class possible. Sophomore year, I began taking more photos and became Assistant Photo Coordinator, helping with media days, writing captions for editors, and picking photos for pages while continuing to write over 10 stories for the 2024 Brickhouse yearbook. My junior year was nothing short of busy. With three journalism classes, I was both Photo Editor and Copy Editor as well as writing over 25 stories and a photo of mine on nearly every page of the 2025 Brickhouse yearbook. I also began to look at design seriously. Following that heavy load, I became Editor-in-Chief and began designing regularly for the first time. I taught myself how to design a cover and develop a theme while planning lessons for the brand-new staff. I completed my theme deadlines between the rough draft corrections with my staff designers. Being Editor-in-Chief wasn't just the theme for me, I continued to design showstoppers and biweekly spreads, picking up wherever my staff was lacking. I continued to write and take photos, fostering a hard working community as I continued to teach the staffers who would replace me next year.

Describe your leadership philosophy (200 words or fewer).

As a leader, I understand that the loudest, bossiest person isn't always the best way to teach and lead others. Journalism attracts a diverse group of students. Understanding that and utilizing that to my advantage, I have learned to listen to the needs of my staffers and adjust my strategies accordingly. Some of my staff need a lot of direction and help when learning new skills while others like quiet encouragement and written corrections. Either way, it's important for me to be flexible to their needs in order to help them produce the best results and feel proud of their work. I also believe that sometimes journalism gets stressful and overwhelming. With that in mind, as EIC, I've begun to implement new activities like "deadline celebrations" after a hard deadline and positivity boards around the room where anyone can add sticky notes to boost morale.

Describe your most proud leadership moment (100 words or fewer).

Recently, we got KSPA Regional results back. Personally, I placed in all five of my categories but only received one first place. I was disappointed in myself as last year, I had four first places. However, this year, as a staff, we placed first. I didn't do the best but my staff showed up and they showed out. With 68 placements, we scored first in our entire region. Each

staff member was required to enter two categories, pushing a majority of them to enter categories they normally wouldn't, to do something unknown, and yet they tried their best and pushed us to the top.

A statement of support from your adviser (100 words or fewer).

Macy is the leader who not only makes sure that everything gets turned in ahead of time and done well but also reaches out to other schools in our area when they need assistance. Her leadership goes far beyond the SM North High School classroom. Just yesterday, I had a phone call from the Quill and Scroll Director who asked if Macy would be willing to speak in front of a group at the National High School Journalism Conference this spring. That's the kind of editor Macy is, she makes impacts big and small wherever she goes. After nearly 4 decades of advising a yearbook, there's only been a handful of top-notch editors, and Macy is in the one percent of top editors I've ever had.

- Becky Tate
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