01. Breaking News Reporting

Division A

1st Place
Staff
Orlando Sentinel
Breaking news coverage of Epic Universe opening

2nd Place
Staff
Orlando Sentinel
The Pulse crosswalk gets painted over

Division B

1st Place
Staff
Tallahassee Democrat
A Mass Shooting at FSU

2nd Place
Tayeba Hussein, Andrew West, Kim Luciani & Team
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Bear Attack

3rd Place
J. Kyle Foster, Andrew West & Team
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Cape Coral boat crash

Division C

1st Place
Nichole Manna
The Florida Trib
A death in the Duval County jail

2nd Place
Staff
Florida Phoenix
Christine Sexton

3rd Place
Pensacola News Journal Staff
Pensacola News Journal
Historic Florida Snow Storm

02. Enterprise Stories

Division A

1st Place
Alex Harris, Susan Merriam
Miami Herald
Floods of Trouble

2nd Place
Lauren Peace
Tampa Bay Times
The Death of Audrey Petersen

3rd Place
Ryan Gillespie, Natalia Jaramillo
Orlando Sentinel
Orlando Sentinel immigration coverage

Division B

1st Place
Alicia Devine
Tallahassee Democrat
Hidden Heroics in the ER

2nd Place
Shira Moolten
South Florida Sun Sentinel
He beat and terrorized the women he said he loved. Florida's justice system nearly failed them.

3rd Place
Rick Neale, Jim Waymer, Dave Berman
Florida Today
Evolving Cities: Brevard County

Division C

1st Place
Nichole Manna, Casey Frank
The Florida Trib
'Cold-Blooded'

2nd Place
Alice Herman, Kara Newhouse
Suncoast Searchlight
Immigration Crackdown

3rd Place
Josh Salman, Derek Gilliam, Kara Newhouse
Suncoast Searchlight
Power and Profit

03. Investigative Reporting

Division A

1st Place
Zachary T. Sampson, Shreya Vuttaluru and Bethany Barnes
Tampa Bay Times
Wasting Away

2nd Place
Staff
Miami Herald
Killer Train

3rd Place
Emily L. Mahoney and Langston Taylor
Tampa Bay Times
Undocumented workers built Florida's roads — and died in the process

Division B

1st Place
John A. Torres
Florida Today
Exposing and Correcting a Wrongful Conviction

2nd Place
Shira Moolten
South Florida Sun Sentinel
He beat and terrorized the women he said he loved. Florida's justice system nearly failed them.

3rd Place
Jeff Burlew
Tallahassee Democrat
A Watchdog for Missy Mogle

Division C

1st Place
Nichole Manna, Casey Frank
The Florida Trib
'Cold-Blooded'

2nd Place
Derek Gilliam (Suncoast Searchlight); Michael Moore Jr. (Bradenton Herald)
Suncoast Searchlight
Manatee County Sheriff's Bar Fight

3rd Place
Derek Gilliam (Suncoast Searchlight); Michael Barfield (Florida Trident)
Suncoast Searchlight
Sarasota Stormwater Investigation

04. Community Leadership

Division A

1st Place
Zachary T. Sampson, Shreya Vuttaluru and Bethany Barnes
Tampa Bay Times
Wasting Away

2nd Place
Graham Brink and Jim Verhulst
Tampa Bay Times
Pedestrians in Peril

3rd Place
Max Klaver
Miami Herald
Economic mobility package

Division B

1st Place
Finch Walker
Florida Today
Teacher Disciplined for a Name

2nd Place
Staff
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Alligator Alcatraz Exposed

3rd Place
Elena Barrera
Tallahassee Democrat
Tallahassee Hospital for Sale

Division C

1st Place
Carter Weinhofer, Kara Newhouse and Josh Salman
Suncoast Searchlight
Manatee County Schools Misconduct

2nd Place
Josh Salman (Suncoast Searchlight), Derek Gilliam (Suncoast Searchlight), Michael Moore Jr. (Bradenton Herald)
Suncoast Searchlight
Illegal Arcades

3rd Place
Josh Salman, Derek Gilliam, Kara Newhouse
Suncoast Searchlight
Power and Profit

05. Features Writing

Division A

1st Place
Lane DeGregory
Tampa Bay Times
Shell Shocked

2nd Place
Leah Schwarting
The Villages Daily Sun
How 177 Aliens Hitched a Ride During Florida's Last Hurricanes

3rd Place
Roger Simmons
Orlando Sentinel
Ticked Pink: Flamingos at Merritt Island

Division B

1st Place
Mark Woods
Florida Times-Union
Mark Woods feature writing

2nd Place
Chad Gillis
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Who is Clyde Butcher

3rd Place
TaMaryn Waters
Tallahassee Democrat
Sales and the Scars of Segregation

Division C

1st Place
Nichole Manna
The Florida Trib
'Cold-Blooded'

2nd Place
Alice Herman, Kara Newhouse
Suncoast Searchlight
Jail-to-Deportation Pipeline

3rd Place
Kaila Jones
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Frogging

06. Beat Reporting

Division A

1st Place
Jacqueline Charles
Miami Herald
Haiti's Lost Generation

2nd Place
Dan Sullivan
Tampa Bay Times
Dan Sullivan on justice

3rd Place
Steven Walker
Orlando Sentinel
Steven Walker beat reporting

Division B

1st Place
Rick Neale
Florida Today
Covering Space

2nd Place
Amy Bennett Williams
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Environment Reporting

3rd Place
Tarah Jean
Tallahassee Democrat
An Ascension at FAMU

Division C

1st Place
Nichole Manna
The Florida Trib
Nichole Manna coverage of JSO

2nd Place
Tim O'Hara
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Tim O'Hara collection

3rd Place
Nancy Kennedy
Citrus County Chronicle
Beat Reporting. Postscripts

07. Sports

Division A

1st Place
Joey Knight
Tampa Bay Times
As Jim Leavitt reconciles with USF, peace eludes Joel Miller's family

2nd Place
Jeff Shain
The Villages Daily Sun
Collection of work by Jeff Shain

3rd Place
Rick Stroud
Tampa Bay Times
Dr. Ali Marpet? A career in clinical psychology awaits former Bucs guard

Division B

1st Place
Dan DeLuca
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Dan DeLuca Sports Writing

2nd Place
Clayton Freeman
Florida Times-Union
Clayton Freeman sports reporting

3rd Place
Liam Rooney
Tallahassee Democrat
The Sports Reporting of Liam Rooney

Division C

1st Place
Jason Dill
Bradenton Herald
Dill Sports Collection

2nd Place
Patrick Obley
The Daily Sun
Belated medal

3rd Place
Staff
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Collection: Vero Beach High School football championship run

08. Sports Columns

All Divisions

1st Place
John Romano
Tampa Bay Times
A collection by John Romano

2nd Place
Staff
Orlando Sentinel
Mike Bianchi

3rd Place
PATRICK OBLEY
The Daily Sun
Sports Columns 2025

09. Business

Division A

1st Place
Staff
Tampa Bay Times
Power Struggle

2nd Place
Ron Hurtibise
South Florida Sun Sentinel
Retail Dreams

3rd Place
Ron Hurtibise
South Florida Sun Sentinel
Florida's high cost of home insurance

Division B

1st Place
Phil Fernandez
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Growth & Development Collection

2nd Place
Rick Neale
Florida Today
Secretive Space Businesses

3rd Place
Laura Layden
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Business Journalism Collection

Division C

1st Place
Jack Randall
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Citrus greening has wreaked havoc on Florida industry

2nd Place
Jack Randall & Melissa Holsman
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Florida's new condo inspection rules -- How they affect the Treasure Coast

3rd Place
Jack Randall
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Ranchers worry about the coming of Florida's largest data center

10. Columns

Division A

1st Place
Stephanie Hayes
Tampa Bay Times
A collection by Stephanie Hayes

2nd Place
Staff
South Florida Sun Sentinel
Pat Beall Columns

3rd Place
Scott Maxwell
Orlando Sentinel
Columns from Scott Maxwell

Division B

1st Place
Mark Woods
Florida Times-Union
Mark Woods columns

2nd Place
Britt Kennerly
Florida Today
Columns by Britt Kennerly

3rd Place
John A. Torres
Florida Today
Columns by John A. Torres

Division C

1st Place
Jim Gouvellis
Citrus County Chronicle
Jim Gouvellis columns. Homelessness

2nd Place
John Hackworth
The Daily Sun
Pardon Me For Askin' 2025

3rd Place
Jim Gouvellis
Citrus County Chronicle
Jim Gouvellis columns. Library Board

11. Editorials

Division A

1st Place
Krys Fluker
Orlando Sentinel
State Paints Over Pulse Crosswalk

2nd Place
Staff
South Florida Sun Sentinel
South Florida Sun Sentinel Editorials

3rd Place
Krys Fluker
Orlando Sentinel
Coryy Mills' Problems

Division C

1st Place
Staff
Citrus County Chronicle
Editorials. Peggy Primeau

2nd Place
John Hackworth
The Daily Sun
Editorials 2025

3rd Place
Laurence Reisman, Blake Fontenay, Adam Neal
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Collection

12. Spot News Photography

Division A

1st Place
Matias J. Ocner
Miami Herald
The Li'l Abner Mobile Home Park

2nd Place
Pedro Portal
Miami Herald
Immigrants Arrested

3rd Place
Matias J. Ocner
Miami Herald
Everglades Wildfire

Division B

1st Place
Craig Bailey
Florida Today
Lightning and the VAB

2nd Place
Andrew West
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Coyote on a Ledge

3rd Place
Ricardo Rolón
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Face-off

Division C

1st Place
Matt Beck
Citrus County Chronicle
God Bless these people

2nd Place
Kaila Jones
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Sergeant killed during eviction notice

3rd Place
Gregg Pachkowski
Pensacola News Journal
FSU shooting

13. Feature Photography

Division A

1st Place
Staff
South Florida Sun Sentinel
Critics worry Swimming Hall of Fame tower will steal limelight from dive tower

2nd Place
George Horsford
The Villages Daily Sun
Collection of work by George Horsford

3rd Place
Matias J. Ocner
Miami Herald
Aquaplex is open for business

Division B

1st Place
Malcolm Denemark
Florida Today
Space

2nd Place
Ricardo Rolón
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Christmas Snow

3rd Place
Andrew West
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Southwest Florida Weather

Division C

1st Place
Crystal Vander Weit
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
ICE protest

2nd Place
Gregg Pachkowski
Pensacola News Journal
Snow Day

3rd Place
Matt Beck
Citrus County Chronicle
More eats, please

14. Sports Photography

Division A

1st Place
Al Diaz
Miami Herald
Malachi Toney Scores

2nd Place
Stephen M. Dowell
Orlando Sentinel
SPORTS Florida Basketball Championship

3rd Place
Rachel Govola
The Villages Daily Sun
Collection of work by Rachel Govola

Division B

1st Place
Craig Bailey
Florida Today
Covering Sports

2nd Place
Jonah Hinebaugh
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Jonah Hinebaugh Sports Collection

3rd Place
Ricardo Rolón
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Ricardo Rolón Sports Moments

Division C

1st Place
Patrick Obley
The Daily Sun
Year In Review

2nd Place
Crystal Vander Weit
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Crystal Vander Weit collection

3rd Place
Kaila Jones
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Kaila Jones collection

15. Photo Story

Division A

1st Place
Al Diaz, Pedro Portal and Matias J. Ocner
Miami Herald
Alligator Alcatraz

2nd Place
George Horsford
The Villages Daily Sun
Florida Man Games

3rd Place
Joe Burbank
Orlando Sentinel
PHOTO STORY The Beauty of Blue Spring

Division B

1st Place
Andrew West
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Alligator Alcatraz Light Pollution

2nd Place
Jonah Hinebaugh
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Battling the Iguana Invasion

3rd Place
Tim Shortt, photojournalist
Florida Today
Viera Cowboys

Division C

1st Place
Crystal Vander Weit
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
The 10,593rd capture

16. Breaking News Or Live Video

All Divisions

1st Place
David Goodhue
Miami Herald
'I'm a U.S citizen.' Federal agents detain woman

17. Features Video

Division A

1st Place
Rich Pope
Orlando Sentinel
VIDEO Central Floridian of the Year

2nd Place
Rich Pope
Orlando Sentinel
VIDEO Restaurant of the Year

3rd Place
Mike Stocker, Sean Pitts
South Florida Sun Sentinel
First-look: Fly-through the new Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale (FPV drone)

Division B

1st Place
Andrew West
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Hurricane Ian: Then & Now

2nd Place
Jonah Hinebaugh
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Hurricane Ian Survivors

3rd Place
Andrew West
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Tiara Brown Profile

Division C

1st Place
Matt Beck
Citrus County Chronicle
Life-like training hones skills for SROs, Guardians

2nd Place
Matt Beck
Citrus County Chronicle
Scenes from Andy Lahera's funeral

3rd Place
Gregg Pachkowski, Brittany Misencik
Pensacola News Journal
Fair foodies

18. Multimedia

All Divisions

1st Place
Greg Pachkowski
Pensacola News Journal
Mullet toss culture

2nd Place
Edgar Thompson and Wesley Alden
Orlando Sentinel
MULTIMEDIA Swamp Things

19. News Interactive

All Divisions

1st Place
Jack Randall
TCPalm - Treasure Coast Newspapers
Citrus grown in Florida over time

2nd Place
Staff
Tampa Bay Times
How many of Tampa Bay's top 50 restaurants of 2025 have you visted?

20. Podcast

Division A

1st Place
David Schutz, Sean Pitts, Robin Webb
South Florida Sun Sentinel
Felonious Florida: The Altidor Massacre

2nd Place
Rick Stroud
Tampa Bay Times
Sports Day Tampa Bay

3rd Place
Andre Fernandez, Michelle Kaufman
Miami Herald
Inside Inter Miami Podcast (sound and video)

D03. Page Design

All Divisions

1st Place
Adam Rogers
The Villages Daily Sun
Three Years After Ian's Fury

2nd Place
Lisa Merklin
Tampa Bay Times
Tampa Bay's Top Workplaces

3rd Place
Lisa Merklin
Tampa Bay Times
St. Pete Home Burglary

STUDENT CATEGORIES

C01. Breaking News Reporting

1st Place
Sara-James Ranta
Fresh Take Florida
Florida appeals court decision allows openly carrying guns

2nd Place
Kyla Ann Faircloth
The Beacon Today (Palm Beach Atlantic University)
Palm Beach Atlantic Students raise concerns about housing

3rd Place
Aiden Brill and Nicole Vogler
The Current
Eckerd Seniors Walk Out of Class in Protest of Graduation Change

C02. Enterprise Writing

1st Place
Kylie Williams
WUFT.org
“Beluga sturgeon are vanishing from their home seas–so why are they on North Florida caviar farms?”

2nd Place
Daniella Pacheco
The Beacon Today (Palm Beach Atlantic University)
The high cost of graduation: How 2025's changing job market is shaping careers

3rd Place
Matthew Cupelli
Fresh Take Florida
Civilian police oversight in Florida crumbles after new law kicks in

03. Investigative Reporting

1st Place
Anthony Cruz
Caplin News
South Florida’s immigrant detention centers: A long history of documented human rights violations

2nd Place
STAFF
WUFT.org
The Cold, Hard Facts

3rd Place
Sara-James Ranta
The Independent Florida Alligator
Community Protests ICE Involvement in Alachua County Schools

C04. Features Writing

TIE:

1st Place
Lauren Brensel
Atrium
Fists of a Fighter, Heart of an Angel

1st Place
Bea Anhuci
Fresh Take Florida
'I grieve what I could have had': Daughter of murdered couple reflects on killer's execution

2nd Place
Zoey Thomas and Garrett Shanley
The Independent Florida Alligator
Why are politicians purging 'identity politics' from UF's general education curriculum?

3rd Place
Rylan DiGiacomo-Rapp
Fresh Take Florida
Chasing rarity: Poachers brave dangerous Florida swamps for imperiled ghost orchid

C05. Commentary

1st Place
Daniella Pacheco
The Beacon Today (Palm Beach Atlantic University)
Opinion: The Power of Reading from a Dyslexic Student

2nd Place
Jordan Keldani
The Current
Eckerd's Graduation Protests Were a Mistake

3rd Place
Sophie Hovis
The Current
Consequences of AI Associated with Capitalism and Abuse

C06. Sports

1st Place
Liana Handler
The Grandstand
More Than Words: Inside the Important, Unique — And Sometimes Random — Role of MLB Translators

TIE:

2nd Place
Jessica Garcete
The Grandstand
Racing's Virtual Revolution

2nd Place
Jackson Castellano
WUFT.org
$19 chicken fingers? How UF's baseball concession prices rank vs. SEC rivals

3rd Place
Scarlett Cooney
WUFT.org
Months of work for 90 seconds: The making of a UF gymnast's floor routine

C07. Multimedia

1st Place
Staff
Caplin News
Most Banned Books of the 2024–2025 School Year (Number of Districts That Banned Each Title)

2nd Place
Kairi Lowery
Fresh Take Florida
Built in a flash: new satellite imagery shows rapid construction of 'Alligator Alcatraz'

3rd Place
STAFF
WUFT.org
When Lightning Strikes

C08. Photography

1st Place
Donovan Snell
The Current
Eckerd College hosts 13th annual pet graduation

2nd Place
Mia Henrich
The Current
Eckerd Seniors Walk Out of Class in Protest of Graduation Change

3rd Place
Juleidi Machuca
The Independent Florida Alligator
The battle over the Norman Tunnel rainbows

C09. Video Storytelling

1st Place
Staff
Caplin News
Mama Hattie's House: Stepping out, stepping in (includes documentary)

2nd Place
Juan Carlos Chaoui
WUFT.org
The Rodeo Kid

3rd Place
Nicole Borman
WUFT.org
Rebuilding Paradise

C10. Podcast

1st Place
Staff
Caplin News
Pages They Pulled: The fight against Florida's book ban legislation (includes audio story)

2nd Place
Nicole Vogler and David Andino
The Current
Tea with the Triton: Eckerd Town Hall Attendance up 3,000%, AI Minor and Bad Bunny

SPANISH

S01. News Reporting |

1st Place
Verónica Egui Brito
El Nuevo Herald
Veronica Egui Brito collection

2nd Place
Alejandro Marquina, Esteban Rodriguez, Marc Bourgeois
Caplin News
Futuro en limbo: venezolanos temen la eliminación del TPS en EE.UU. (incluye video)

3rd Place
Alejandro Marquina
Caplin News
Tensiones entre EE. UU. y Venezuela crean expectativa en el Caribe (incluye video)

S02. Sports |

TIE:

1st Place
Jorge Ebro
El Nuevo Herald
Jorge Ebro collection

1st Place
Brianna Arias, Mauro Rueda
Caplin News
La revolución de la FIFA comienza en Hard Rock (incluye video)

S03. Features & Enterprise Writing |

1st Place
STAFF
WUFT.org
Precio del Paraiso

2nd Place
Sarah Moreno
El Nuevo Herald
Sarah Moreno collection

TIE:
3rd Place
Sonia Osorio
El Nuevo Herald
Sonia Osorio collection

3rd Place
Nathan Thomas and Gabriella Chavez
Atrium

800 millas, sin zapatos: El viaje de un migrante hacia la libertad

001. Paul Hansell Award |

First Place
Reporter: Amy Bennett Williams
Naples Daily News - Fort Myers News-Press
Paul Hansell Award

2026 GOLD MEDAL AWARD WINNERS

Division A:
Tampa Bay Times
Wasting Away, *Zachary T. Sampson, Shreya Vuttaluru and Bethany Barnes*

Division B:
Tallahassee Democrat
Hidden Heroics in the ER, *Alicia Devine*

Division C:
The Florida Trib
Cold-Blooded, *Nichole Manna, Casey Frank*

2026 STUDENT GOLD MEDAL AWARD WINNERS

Tie:
Caplin News

2026 FSNE Journalism Contest

List of Winners

WUFT.org