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Dearly WNA Better Newspaper Contest Committee,

As leaders in the industry you know what its like to get a terrific employee and you never want to let them go. They're the "pick of the litter" and you don't want them to ever leave. That's the blessing and curse of being an adviser, and especially at the UW-W *Royal Purple*. So many of my students start here as freshmen learning to write and move on to the TV station, radio station, athletics office, university marketing, theater promotions, etc. I'm proud every time they get "picked off," but I hope I can hold onto Parker Olsen as long as I can.

He came to the RP as a freshman in the fall of '21 and has grown exponentially since then over the past year of 2022. Sharp as a tack, I brought him on reluctantly as editor of the sports section, but with such a veracity for reporting and high school pedigree I took a chance and I'm so glad I did. Sports is typically an easy section to recruit editors and journalists for at UW-W, but the pandemic took its toll and even that section struggled to get student involvement last year. Parker picked up the reigns and even lifted that section to a higher caliber.

I continually get compliments on his professionalism and how well the sports section is running. The *Royal Purple* has had trouble in the past getting through the sports information directors, coaches guarding their players and inhospitable conditions. But I never tell new staff about those problems, believing that they can make their own future, and Parker has done just that. I never get complaints about him or his staff leaving in the middle of games or not being prepared for interviews. When his staff got pushed off the press table at last year's women's basketball game finals by a local journalist they handled it with professionalism and we politely worked through the intercollegiate athletics office. At the next game there were name cards on the table and the RP even got two seats front and center.

Parker is the first to contribute and volunteer for anything extra. On print newspaper layout days he's the first in the office in the morning, making me get there even earlier to beat him. He's marched in every parade, delivered papers to news racks, he was a camp counselor this past summer for the Kettle Moraine Press Association journalism camp.

He is innovative, and was instrumental in splitting our sports section into a men's sports and women sports sections. He developed Mikey Rottier to such a degree that we felt confident

that this year Parker could lead as the men's sports section editor and Mikey could be the women's sports section editor. That was a huge and important step because last year we often commiserated about how we felt like our hands were tired having to cover the men's sports when our women were doing so great (and often better!).

And that's who Parker is. He's not your typical "bro" sports editor. Yes, Parker can write a darn good game story <https://royalpurplenews.com/39196/sports/despite-noise-wrestling-comes-short/>. But look at his creativity. I love in this wrestling wrap-up how he uses words like "knotted up." He can turn a cross country results story into an interesting Q&A piece <https://royalpurplenews.com/38665/sports/cross-country-keeps-working/>. But Parker goes beyond the typical sports beat, covering topics and issues that I find are very hard for most sports writers. Check out this story on a Paralympic alum <https://royalpurplenews.com/38997/sports/pushing-the-limits/>. Read this piece about UW-Whitewater's past Native American logo <https://royalpurplenews.com/35380/sports/did-you-know-uw-w-had-a-indigenous-logo/>. And read this piece about an alum working to restart interest in speed skating <https://royalpurplenews.com/34766/sports/dashing-to-rekindle-american-speed-skating/>. No typical college sports writer would choose a story on speed skating, but he did. And that's why he deserves to be Collegiate Journalist of the Year.

Please search Parker Olsen at www.royalpurplenews.com (<https://royalpurplenews.com/?s=Parker+Olsen>) to read even more season previews and wrap-ups, profiles, features and so many different types of stories with various formats. You'll be just as proud as I am. And when Parker is a superstar professional journalist someday we can all be proud he got "picked." Because he deserves it.

Thank you very much for considering Parker Olsen for this award.

Sincerely,
Keith J. Zukas

